

Murder trial: Judge removes accused, Brandon Metallic, from the court

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – Brandon Metallic, who faces a charge of murder and manslaughter, will no longer be present in the courtroom during his trial. Instead, he will attend the proceedings from another room equipped with audiovisual equipment. Superior Court Judge Guy De Blois made this decision after ordering the jury to leave the room at approximately 2:20 p.m. on January 18. The accused had refused, for the second consecutive day, to comply with the judge's requests to respect the trial's rules.

Testimonies began on January 17, during which Judge De Blois faced various issues controlling Brandon Metallic's constant interruptions. The judge warned the accused several times that day as well.

In fact, Brandon Metallic, who is representing himself at the New Carlisle Courthouse, intervened several dozen times during a three-hour period on January 17 while four witnesses testified. He repeatedly claimed that certain elements of the procedure were illegal and that he had not received all of the evidence. Additionally, he frequently interrupted Judge De Blois, who appeared to be reaching the limit of his pa-

tience on several occasions.

After a few bouts of interruptions from the accused, and while Brandon Metallic challenged the validity of a document, the judge warned him: "If you continue to speak like this, you will have to listen to the trial from another room."

Despite this warning, the accused continued regularly to comment out loud on the testimony, with the judge just as regularly ordering him to remain silent and telling him that his turn would come to speak and cross-examine the witnesses. At times, the judge just ignored Brandon Metallic's interruptions.

However, the following day, Judge De Blois decided enough was enough. The security guards escorted the accused outside the courtroom, and the judge stated that his decision is valid until further notice.

A particularly harsh crime scene

Before hearing witnesses on January 17, criminal prosecutor Florence Frappier Routhier informed the jury in her opening statement that she intended to prove how the accused had killed a man in his early twenties by shooting him in the chest and stomach area. She also described how he committed an involuntary manslaughter against a young girl by firing a shot from the basement towards the ground floor of a Listuguj house.

This opening statement by prosecutor Frappier Routhier to the attention of the jurors was punctuated with numerous explicit details on the state of the remains and the location of the crimes in a house located at 94, Riverside Street West in the First Nations community of Listuguj.

Ms. Frappier Routhier specified that the accused, who was living in Montreal in May 2021, had asked an acquaintance, Kennedy Martin, to stay with her during a visit to his home community. On May 14,



Photo: G. Gagné

The trial is taking place at the New Carlisle Courthouse. About 20 people follow the procedure daily, including the press.

2021, Ms. Martin made a fire outside and a few people met there, including the accused and the young man who would be shot around midday on May 15. Alcohol and drugs were allegedly consumed during this gathering.

The accused and the two victims, whose identity is subject to a publication ban, spent the night at Kennedy Martin's house. The two men seemed to get along, according to the details presented by prosecutor Frappier Routhier but, later, in the morning of May 15, a verbal argument degenerated and the accused allegedly shot the 21-year-old man with a semi-automatic rifle, in the living room.

The young girl was then in her bath. In the evidence that Florence Frappier Routhier intends to add to during the five weeks reserved for the trial, is the fact that the young victim was still alive when Kennedy Martin left her house to get help.

The prosecutor indicates that the accused then went to the basement of the house and fired three shots there. One of the bullets went through the floor and hit the little girl in the neck, while she was still in the bathroom.

Four witnesses heard on January 17

The first witness heard on January 17 was police officer Éric Frappier, of the Sûreté du Québec, who had been called for reinforcement by the Listuguj police at the beginning of the afternoon on May 15, 2021. He was in Sayabec, in the Matapédia Valley, about a 75-minute drive from the crime scene.

The police officer was first called to ensure a security perimeter around 94 Riverside West was initiated before participating in the arrest of Brandon Metallic, who left the house a few hours after the start of the intervention initiated by Kennedy Martin's cry for help.

Sergeant Éric Frappier told the court that he was struck by Brandon Metallic's look, "a look of death" and "of panic." The police officer, however, clarified that the suspect had collaborated.

The police officer then entered the house, where he found the two victims, the first in a pool of blood, "a horror scene." As for the young girl, he found her in a room located near the bathroom.

"All you could see were the

legs from the edge (of the bed) and down. The rest of the body was on the bed with a white blanket on it. I could see that blood was flowing down one leg," said police officer Frappier.

Paramedics called to the scene, attempted to resuscitate the girl in vain, he added.

The second witness on the stand, Océane Veilleux was working in Rimouski at the Centre d'appels d'urgence de l'Est-du-Québec (the Eastern Quebec Emergency Call Centre) on May 15 at 2:08 p.m. when she responded to the call from Brandon Metallic who told her that shots had been fired at 94 Riverside West.

The court listened to the recording of the accused's emergency call, requesting that someone be sent to the house. He hung up after this request.

Indigenous police officer Jessy Doiron then testified. He was the first officer at the crime scene. He picked up Kennedy Martin in the middle of the day to drive her back to her grandmother's who lived nearby. She asked him to intervene immediately in the house but he decided to drive her to a safe location first.

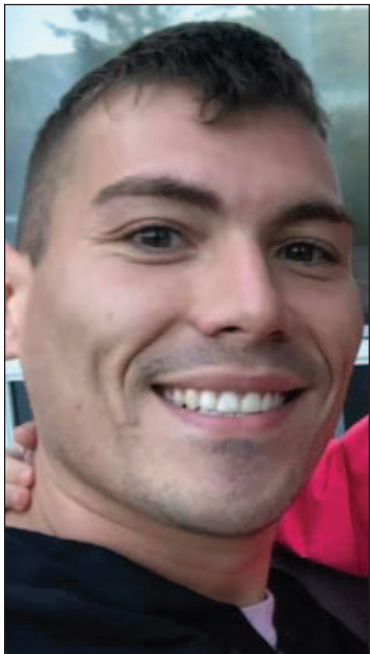


Photo: Facebook

The accused, Brandon Metallic, is defending himself without a lawyer.

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MURDER TRIAL

▶ *Cont'd from cover*

He then planned an intervention with three other Listuguj Police Department officers, including police chief Trapper Metallic.

It was from this moment that the assistance of the Sûreté du Québec was requested, and that Officer Jessy Doiron, who has known the accused since his childhood and with whom he went to school, was assigned to the task of monitoring the house in which the tragedy had taken place. Brandon Metallic was still in the house at the time.

Officer Doiron's patrol partner, Sharon Barnaby, also watching the house from another location, radioed him that she had heard a gunshot. Shortly after, he said he himself heard what sounded like a muffled shot.

Once during his testimony, Jessy Doiron wiped away a few tears. He was also part of the police team responsible for searching the house in which the crimes were committed. He was one of those who saw the corpses. He knew the adult victim and had previously seen photos of the girl on social media.

Officer Doiron further told the court that Brandon Metallic's cooperative attitude during his arrest had changed considerably after he consulted a lawyer.

"He was very belligerent, demanding respect from us, demanding us to order a big meal at the Pastali restaurant," said the police officer, referring to a restaurant located in Pointe-à-la-Croix.

The last witness of the day was the investigating Sergeant Patrick Talbot, of the Quebec City Police Service, regularly called SPVQ. He told the court how, on May 16, 2021, he recovered video footage recorded by a surveillance camera located in the door bell of a house next to the one where the crimes took place. The house belongs to Dylan Labilloy.

This sequence shows, in particular, the initial intervention of Jessy Doiron towards Kennedy Martin, occupant of 94 Riverside West.

January 18 testimonies

On January 18, Kennedy Martin, who lived at 94 Riverside West, informed the court that she witnessed Brandon Metallic shooting her friend

and falling into a chair behind him in the living room.

Kennedy Martin explained that Brandon Metallic was temporarily staying at her home, and in the morning, an argument broke out between the two individuals. According to Ms. Martin she saw the accused point a gun at the victim and shoot him twice in the stomach.

Only a few minutes, about three according to Ms. Martin, passed before she fled outside the house. At that time, she maintains that a young girl was in the bathroom.

Listuguj police officer Sharon Barnaby had earlier recounted the moment she learned of the girl's death inside 94 Riverside West.

After her arrival at the scene, she said she heard a muffled gunshot. About ten minutes later, she heard a second detonation, accompanied by a ricochet sound. Officer Barnaby had difficulty holding back tears when she recounted that the police officer preceding her advised her not to enter the room where the body of the girl had just been discovered, apparently lifeless. The police officer had just noticed traces of blood on the floor and on the sink in the bathroom.



Photo: G. Gagné

Criminal and penal prosecutor Florence Frappier Routhier intends to call 26 witnesses in total, including experts.

Twenty-six witnesses are expected to be heard during the trial. The 14 jurors, including two substitutes, were chosen on January 16 from 59 people who showed up for this selection. Up to 300 people received documents asking them to be jurors, but many of them received exemptions.

The documents were sent to people based on their family name, with the hopes that they speak and understand English,

the language chosen by Brandon Metallic for the trial.

The Quebec City Police Service received the mandate to carry out the criminal investigation since people died during the initial intervention of other police forces.

Note: The testimonies heard on January 18 were supplied to SPEC by CIEU-FM, as part of a collaboration between the two media.

Accusations brought against Bruno-Pierre Godbout

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - Chandler municipal councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout is facing three charges in connection with expense accounts presented in 2021.

In a press release on January 18, the Permanent Anti-Corruption United (UPAC) emphasized that its investigation tends to show that between February 1 and July 31, 2021, Mr. Godbout, who was pro-mayor during the suspension of former mayor Louisette Langlois by the Commission municipale du Québec, produced and used false expense claims.

The UPAC estimates the amount of the fraud at around \$10,000.

He is scheduled to appear on April 22 at the Percé Courthouse to answer charges of fraud, forgery and its use, possession or trafficking of a document.

In June 2021, the issue of travel costs and expense accounts totalling nearly \$7,000



Photo: N. Sergerie

Councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout under fire amid allegations.

since January had raised controversy at the municipal council.

Former councillor Denis Pelchat reported during the session that two invoices totalling \$3,200 were requested in May by Bruno-Pierre Godbout.

Councillor Pelchat argued that no deputy minister or minister was meeting people at this time in Quebec, and that everything was done by telephone or Zoom.

The former elected official seriously questioned these travel expenses and asked who had been met after another meeting in Quebec.

The defendant never wanted to mention what it was, indicating that "everything would be passed on." Mr. Godbout declared that the files mentioned were about the bypass route and the release of the loan regulations for asphalt.

When contacted, Mr. Godbout did not want to comment on the situation, but he did indicate that he intends to defend himself against the allegations.

The current mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche, commented briefly on this matter. "This is an event that occurred when I was not mayor of the Town of Chandler. I can tell you that since my arrival, I have complete confidence in Mr. Godbout who has his town at heart and does a remarkable job. He will defend himself, and we will see the outcome of the investigation," notes the mayor.

A third storm hits the region in a week

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Winter has returned to normal on the Gaspé Peninsula. Environment Canada estimates that the Gaspé Peninsula received between 20 and 35 centimetres of snow, depending on the sector, following the storm which hit on January 16 and 17.

The area east of Route 299 received the most snow, with Gaspé receiving 33.2 centimetres at Michel-Pouliot airport. "We've been playing catch-up. That said, the heart of winter is between mid-January and mid-February. After that, winter isn't over - definitely not even in the Gaspé Peninsula in March - but it's still a big period. We've just embarked on winter," says Environment Canada meteorologist, Jean-Philippe Bégin.

As of January 18, a total of 136 centimetres of snow had fallen in Gaspé since the beginning of the winter. The normal amount for the month of January is 195 centimetres.

The Orléans Express bus service was suspended on January 17. The Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine intermunicipal transport authority also cancelled its runs on the north side of the Coast on January 17.



Photo: N. Sergerie

After three storms in one week, the streets of the residential areas of Gaspé were quite narrow.

Concerns remain about how to protect the railway tracks in Pabos

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - Following the storm on January 10, new concerns have emerged about safeguarding the railway tracks in the Banc de Pabos sector. During the storm surge, strong tides threw debris onto the tracks.

The mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche, notes that his municipal team observed water going over the protective wall, and the ditches along Highway 132 were flooded.

The elected official questions the work carried out this fall to protect the railway line, which is slated for rehabilitation in this sector by 2026.

“There was work with riprap. There were tests which, for them, were conclusive. We saw with the force of the storm that it was clearly insufficient to contain the water and the trees coming from the sea,” comments the mayor.

“It can’t continue because we’re going to have storms

like this every year. There will have to be major investments made in this sector because it will continue,” adds Mr. Daraïche.

The president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie mentioned that the site in question has not undergone maintenance in the last 10 years.

“People need to realize that every time there is a storm, we carry out inspections along its entire length. What we see in Pabos is that Highway 132 passes nearby. But where the railway is in the forest, large trees sometimes fall. Every storm, we do inspections,” mentions Éric Dubé.

The president mentions that there is no urgency to act because the train is not yet operational in this sector.

“The foundation of the structure was not destroyed. If there are pieces of wood, we will remove them. If there are rocks, we will replace them or put new ones,” continues Mr. Dubé.

The Ministry of Transport aims to protect the entire sector, including Highway 132.

“The ministry is working on a major project which will be carried out over the coming years to secure (that Banc de Pabos sector). We understand that the storms are becoming more and more violent, and major interventions will have to be made. We can lose the railway line for a few days, but we cannot lose our main road,” he says.

“We now have the budgets to make corrections and repairs after each storm, allowing the train to run when the rail is rehabilitated to Gaspé. This will protect Highway 132 while awaiting major investments and while taking into account the environmental reality,” explains the president.

“It’s always impressive, but we’re used to bits of woods or the sea. In the Carleton area, every time there is a storm, we go to collect wood from the tracks. It’s normal,” cites Mr. Dubé as an example.

CISSS establishments reinstate requirements for medical masks

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PASPEBIAC - Medical masks are once again mandatory at certain Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centres (CISSS).

The circulation of influenza and COVID-19 viruses prompted the infection prevention committee to recommend this measure for the Rocher-Percé and Bay of Chaleur local health networks, including the Chandler and Maria hospitals.

The recommendation, made on January 12, took effect immediately for an indeterminate period of time.

Wearing a medical mask is compulsory in common areas for staff in contact with users, patients, visitors and caregivers in all of these facilities.

However, CHSLD (long term care) residents are exempt from this requirement.

The CISSS reminds the public that simple actions can limit the transmission of infec-



Photo: CISSS de la Gaspésie

Since January 12, medical masks are once again required in CISSS establishments in Rocher-Percé and the Bay of Chaleurs.

tious respiratory diseases, such as coughing into your elbow, practicing hand hygiene, keeping vaccinations up-to-date,

wearing a mask when symptoms appear or when required and, finally, staying home if experiencing a fever.

Police report

Christopher Ballerini-Kruse, 41, recently entered a plea of guilty to several charges related to a police operation that took place on September 17 on Church Street in New Carlisle. On that day, the police seized drugs and firearms, leading to the arrest of two other individuals. Christopher Ballerini-Kruse pleaded guilty to all charges against him, including drug possession, assault with a weapon, and unauthorized possession of a firearm. He was sentenced to six months in prison. Detained since his arrest, he only had one day left to serve before being released. He is subject to two years of probation, including 12 months with supervision and 50 hours of community work.

Kevin Plante, 42, from Gaspé, is being sent to closed therapy for his drug consumption problems. The man was detained since his interception by the Sûreté du Québec while driving his vehicle on January 10 in Gaspé. Kevin Plante faces charges of driving while impaired by drugs, possession of cocaine and breach of conditions. The police also allegedly found a small quantity of cocaine on board the vehicle. The accused will return to court on February 14. He also faces prior charges of obtaining sexual favours for payment and sexual assault for events that occurred in September 2021, as well as drug trafficking.

An 81-year-old man remains in stable condition in the hospital after being hit by a car around 6:40 a.m. on January 16 at Place de l'Acadie, in Bonaventure. The victim suffered significant injuries, including a head injury. The low light at that time of day could have played a role in this accident. The Sûreté du Québec has ruled out foul play.

On January 11, investigators from the MRC of Rocher Percé, in collaboration with the organized crime investigation and coordination division, carried out an operation in connection with a network selling cocaine and illegal cannabis in Grande Rivière. The police conducted a search in a residence on Du Parc Street, seizing, among other things, 28 grams of cocaine, 115 grams of hashish, more than 620 grams of illicit cannabis, one methamphetamine tablet, 18 contraband cigarettes, \$200 in Canadian currency and equipment commonly used to sell drugs.

Yannick Kakoulas, 46, who was present during the search, was arrested. He appeared at the Percé Courthouse on January 12 and faces charges of possession for the purpose of trafficking cocaine and cannabis, as well as possession of methamphetamine. He was remanded in custody and could face additional charges.

During the police search, a 28-year-old-woman arrived on scene. She was arrested as well and faces charges of driving while impaired by drugs. She was later released.

The Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility is asking snowmobilers to be careful during their excursions. Despite the pleasure that snowmobiling brings to outdoor enthusiasts, reckless behaviour can lead to tragic consequences. It is important to respect basic safety rules on a snowmobile or aboard any other type of off-road vehicle.

This includes planning rides in advance by finding out about the condition of the trails and the ice thickness of lakes or rivers located along the route. It also means wearing protective clothing, boots, helmets and other adequate protection equipment. Transports Québec also asks riders to respect the signs and the permitted speed limits which are 70 km/h on snowmobiles and 50 km/h in an all-terrain vehicle.

It is recommended to travel only on marked bodies of water where the thickness of the ice has been verified by off-trail vehicle clubs. It is also suggested to adapt driving to the weather and surface conditions and to take extra caution when driving at night, especially when going off-trail. Carrying a basic survival kit is another way to remain safe.

To use an off-trail vehicle drivers must be at least 16 years of age. Driving while impaired is prohibited. In fact, speed, alcohol and drugs are the main causes of collisions and deaths in Quebec. From 2018 to 2022, an average of about 20 deaths occurred each year in off-trail accidents, and nearly 400 people sustained injuries related to driving an off-road vehicle. The purpose of the Off-Highway Vehicle Act is to ensure public safety by regulating the use of such vehicles as well as traffic on trails. The act aims to promote harmonious cohabitation between off-trail vehicle users and other users of the territory.

It includes measures such as the obligation to hold a driving license, other measures concerning impaired driving, as well as the improvement of powers entrusted to trail surveillance agents.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Northvolt is a greenwashing project so far

On September 28, Quebec Premier François Legault and Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau proudly announced the arrival of Swedish company Northvolt to the small town of McMasterville, where a \$7 billion plant is set to manufacture electric vehicle batteries.

The company is poised to receive over \$2.7 billion in loans and grants from the Quebec and Canada governments, with each contributing \$1.37 billion. Another public funding agreement will grant Northvolt up to \$4.6 billion in government production incentives over the next five to nine years.

One-third of this amount will be contributed by the Quebec government, adding another \$1.5 billion to the project.

Following the September announcement, François Legault stated that Quebec has realized its vision of becoming a world leader in the green economy.

Green economy?

Over the last four months, Quebecers have learned more about the Northvolt initiative. Firstly, the Quebec government was forced to admit that the huge project would not be submitted to the scrutiny of an environmental assessment carried out by the BAPE, the Bureau d’audiences publiques sur l’environnement.

That bypass means that such a project, using thousands of tonnes of chemicals like lithium, will not have to go through a public hearings process.

Just as bad, before the September announcement, the Quebec government modified the standards of projects that must be assessed by the BAPE. By increasing the output tonnage from 40,000 to 60,000 tonnes, the new landmark before a BAPE intervention, the government paved the way to Northvolt’s bypass, as the company will produce 56,000 tonnes of batteries!

It is flatly an insult to people’s intelligence. People can easily imagine that the Northvolt model will be repeated by another company, on another front.

In that context, it is rather odd to see that wind farms located far from towns and villages, for example, the Mesgi’g Ugiu’s’n 2 project in the backcountry of Escuminac, are subjected to the full BAPE evaluation process.

The case of Northvolt is all the more controversial, given that the surface required to build the plant will encroach on a 13-hectare marshy area that should be protected, as there are not too many wetland habitats left around Montreal or close. MacMasterville is located about 30 kilometres from the metropolis.

The Quebec government ministers who are defending the project affirm that Northvolt’s plant will be located on former industrial land, as a factory producing explosives was occupying the location until 1998. The ministers fail to point out that the C.I.L. facility was much smaller than the 170 hectares covered by the battery plant.

A few days ago, Northvolt’s contractor started clearing the land where the facility will be built. Up to 8,000 trees will be cut in the process, either relatively old or 25-year-old trees that were planted upon the dismantling of the C.I.L. plant.

In an attempt to protect Northvolt’s image, the company’s spokesperson remarked that 24,000 new

trees will replace the ones that are cut. He was thus trying to convince people that the planted trees will capture enough carbon to make up for the old ones.

Again, this is an insult to people’s intelligence, as one big tree can capture more carbon than dozens, if not hundreds, of small trees. It will also take a couple of decades before these 24,000 trees compose an ecosystem fit to greet a wide array of birds and other forms of wildlife.

The first phase of the plant will produce one million batteries annually. This means that the model François Legault and Justin Trudeau opted for reproduces the economic scenario that has put humanity in environmental trouble, namely individual cars. Northvolt will not produce bus or locomotive batteries, which would lead to a greater use of commuting transport, the most efficient way to reduce greenhouse gases.

François Legault was therefore misleading Quebecers when he said that the province is becoming a green economy world leader. He is above all blinded by the 3,000 jobs that are supposed to be created by Northvolt.

Quebec’s very weak Environment Minister, Benoit Charrette, added a layer of mediocrity to the government announcement when he said, after being told by Premier Legault for sure, that Northvolt would be submitted to the BAPE scrutiny once the plant is ready to recycle batteries, one aspect of the company’s second phase of the venture.

Where is the consultation?

Bypassing a BAPE consultation process implemented 46 years ago might, however, be the most disturbing element of the decision to announce

Northvolt’s project so fast.

Other huge industrial projects have been granted an environmental assessment bypass over the years. We know of one in the Gaspé Peninsula, Saint Marys Cement, with questionable results, environmentally speaking.

Yes, a BAPE consultation process might add a year before a venture takes off the ground. However, it usually generates improvements for a project, as the business sector is forced to convince surrounding communities of its relevance. In that exercise, the population can count on the BAPE experts, who will review the most technical aspects of the venture they have to assess.

At the beginning of 2006, for example, when Cartier Energy’s Carleton wind farm project was assessed by the BAPE, a number of cottage owners and public land users opposed the proximity of some windmills from Sansfaçon Lake in the backcountry of Maria. The BAPE experts, without rejecting the venture, put that observation in their report, and the company modified its original plans. Some projected windmills were moved away from the lake.

Environmental stakes are increasingly important in today’s world, and most governments are increasingly lame at providing people with the tools to properly assess projects.

Less frequent use of the BAPE expertise could lead to the gradual disappearance of competencies serving the population.

Premiers, prime ministers, and ministers are trying to tell us that they are not subjected to the big industry, however, some of their most recent decisions are convincing a growing proportion of the population that dwindling expertise put to the service of the public in the environment is a planned move.



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CHANDLER:

Dismissal of former head of aquatic activities stands

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - An arbitrator upholds the Town of Chandler's decision to dismiss the former head of aquatic activities.

In a decision filed on January 15, lawyer Alain Turcotte notes that as manager of the sports and aquatic complex, Dominique Giroux had a certain margin of maneuverability in its management. This leads to greater obligations.

However, the complainant began a system of free courses without authorization in connection with sponsorships received via Sauvetage Adrenaline.

She convinced some municipal councillors that the benefits outweighed the losses from registrations.

She was fortunate that this issue was not debated at a regular board meeting, and in a pinch, it would have been understandable if the system had been maintained only for the four events of 2016.

On the contrary, the plaintiff modified the tolerance, again without authorization.

She even extended the way of proceeding to her other mandates as a town employee.

"It is undisputed that the money collected by Sauvetage Adrenaline has enabled very interesting sporting achievements, particularly for young people in the municipality. However, it is fallacious reasoning to suggest that this justifies the actions of the complainant," notes Mr. Turcotte in his decision.

"The court considers that this is an exceptional situation where the employer has demonstrated a breakdown in the bond of trust. In the circumstances, there was reason to override a gradation of sanctions. The complainant demonstrated her willingness not to comply with the directives. A suspension would only have served to give her another pretext to literally fight the council," justifies the arbitrator, thus rejecting the grievance for dismissal.

In the administrative investigation carried out by the Town of Chandler, the arbitrator found that the free courses were not limited to the four activities identified in



Photo: N. Sergerie

The mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraiche, is satisfied with the decision.

2016.

In practice, they are granted for all activities.

This is the case, for example, for the rental of a gymnasium, yoga or music classes and even packages for children's parties.

He also cites that this advantage, supposed to be restricted to the sponsor or his immediate family, is applied to the extended family or even employees of the contributing company.

It is noted in the arbitration decision that for the years 2019 to 2022, the value of discounts granted to sponsors for activities not authorized by the town amounts to more than \$6,000.

However, Mr. Turcotte cancels the three-day suspension imposed on December 6, 2022 and orders the Town to pay the lost salary and benefits with interest.

The heart of the debate concerned the gratuities granted by the organization in which Ms. Giroux was associated.

The council adopted a resolution in February 2023 where it was indicated that as part of the partnership, the Town had accepted in 2016 that freebies to participate in certain activities at the sports complex be granted to certain donors who contribute to the mission of the organization.

Ms. Giroux explained at

that time that a sponsor who paid \$1,000 received between \$300 and \$400 in free swimming lessons.

Adrenaline Rescue has existed since 1996 and over the years, according to her, equipment worth \$800,000 had been purchased for aquatic activities.

In the resolution, it was also specified that a situation where the Town must assume significant costs to benefit from the sports complex which belongs to the René-Lévesque School Services Centre, it particularly wishes to maximize revenues from registrations for activities by putting an end to activities (freebies).

The Town of Chandler indicated that losses amount to \$310,000 for the 2022 financial year.

"We are very satisfied," immediately mentions the mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraiche. "We had a job to do and we did it. The bleeding had to be stopped. Justice has been done and we are happy with that," continues Mr. Daraiche.

The mayor is turning the page on this situation, ensuring that measures are being taken to prevent such events from happening again.

For her part, Ms. Giroux preferred not to comment on the decision, also wishing to turn the page on this saga.

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THEGASPESEC.COM



Photo: N. Sergerie

The service will be reorganized into the old emergency room.

Revamping of the hemodialysis unit is underway in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Nearly a year and a half after formally launching the process of redevelopment of the hemodialysis department of the Gaspé hospital, the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre hopes to be able to launch the work by the end of winter.

Three contractors submitted proposals and Rénovation CM de Grande-Vallée presented the lowest bid at \$3,997,000, just below the CISSS's target of \$4 million. The highest was almost \$5 million.

The offers have been analyzed, and if everything is compliant, the work can finally move forward.

The redevelopment involves relocating the department to the former emergency room, vacated in July 2021, and transforming it to accommodate four seats in a space that will be designed to accommodate six. Currently, there are only three seats available.

The unit area will increase from 65 square metres to 584 square metres.

The objective is to ensure

better functionality and more confidentiality for patients while also offering the flexibility to increase the service for future needs.

An exclusive bathroom and a fixed water treatment room are also necessary for treatments.

In the spring, the initial budget of \$4 million proved insufficient during the preliminary plans and specifications stage, leading the CISSS to have discussions with the Ministry of Health.

In August 2022, the project was estimated to cost \$2 million but the infrastructure project, like thousands of projects across the province, has suffered the effects of inflation and overheating in the construction industry.

Confronted with rising costs, the CISSS had to forgo adding the oncology service in the initial plans.

Recently, the CISSS president and CEO, Martin Pelletier, emphasized the importance of keeping the project within the \$4.5 million mark, which appears achievable.

Currently, the region has six hemodialysis sites in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and Chandler, three in Gaspé, and three others in Maria for a total of 18.





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Spiritual leader recognized by Quebec

CYNTHIA DOW

GESGAPEGIAG: William Jerome of Gesgapegiag has been recognized by the province for his efforts to promote Mi’gmaq culture. In December, he received the First Nations Medal from the outgoing Lieutenant-Governor, Michel Doyon.

It was fellow Wejgwapniag School teacher, Vanessa Jerome, who nominated Mr. Jerome for the honour. “He’s done so much for the school, for the Sundance and the Pow-wow. And he has such a good heart,” she told SPEC.

Mr. Jerome got a call in early December about the award and the ceremony to be held at the National Assembly. “I thought someone was trying to scam me!” he said. He had his daughter Wanda call back to check and see if it was true.

In effect, ten Indigenous leaders were recognized at the ceremony held in Quebec City on December 22, in an initiative developed by Michel Doyon. The First Na-

tions medal recognizes “the outstanding contribution of First Nations and Inuit people to the province,” in particular through enhancing the influence of their community on their nation, on Quebec, Canada and the international community.

Members of the Cree, Innu, Naskapi, Atikamekw and other nations received medals at the ceremony, Mr. Jerome being the only Mi’gmaq included. “It still hasn’t sunk in yet,” he said, “But all my life I have tried to pass on my parents’ teachings. At first, I took the wrong road but now I have found the Red Road and I am proud of our people and our community.”

In fact, on January 10, Mr. Jerome celebrated 25 years of sobriety. “I want to show young people that even if you struggle, there are people out there who can help you, help you find out who you are. The young people are our strength.” He explained to SPEC that his traditional spiritual life gives him “the strength I need to face life and I am glad to see it is



Photo: Cynthia Dow

William Jerome has framed the certificate and medal received from the Lieutenant-Governor, but was most touched by the eagle feather he received from the Huron-Wendat nation while in Quebec City.

slowly catching on in Gesgapegiag.”

Mr. Jerome has been working as the Cultural Teacher at Wejgwapniag School for 23 years, teaching

the children about traditional Mi’gmaq culture and spirituality. He says it does his heart good to hear the children sing the Honour Song every morning.

Manon Jeannotte, a member of the Gespeg Mi’gmaq community, was named as Mr. Doyon’s replacement as Lieutenant-Governor in mid-December.

There are six major projects in Gaspé for 2024

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, presented his list of six major priorities for 2024 during the last municipal council meeting on January 15. The list includes housing, daycare spaces, the fishing sector, infrastructure, air transport and a strategic plan for the next decade.

“Even if about a hundred residential units are built per year, the fact remains that there is a severe housing shortage. We will continue to work to develop even more,” says the mayor.

With high interest rates and construction costs, it is difficult to attract contractors.

“But there are some. One approached us on his own this fall. Those things didn’t seem to be a problem. Those who have a real estate portfolio can finance their investment while keeping rent costs reasonable. A new developer would have no choice but to pass on the bill to his tenants,” says Mr.



The mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Côté.

There is a shortage of approximately 400 housing units in Gaspé, according to a recent study.

“At the same time, we see that it is difficult to deploy daycare places. There are complexities, and we are coming to the table quickly to resolve the impasses,” adds the mayor.

All the files have specific issues, and Mr. Côté men-

tions that the managers of the Centre de la petite enfance (CPE/daycares) are not real estate developers, which makes it difficult to carry out the projects quickly. “There could be better support to accompany them in this, and that would not be refused,” suggests the mayor.

The fishing industry is likely to feel the impact of upcoming decisions, as the Minister of Fisheries, Oceans

and the Canadian Coast Guard and Member of Parliament for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Diane Lebouthillier, said at the start of the year that the next six months would be critical.

Ms. Lebouthillier is due to announce shrimp quotas and her plan to revive the redfish fishery by the end of the month.

“When fishing goes bad, we feel it. The minister has important decisions to make. I hope that the right decisions will be made to limit the impacts,” says Mr. Côté, who hopes that governments will promote the economic diversification of this sector.

On air transport, the mayor hopes that 2024 will be the year when this file stands on its own two feet.

“(The government of) Quebec has tried things. I wouldn’t blame them. What they’re trying to do now is put a Band-Aid on a boo-boo. Does it heal the problem in depth? No. We’ve proposed regulating the markets, controlling prices, service and schedules. That would help us provide a better quality of

service,” says the mayor.

Premier François Legault also mentioned an option by subsidizing all carriers to offer services by absorbing deficits. “I hope that 2024 will be a good year for this component,” says Mr. Côté.

The infrastructure file, such as the new arena, is in the spotlight as well, a project worth nearly \$30 million.

A 10-year strategic plan is also in the plans. “We want to give you a vision that will take us to 2034. That’s the year of Gaspé’s 500th anniversary, of Jacques Cartier’s arrival, of the Rencontre des Peuples, and of La Francophonie in North America. We’re going to have to prioritize which infrastructures we need to revamp and what festivities we want to hold. Ten years is tomorrow morning,” says the mayor, recalling that the 475th anniversary celebrations were planned “at the last minute”.

Preliminary talks have already begun with Saint-Malo, the place of origin of Jacques Cartier.

Food bank is concerned as community needs are likely to remain high in the coming weeks

GILLES GAGNÉ

MARIA – The staff of Source alimentaire Bonavignon, the food bank serving Nouvelle to Caplan, is worried about the coming weeks, as families deal with high inflation and a housing crisis.

Source alimentaire Bonavignon coordinator Suzanne Lamarre fears that the demand for emergency food aid in January and February will be higher than previous years. “From our viewpoint, the housing shortage started 15 years ago. People need a roof over their heads, and there is no such thing as an apartment costing \$500 per month. So, people with a low income have no money left for food,” stresses Ms. Lamarre.

Lorie Munro, who is in charge of Source alimentaire Bonavignon’s emergency food aid service, remarks that in December, 40 households relied on the organization to get a box full of various food, and 50 additional households received a Christmas basket.

“January and February are scary for some people because they want to be like everyone else around Christmas time. So they spend, and after that, there is no money left,” explains Ms. Munro.

“So we wonder what is going to happen over the winter,” stresses Ms. Lamarre. “And nobody has the answer,” adds Ms. Munro.

Before 2023, an average month consisted of 35 to 40 emergency food aids while now, “the monthly average is between 45 and 50. October is



Volunteer Nicole Ratté, director Suzanne Lamarre and Lorie Munro, who is in charge of the emergency food aid service, are worried about the winter months’ impact on low-income individuals already dealing with high rent, electricity bills and inflation in grocery stores.

our smallest month with 40. We had 53 in November,” points out Lorie Munro.

Pride complicates the situation for low-income individuals dealing with food insecurity.

“Not everybody will call here to get food,” says Lorie Munro. “I can only hope that people don’t use their credit card after Christmas to get food. They better come and see us. We will find a way to help them,” assures Suzanne Lamarre.

The Source alimentaire Bonavignon always holds a pre-Christmas period fundraiser, which generates much anxiety for Ms. Lamarre. She knows that her organization’s needs are growing and that in an inflationary period like that of the last three years, people’s capacity to donate

might be increasingly limited.

“Grocery shopping is a concern for everybody. The last two years are comparable, donation-wise. We raised \$25,000 this year, including \$7,000 from a single company I won’t identify because it would be unfair to the ones I won’t name. Last year, we raised \$30,000. My anxiety is gone! Money doesn’t come in after Christmas for a while,” explains Suzanne Lamarre.

Having been employed for over 23 years by the Source alimentaire Bonavignon in Maria, Ms. Lamarre, who has been coordinator since 2004, has seen a lot. She experienced the closure of New Richmond’s Smurfit-Stone mill in 2005 and its impact in the area, the 2008-2009 recession, the budgetary austerity of Philippe Couillard’s

government from 2014 to 2017, but she is categorical; the inflationary push of the last three years is the worst crisis Source alimentaire Bonavignon has dealt with.

“When I arrived, on October 6, 2000, there were people who had income security and who came here, awaiting the next check. Now, we have workers. We have a lot of single people, it’s 65% of our clientele and it has always been that. The rent, when you have a one-bedroom apartment, is the same price for one or two people. And there are more and more elderly people (using food bank services),” explains Ms. Lamarre.

Some food banks set a limit to the number of monthly food aids to which people are entitled to receive. “This is not the

case at the Source alimentaire,” she says.

Lorie Munro, collective kitchens’ supervisor Guy Julien and Ms. Lamarre “are in reflection (about a limit that could be applied to individual food aid). When do we stop? How much do we give? Unless a force majeure case is raised, we rarely refuse. When you ask for food assistance, it is because you have reached rock bottom. No one is laughing here. When you give out the Christmas baskets, a Kleenex box is close to the door,” explains Suzanne Lamarre.

“We even have people who come to meet me to say “we are alright,” but we see a lot of anxiety.

Ms. Lamarre, worries though that the situation is not okay and isn’t going well. She says you just have to watch the news to see the impact inflation is having on people. She adds “it makes me want to watch the news less and less.”

Increase of 33.2% of emergency food aid in three years

Between the start of the pandemic, in 2020 and the beginning of 2023, the number of monthly food aids has increased by 33.2%. From 337 in 2019-2020, to 445 in 2022-2023. Suzanne Lamarre worries what this year’s data will look like.

“Our service is less and less troubleshooting. Once the rent, car and electricity are paid, there is not much left for the grocery store, sometimes nothing,” concludes Suzanne Lamarre.



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Town of Percé Tourist Information Office: Local merchants upset and request a meeting

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ: - Merchants and stakeholders in the tourism industry submitted a letter to the Percé town council on January 16 requesting a meeting. The stakeholders would like to find a quick solution to the town's decision to close the Tourist Information Office.

At the previous council meeting on December 20, Mayor Cathy Poirier had noted that the decision was not taken lightly. She explained that the \$168,000 that would be saved was necessary since finances were tight and the decision to close the information centre would help avoid a price shock for taxpayers.

The mayor also mentioned that the town is prepared to offer support to a nonprofit organization interested in operating the tourist information office.

The letter requesting a meeting was presented by Nathalie Clément who operates a bookstore and a bistro in the heart of the tourist district of Percé. "It is with dismay that the undersigned, entrepreneurs in the tourism sector of Percé, learned of the



Photo: N. Sergerie

The mayor of Percé, Cathy Poirier.

decision of the Town of Percé to cut the budget devoted to the promotion of tourism which represents the main economic engine. (...) The council's decision does not come without raising questions about how the Town came to this conclusion and to what extent all budget items were subject to reevaluation in this context. This is why we are requesting a meeting with the council to study the situation and evaluate potential solutions together," mentions, in

particular, the letter presented by Ms. Clément.

The business owners want a meeting by February

"We can meet you quickly. We have proposals to make at the level of an organization, an NPO (nonprofit organization). We are committed to helping with its creation. We have already said that we would provide the building and the resource that comes with it, that is to say Marie Leblanc who is the director of

tourism promotion. We are capable of making a large financial contribution to this situation which is not desirable. It's not a happy-go-lucky situation," replies the mayor, Cathy Poirier.

Two surprises awaited the mayor during the council meeting.

A merchant, Jean-Claude Méthot, raised the possibility of reducing the council from eight to six districts.

The councillors who spoke were very open to the idea.

"You have to understand that not all councillors were present. Two were absent.. They voted on an intention. It's something I put forward twice in my first term. I asked for unanimity to commit to this approach, as it would affect a number of sectors. I didn't want to impose it on the council," recalls the mayor.

"We will study it and if the eight are unanimous in taking this approach, it is a process that we can do in the last year of the mandate," says Ms. Poirier.

The mayor was also surprised by the position of the councillors on the future Piedmont Street, when Mr.

Méthot questioned her on this issue.

"I have been somewhat (surprised). When we drew up the budget, we discussed it. It was brought up, but not voted on. People came forward and it was a surprise because people had expressed other intentions behind closed doors," says the mayor. She adds that it will be up to a vote, if the entire council reconsiders and refuses, that verdict will be respected.

The councilors who spoke mentioned that the economic and budgetary situation of the town did not allow the construction of this street which would connect Highway 132 to the Geopark.

In the three-year capital plan, nearly \$3 million had been allocated in 2025 and 2026 for its implementation and the town wanted to finance it through the sale of commercial land.

The land for the future street has been subdivided and two of the six available promises to purchase have been submitted to the town.

In 2016, the population rejected, in a referendum, a project worth some \$2 million proposed by the former administration.

Quebec will protect the interior of the Percé wharf harbour

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - According to the mayor of Percé, Cathy Poirier, the Quebec government will protect the interior sector in the Percé wharf harbour. She notes that the damage, which is increasingly visible, is attributable to the reconfiguration of the wharf made by Ottawa and ceded to Quebec in 2020.

The ground under the promenade has practically disappeared, the foundations are exposed to bad weather, and Mont-Joli Street is becoming more and more vulnerable as the storm sewers have been affected by the latest violent storms.

"We have worked on this issue very closely in recent years. Unfortunately, we have said it too often. Currently, we have proof that it is really due to the formation of the wharf," explains Ms.



Photos: N. Sergerie

Rue du Mont-Joli is threatened by erosion.

Poirier.

The Ministry of Transport has been notified. "And it knew that it would be responsible for future damage," says the mayor.

"The ministry is with us

and will assume all costs relating to this matter," maintains Ms. Poirier.

Three phases of work are planned. "Phase 1 is short term. We're talking about a few weeks. We want to pro-



The promenade to the east of the wharf has been deformed by the subsoil undermined by erosion.

tect erosion and rainwater pipes," specifies the mayor.

Phase 2 will be medium-term protection. "To ensure that solution 3, which will be the corrective measures to avoid this situation. This so-

lution, which is not yet on the table, will come in the next two years," says Ms. Poirier.

The ministry will cover all the costs which are estimated

Cont'd on page 9

It's cold outside, but dry inside!

Hydrate and moisturize!

DIANE SKINNER

Winter has arrived and it can be a tough season for our skin often making it feel dry, irritated and even itchy. It is caused not only by the outdoor wintry wind but the dry indoor air that takes moisture out of your skin. Your skin is your largest organ, about 15% of your weight is from your skin, so it is important to take care of it. The skin renews itself every 28 days. Human skin has three layers: epidermis, dermis and hypodermis. The outer layer of your skin (the epidermis) is the thin outer layer and it contains dead skin cells. The thickest skin on humans is on the bottom of your feet and palms while the thinnest skin is on the eyelids and around the eyes.

There are a few simple habits you can try to keep your skin healthy this winter:

Use a humidifier which will add much needed moisturizer to the air. Place the humidifier in the room that you use most often. Humidifiers come in a wide range of prices, from very affordable to quite expensive.

Take shorter, cooler showers. Lukewarm water is ideal. Apply rich cream or lotion right after because doing so will seal the water into your



Protect your dry winter skin by using moisturizers and creams. Apply right after your shower or bath and this will seal the moisture into your skin.

skin.

Avoid hot water when washing your hands. Cooler water is as effective at removing germs.

Use a creamy facial cleanser and a rich facial moisturizer.

Use a lip moisturizer.

Use facial sunscreen especially on a sunny day when there is reflection off the snow. This amplifies the drying effects of the sun.

Hydrate. Dry skin can be improved by drinking water. Eat foods rich in Omega-3 or Omega-6 fatty acids, including fish oil and flaxseed oil.

Keep the house a bit cooler. Heat dries out the air, so aim for 21 degrees.

Regular bar soap can irritate dry skin, so use a fragrance-free soap with moisturizer.

Moisturize after washing, including your hands. Use gloves when washing dishes.

Wear clothing made from soft, breathable materials. Wool next to your skin can be irritating, even itchy. Healthy skin needs to breathe.

Exfoliate the dead skin, particularly on legs and arm using a loofah, or a rough cloth.

The effects of the indoor and outdoor winter weather can make your skin feel dry and itchy. Keep in mind these two words: hydrate and moisturize.

PERCÉ WHARF:

Cont'd from page 8

to be in the millions of dollars.

“Just the recharging of the coastline this year, carried out by the Ministry of Public Security, we're talking about \$2 million. We're definitely in the millions of dollars. We were very clear. The Town of Percé does not have the means to take on costs of this magnitude,” adds the mayor.

Meanwhile, the government of Quebec confirms that dredging will be done this spring at the Percé wharf.

The Ministry of Transport is calling for tenders for the plans and specifications, and another will subsequently be launched for carrying out the work and monitoring. Dredging will be done in April.

The ministry wishes to finalize the work before the opening of the lobster fishery to provide a safe environment for users.

Furthermore, hydro-sedimentary analyses are contin-

uing for a final year in order to obtain bathymetric and topographical surveys.

The ministry notes that the current situation is not viable in the medium term and will seek a permanent solution to the silting and degradation of the promenade sector in the harbour.

Since 2020, three dredging

operations have been carried out in the harbour.

The wharf was delivered in the fall of 2020, and sediments accumulated quickly on the beach, causing the silting up of a significant part of the landing stage of the brand new infrastructure, the construction of which cost \$7.7 million.

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Reflections

by
Diane Skinner Flowers



Baby, it's cold outside!

Keeping warm, relaxed and cozy

The New Year has brought us the full chill of winter weather but there's no place like the warmth of your own home. All the Christmas and New Year hoopla is behind us so hunker down and enjoy the simple joys of home.

Besides grabbing a soft blanket, a cup of tea or a mug of coffee and a book, there are small but purposeful things we can do to up the cozy quotient in our homes.

Winter Wonderland: Make your living space instantly more welcoming by adding some seasonal (winter, not Christmas) décor. Add plush pillows, soft blankets, and twinkly white fairy lights that will provide warmth and a mellow atmosphere. To complete this picture, just add that warm beverage, curl up, and turn off the cell phone. This is your time.

Organizing can bring you bliss: Yes, the satisfaction of decluttering and organizing can bring you peace of mind and that's pretty close to feeling blissful. Clean one room at a time so that you don't feel overwhelmed. Donate unwanted items because there is always someone who will appreciate those unneeded or unwanted items. One person's trash is another's treasure.

Garden indoors: The winter blues could settle in at any time, so fight them off by bringing nature indoors. Buy a few plants, start small and consider getting low-maintenance plants like succulents or even herbs. The plants provide beauty, freshen the household air, and caring for your plants may bring you a sense of contentment.

Movie Nights: Arrange the living room for maximum comfort and coziness. You will need blankets and pillows and a big bowl of freshly popped popcorn. Plan your movies in advance so you do not need to spend hours debating what movie to watch. Most importantly, no cell phones allowed. Give the small screen a break, while watching the bigger screen.

Cooking adventures: Experiment with a new recipe. It could be a stew, soup from scratch or a new recipe that you have been wanting to try. Enjoy the process but delight in your results! Baking bonanza: Whether you are a novice baker or very experienced, bake some comfort foods, such as cookies, muffins or bread. It's an experience for your senses! Enjoy the aromas filling your home. Share some of that baking with a friend or neighbour.

The De-stress Home Spa: Set aside time to have a relaxing bubble bath and pamper yourself with skincare routines. Practice yoga. Give yourself a manicure and pedicure, also known as a mani-pedi. Floss because we don't always take the time for this important self-care practice.

Mellow out with music: Put away the Christmas songs including All I Want for Christmas is You. Play music that soothes your soul, maybe sounds of nature or acoustic covers of popular songs which are often better than the originals.

January has taken hold, and it is chilly, windy, icy and snowy, but inside is your haven and a place of warmth and relaxation. A few small additions or activities can make your home a place of comfort and relaxation.



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, you may have an artistic talent that you haven't explored yet. Events this week may spur you on to try something new because inspiration is high for you right now.
TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Taurus, your household may not agree on which remodeling changes to make. Unless you come up with a compromise, nothing will get done at all.
GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
A miscommunication with a loved one could have you trying to make amends soon enough, Gemini. Don't worry, you will easily resolve your differences in time.
CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, you might be asked for assistance by a close friend having financial troubles. Be careful about lending out money at this juncture because you don't want to cause issues for yourself.
LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
This week you may have a hard time integrating yourself into a group, Leo. Make a concerted effort to be supportive of others. This can be an effective way to get back into



the group's good graces.
VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Speaking with friends this week could help to address a number of things you're wrestling with, Virgo. Don't hesitate to lean on this support network.
LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, when you discover a mutual interest with someone you consider a friend, your bond may grow even deeper. Have fun spending time together.
SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
Scorpio, something important to you doesn't seem to be moving along at the pace you had hoped it would. You might have to be a little more patient in this situation.
SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
General malaise may have you wondering if


you are sick. It's likely nothing more than stress and fatigue. Keep an eye on symptoms moving forward.
CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
Capricorn, a romantic encounter you have been counting on may not pan out this week, or it may be less exciting than you imagined. Wait a few days before reevaluating things.
AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
Don't put all of your trust in new information this week, Aquarius. It is likely unreliable, so take everything that is said with a grain of salt.
PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Your imagination is riding high this week, Pisces. Don't hinder it in any way so you can explore all of the creativity that is flowing out of you right now.

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JANUARY 22: Logic, Rapper (34)
JANUARY 23: Tiffani Thiessen, Actress (50)
JANUARY 24: Matthew Lillard, Actor (54)
JANUARY 25: Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Leader (46)
JANUARY 26: Kirk Franklin, Songwriter (54)
JANUARY 27: Bailey Zimmerman, Singer (24)

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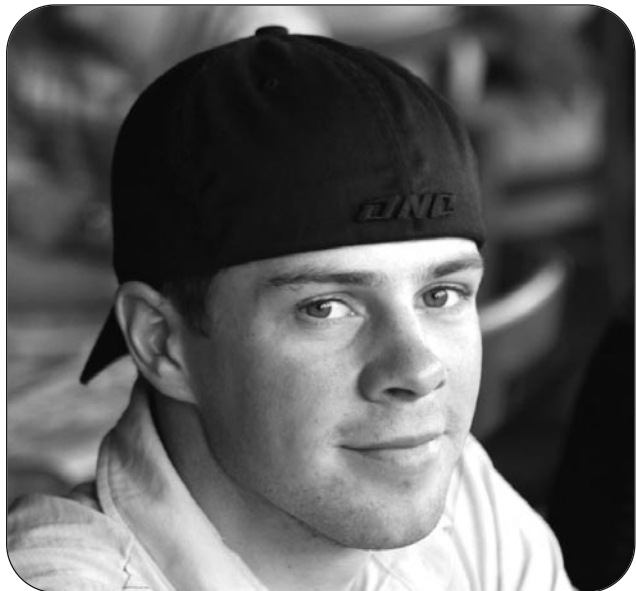


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In Memory



GOYETTE: Eric

In loving memory of our son, brother and uncle.
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May the winds of love blow softly,
And whisper in your ear.
We love and miss you Eric.
And wish that you were here.
A silent thought, a secret tear,
Keeps your memory ever near.*
Love always Mom, Jean, Patrick, Emilie, Noemie and Nelly.



MANN: Sheila Sullivan:

In memory of a loving wife, mother and grandmother.
*There's a face before us
And a voice we'd love to hear
One year ago today
With tears in our eyes
We watched you fade away
But what reality cannot change
Our dreams and wishes can arrange
We found a wonderful spot
It's called "memory lane"
A lane we often walk because
It leads to you
We miss your smile, we miss your laughter
We miss your caring heart
But most of all, we miss you*
Always in our thoughts Ken, Lori, Tanya, Mackenzie, Kaitlin and Chris.

SIMON: Elson (Sonny)

In loving memory of a dear husband, father, father-in-law, grandfather and great-grandfather who passed away on January 16, 1983.
*No matter how our lives may change,
Or whatever we may do.
We will never forget those precious times,
The ones we spent with you.
We hold you close within our hearts,
And there you shall remain.
To walk with us throughout our lives,
Until we meet again.*
Loved and sadly missed by wife Merle and family.

**Prière infaillible à
la Vierge Marie**

*Fleur toute belle du Mont-Carmel, vigne
fructueuse, splendeur du ciel, mère bénie du
fils de Dieu assistez-moi et montrez-moi, ici
même, que vous êtes ma mère de Dieu, reine
du ciel et de la terre, je vous supplie du fond
du cœur de m'appuyer dans cette demande.
Personne ne peut résister à votre puissance.*
*Ô Marie conçue sans péché priez pour
nous qui avons recours à vous (trois fois).
Saint Marie, je remets cette cause entre vos
mains (trois fois). Faites cette prière trois
jours de suite et vous devez publier. La faveur
demandée vous sera accordée.*
D. J.

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of Bread for believers. 2 p.m. Gospel meeting and Sunday School.

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NEW CARLISLE:
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February 6: General meeting at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle

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Book Room
Please be advised that the book room is now open. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
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Tuesdays: Grocery bingo every Tuesday at 7 p.m. \$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each.

**UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN**
Sunday, January 28
10 a.m. Service

**UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND**
Sunday, January 28
10 a.m. Service

**ANGLICAN
CHURCH
OF CANADA**
Sunday, January 28
NEW CARLISLE
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
PORT DANIEL
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Do you have an upcoming event?
Send all your announcements to holly.smith@globetrotter.net
Deadlines for this page is Wednesdays at 4 p.m.

Table of Prefects 2024 priorities

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CARLETON-SUR-MER: The Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefects will prioritize housing in 2024. “For several years, our main orientation has been what we call sustainable demography but the barrier to attraction is housing and childcare services. We will focus on this as a priority in 2024,” says the president of the Table of Prefects, Mathieu Lapointe.

Support from the MRCs and several towns has produced results with the construction of residential buildings in recent years, however, high inflation in construction, along with high interest rates require new solutions.

“The economic context is making our lives more difficult. We are fortunate that we have made efforts, but we must continue to work with the various ministries including the Ministry of Housing on innovative solutions specific to our region,” indicates the president.

The Quebec Affordable Housing Program is not implemented in the territory because it does not respond to regional realities according to the president. “That’s why we want to come up with solutions that will meet our needs,” he adds.

Maintaining affordability is a challenge. “It requires a low rental cost, but when you have housing that costs \$300,000, \$400,000 or \$500,000 and you have to rent for \$500 or \$600 per month, that requires signif-

icant financial support to maintain affordability,” notes Mr. Lapointe.

With housing comes day-care spaces. Even if there have been several announcements since 2021, the administrative deadlines for the construction of these facilities are long.

“We must speed up the construction of facilities because we must relieve parents who need it,” says the president.

Each project has its constraints, making the preparation leading to construction less straightforward.

Erosion will also become a regional priority, with the various storms that have caused coastal flooding so far this winter in the Bay of Chaleur and Rocher-Percé MRCs.

“Climate change is happening. We see it. The Bay of Chaleur hardly freezes anymore. It has an impact on the coasts. We must work to adapt and intervene to repair the damage. It will take a helping hand,” says Mr. Lapointe, who is hopeful that the coordination office created by the Quebec government, which brings together eight ministries, will find solutions.

“There is no specific program to support municipalities. There are some at the level of public safety if there is an issue for the lives of residents. If we don’t touch houses or lives, it’s more difficult to obtain financing. This is what we are experiencing with rue du Phare in Carleton-sur-Mer,” says Mr. Lapointe, who has high expectations.

On a positive note, the

Running out of things to talk about? The Gaspé Spec provides endless topics for conversation



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president highlights that progress is being made on the train file both at the political and administrative levels to rehabilitate the railway to Gaspé by 2026.

“So far, we have all the information that allows us to believe that this is a realistic

objective. The work is being done. We see it in Paspebiac. Subsequently, it will be a development tool for our territory,” says Mr. Lapointe.

On the passenger side, the president remains vague on the arrival of VIA rail in 2024 in New Carlisle.

“There is work being done and talks with VIA rail and the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie. We are moving forward to bringing the passenger train back to the territory. It’s difficult to give a date, but we are working very hard on it,” says Mr. Lapointe.

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