

## Record number of moose tagged in 2023 in the Gaspé Peninsula

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND — In 2023, a staggering 5,463 moose were harvested by sport hunters in Zone 1, covering the interior part of Highway 132's loop starting and ending in Sainte-Flavie. This marks the highest harvest ever recorded in the zone.

This harvest is 5% higher than the average of the previous five years (2018 to 2022), however, the total harvest level remains within the normal annual fluctuations of the past 15 years, according to the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks.

Compared to 2022, 5,350 moose were harvested in Zone 1, the 2023 results exceeding last year's success rate by 113 moose. The previous record, set in 2017 in the Gaspé Peninsula, was 5,452 moose. The 2023 record surpasses the 2017 results by only 11 moose.

Regularity has been the norm over the past 12 years, since prior to 2017, the record was set in 2014 with 5,446 moose, which beat the previous peak of 5,432 of 2012.

### Other highlights

In 2023, hunter participation in Zone 1 remained high, with 25,973 hunting licenses sold. The hunting success rate of 21% remained stable compared to recent years.

In Zone 1, excluding wildlife reserves, 2,525 bull moose, 1,535 female moose, and 499 calves were killed, for a total of 4,559 moose.

In the four wildlife reserves in hunting Zone 1, a total of 575 bull moose, 295 female moose and 34 calves were killed for a total harvest of 904 moose, a 4% increase from 2022.

When including public land and wildlife reserve re-



Photos: R. MacDougall

*The Gaspé Peninsula remains Quebec's leader for moose hunting.*

sults, the Zone 1 totals reached 3,100 bull moose, 1,830 female moose and 533 calves in 2023.

In 2023, the harvest, including wildlife reserves, is comparable to that of 2022. In 2022, the number of male moose harvested reached 3,039, female moose numbered 1,700, while the count of calves, at 611, was the only higher statistic last year. The 2023 numbers are slightly higher than the average of the five previous years, remaining within the annual normal fluctuations observed over the last 15 years.

A total of 7,500 female moose permits were issued for Zone 1, excluding wildlife reserves in 2023. The utilization rate of these permits was only 20% for a harvest of 1,535 cow moose. This result cannot be attributed to the low proportion of female moose in the population, considering the winter 2017 aerial inventory surveys of moose in hunting Zone 1, again excluding wildlife reserves, confirmed that this population segment repre-

sented slightly more than 64% of the moose population in the area, estimated at slightly more than 16,000 moose.

The harvest's stability and the hunting success show an abundant moose population in hunting Zone 1, as indicated by the Department of Environment, Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks summary of the last season. However, since 2018, min-

istry biologists have observed a slight decrease in the proportion of calves in the harvest, from 28 to 20 calves per 100 male moose killed, which could indicate a certain decline in recruitment. Hunting pressure is mainly directed towards adult bull moose, somewhat contributing to an imbalance in the adult male to female moose ration and reduced recruitment. To slow down the ac-

centuation of the gap between the two sexes, the number of cow moose licenses issued in a draw is adjusted annually to increase the harvest of this population segment.

### Provincial statistics

At the provincial level, the harvest of 22,660 moose during the 2023 hunting season, consisting of 12,959 males, 7,339 females, and 2,362 calves, was lower than in previous years.

In 2023, the share of moose harvested in the Gaspé Peninsula Zone 1 represented 24.1% of all the moose killed by hunters in Quebec in 2022. The Gaspé Peninsula is by far the leader in moose hunting.

The number of permits sold in Quebec, at 170,502, is the lowest since 2005. This includes a decrease of 5% compared to 2021. Several factors are possibly responsible for this decline, including lower attendance in Zones 2 and 27 due to the prohibition of female moose harvest, the impact of forest fires on the territories and installations of certain hunters, the increasing cost of living, and the aging hunting population. Despite these challenges, moose hunting remains a popular pursuit among Quebec hunters.

### Upcoming moose management plan

Meanwhile, the Wildlife Department is collaborating with its partners to develop the next moose management plan. Consultations will take place in winter 2024, addressing the actions and terms of the next management plan. During the work sessions, partners will highlight concerns, allowing the department to present a management plan that aligns with the expectations of the majority.



*In zone 1, excluding wildlife reserves 1,535 cow moose were harvested in 2023.*



# The victims succumbed to their injuries quickly

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE—According to forensic pathologist Caroline Tanguay, the two people hit by the projectiles on May 15, 2021, in Listuguj were not able to survive their injuries for long, given their severity and extent. Dr. Tanguay testified on January 29 at the trial of Brandon Metallic who is accused of unpremeditated murder and manslaughter.

In the case of the first victim, a 21-year-old man, each of the two projectiles that hit him caused injuries serious enough to cause death. It is this man who would be the victim of an unpremeditated murder while a three-year-old girl would be the victim of manslaughter.

In the case of the man, Dr. Tanguay was, however, unable to establish which projectile entered first but both hit him in the thorax, and both passed through his body. No fragments of the bullets were found during the autopsy.

The first projectile, whose path the doctor analyzed, caused significant lacerations to a lobe of the lung, to the blood vessels supplying the lungs, and then to the liver. The second bullet also lacerated the lobe of the left lung, "the envelope of the heart and the heart extensively," indicated Dr. Tanguay, who works at the Laboratory of Judicial Science and Legal Medicine of Quebec.

"The left ventricle was also lacerated: the atria and important blood vessels. These are all very serious injuries," she also said about the ravages of the second bullet.

Before leaving the young man's body, the projectile also caused rib fractures and lacerated the intercostal space. "Death was caused by cardiothoracic trauma. Each of the two projectiles was fatal," insisted Doctor Tanguay.

Questioned by criminal prosecution attorney Florence Frappier Routhier about the time that could have passed between the projectile impacts and the man's death, Dr. Tanguay replied that "projectile B

opened the heart so extensively that death surely occurred very quickly. The heart could no longer send blood through the body."

She also noted that one of the male victim's hands also had wounds caused by a projectile but these wounds could not have caused his death.

## Death of the child

During her analysis of the causes of the girl's death, Dr. Tanguay, the forensic pathologist, indicated that it resulted from serious injuries to the rectum, vagina, bladder, pelvis and mesentery, a membrane that surrounds the small intestine and which contains blood vessels.

Dr. Tanguay could not determine whether the young victim was standing when she was hit by a projectile, but she was certainly in an upright position. Otherwise, a bullet would have lodged in the upper part of her femur, noted Dr. Tanguay.

"In this case, too, death was fast, but since the heart was not affected, it is possible that she remained conscious and moved, as long as the heart irrigated the brain," noted the pathologist.

According to what has been established during previous testimonies since the start of the trial, the little girl was in the bathroom, in the bathtub, in fact, when the fatal shots were fired at the other victim. However, she was found lifeless on the bed in a room separated from the bathroom by a passage. The bullet that killed her was fired from the basement and passed through the ceiling of that part of the house.

On the afternoon of January 29, a second expert, forensic biologist Sonia Roy established that the blood found in numerous places in the house at 94 Riverside Street West during her investigation at the scene, on May 17, 2021, was that of the two victims.

She relied on her genetic analyses to make this assertion. Her presence in Listuguj was two days after the discovery of

the victims' bodies, and shortly after the arrest of Brandon Metallic.

However, a blood sample found in the basement carried the genetic code of the accused. Before describing several dozen photos showing the scene at 94 Riverside West, Sonia Roy explained to the court how she could categorize the differences between traces of blood. There is blood falling from a certain distance from the ground and traces of blood "by contact," that is to say, blood left in certain places by friction of a soaked material, fabric, for example.

Sonia Roy further indicated that very small drops of blood found on the bathroom ceiling were likely caused by an element, such as a projectile, travelling at high speed and consequently causing great pressure to the body.

During her investigation in the house, the forensic biology expert placed around forty markers indicating places where blood was found, sometimes in very small quantities, sometimes in large quantities.

The genetic tests she carried out showed the presence of several blood samples from each of the victims. Some traces of blood were scattered by shoes.

That day, she did not establish as proof that these shoes belonged to or had been used by the accused.

Once again on January 29 and January 30, Brandon Metallic remained in his cell, without responding to the invitations of Judge Guy De Blois, of the Superior Court, to cross-examine the witnesses, directly or through the friend of the court, attorney Ariane Cayer.

Since the beginning of witness testimonies, the accused only participated in one full day of testimony, that of January 17. Faced with his constant interventions during moments when he had to remain silent, Judge De Blois ordered him on January 18 to follow the trial from a separate room, also located at the New Carlisle Courthouse.

Between January 19 and the morning of January 31, Brandon Metallic did not leave his cell during the trial hours. He had the opportunity to follow it from equipment installed very close to his cell door. However, he did not respond to the checks made by Ariane Cayer, in particular regarding returning to the courtroom.

A publication ban on the identities of the two victims has been in place since the charges

were filed on May 16, 2021.

Until now, precise details on the calibre of the weapon, its origin, and the reasons for its presence in the house inhabited by Kennedy Martin, who hosted Brandon Metallic for a few days before the May 15, 2021, tragedy, remain unknown. However, it was mentioned during the testimony of a ballistic expert that the firearm was an assault rifle with a magazine of 21 bullets, which is more than the capacity legally accepted in Canada, which is five bullets for that model.

## January 30 hearing : the blood on the accused's clothes belonged to the child

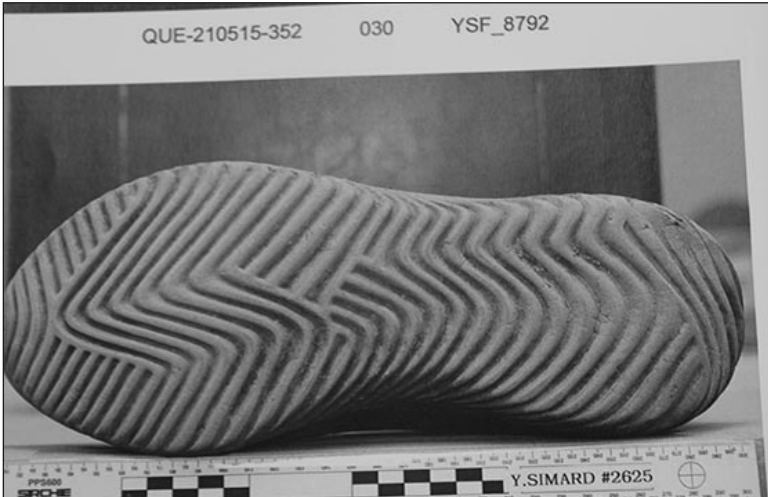
According to genetic testing conducted by forensic biologist

These blood spatters indicate that the little girl "was not wearing clothes when she received the bullet," ruled Sonia Roy.

These projections also suggest "that the victim was in front of the sink when she was shot," said Sonia Roy. The discharge was fired from the basement.

Referring to the fact that the young girl's legs and feet showed uninterrupted and clear streams of blood when her body was discovered and during the autopsy carried out by Caroline Tanguay, Sonia Roy stressed that these traces reinforced the thesis according to which the little victim was transported when she was bleeding.

The expert further indicated



Forensic biologist Sonia Roy established that traces of shoes with herringbone soles were observed in the house at 94 Riverside West in Listuguj, and that traces of blood were sampled. The blood was that of the child.

Sonia Roy, there was a large amount of the blood of one of the victims, the girl in this case, on the clothing of Brandon Metallic.

The 31-year-old man's clothes were recovered after his arrest late in the afternoon on May 15, 2021, and before the police entered the house at 94 Riverside West, in Listuguj, where the two victims were discovered.

On the morning of January 30, Sonia Roy, an expert in blood stains and spatter, further affirmed, based on the quantity and types of traces of the little girl's blood found on a fairly specific route in the house, that the victim had been transported between the bathroom, where she was shot, and the bedroom where she was found lifeless. Ms Roy had begun her testimony the previous day.

The victim "lost a lot of blood on the bathroom floor," the forensic biologist told the court. She also reported numerous blood splashes in this bathroom. It had been established on January 29 that these projections had been caused by the projectile having passed through the body of the little girl.

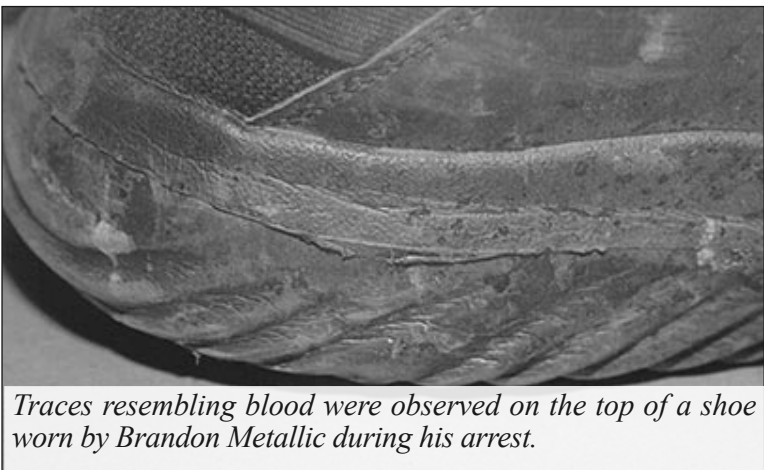
that certain traces of diluted blood suggested that the child was still wet when her blood fell on the kitchen floor and in the passage leading to the bedroom. The victim was taking a bath when the first victim was shot, according to the testimony of the occupant of the house, Kennedy Martin, earlier in the trial. Ms. Martin then left the house and called the emergency services.

Responding to a question from criminal prosecutor Florence Frappier Routhier relating specifically to the presence of blood on the back of the sweater worn by Brandon Metallic, Ms. Roy specified that one of the girl's wounds could have been in contact with this part of his clothing.

The biologist further indicated that blood found in the grooves of the heel of the sole of Brandon Metallic's shoe contained blood from the child.

## Conversations with Brandon Metallic

The last two witnesses of Florence Frappier Routhier were two men from Listuguj,



Traces resembling blood were observed on the top of a shoe worn by Brandon Metallic during his arrest.

Photos: G. Gagné

# Metallic returns to court to say that he will not present a defence

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – For the first time since January 19, Brandon Metallic appeared at the New Carlisle Courthouse, on the morning of January 31, to inform Superior Court Judge Guy De Blois that he is waiving any form of defence.

On January 19, the accused briefly attended the courthouse, sitting in an adjacent room after being excluded the previous day from the courtroom by Judge De Blois, due to his constant interventions and lack of respect for the procedure.

On January 31, Brandon Metallic informed the judge and the 14 jurors that he would not present a defence, which means that he will not call witnesses to testify, testify himself, or present a closing argument to the jurors.

Judge De Blois therefore postponed the case until February 5, which was past SPEC's deadline for the current paper. Prosecutor Florence Frappier Routhier was scheduled to present her closing argument to the jury on February 5, and Judge De Blois was expected to give his instructions to the jurors on the morning of February 6.

The jury was expected to be sequestered from the afternoon of February 6 onward in order to make a decision.

Considering the number of opportunities Judge De Blois has provided the accused to return to the courthouse and talk, it would not be surprising to see Brandon Metallic given a



Photo: G. Gagné

*On the morning of January 31, Brandon Metallic left his New Carlisle prison cell to talk briefly in the courtroom.*

last chance to testify or submit a closing argument.

Since the hearing began on January 17, 22 witnesses were called to the stand.

The tragedy occurred on May 15 in Listuguj, starting shortly before lunchtime. Brandon Metallic was arrested about six hours later. During that time, two police forces intervened: first, the Listuguj Police Department, which requested assistance from the Sûreté du Québec given the gravity of the events.

The bodies of the victims were found on the main floor, and a rifle was found in the basement of the house, a semi-automatic SKS-type weapon.

The criminal investigation was conducted by the Quebec City Police Service, which is standard procedure when fatalities occur during an intervention. An investigation was also initiated the same day by Quebec's Bureau des enquêtes indépendantes (BEI), the In-

dependent Inquiries Bureau, to determine if the protocol was followed during the intervention of the Listuguj Police Department and the Sûreté du Québec, considering that the police operation resulted in a fatality.

The BEI issued its report on December 20, 2021, which was sent to the Directorate of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions in New Carlisle. In March 2023, the BEI revealed that no charge would be laid against the police officers who intervened on May 15, 2021. The report was not released publicly because the investigation mentioned personal information and names that were subject to a publication ban.

During the court appearance in the fall of 2021, when he was deemed unfit for trial, Brandon Metallic informed the Quebec Court that this tribunal had no jurisdiction over his case.

## Police report

Marc-André Lavoie, 34, from Nouvelle, and Michael Martin, 35, from Gesgapegiag, are facing 17 and 18 charges, respectively, in connection with an altercation that occurred in a Miguasha Road house in Nouvelle on January 30 around 1:30 in the morning. The two individuals were arrested in Gesgapegiag a few hours after the altercation. They appeared on January 31 at the New Carlisle Courthouse to face numerous charges, including break and enter, forcible confinement, assault, assault with a weapon, robbery, armed robbery, intentionally wounding a dog, uttering threats and several additional charges related to the use of a firearm.

Initially, Marc-André Lavoie was not represented by a lawyer, but by February 1, he was defended by attorney Yves Desbiens. Quebec Court Judge Annick Boivin postponed his bail hearing until February 5. Michael Martin, on the other hand, is represented by lawyer Camille Marceau-Bouchard. On February 1, he was also scheduled to return to court on February 5 for his pro forma bail hearing. Criminal prosecutor Cédric Leblanc Falardeau opposes the release of the two men.

Judge Boivin issued an order prohibiting the defendants from contacting the victims. Marc-André Lavoie and Michael Martin were arrested on Indian Drive in Gesgapegiag in the hours following the altercation in Miguasha. Additionally, the investigation thus far suggests a link between all the individuals involved in the incident and indicates that the occupants of the house were targeted by the two men before and during the altercation. One of the residents sustained minor injuries, but hospitalization was unnecessary. Investigators from the major crimes squad of the Sûreté du Québec are conducting the investigation. A crime scene technician was dispatched to the house to gather evidence.

Marie-Ève Dupuis-Grenier, under an arrest warrant since January 25, was finally apprehended on January 29 in an apartment building in Chandler. She is charged with having stolen a large sum of money from the La Source boutique in Chandler. The 31-year-old Chandler resident faced the arrest warrant after submitting false documents twice at the Percé Courthouse between January 22 and 24. Judge Janick Poirier of the Quebec Court ordered the arrest warrant. Charged with fraud exceeding \$5,000, Marie-Ève Dupuis-Grenier had her bail hearing on January 30 and 31 and was released from pending several conditions. She was required to pay a \$1,000 bail. She is scheduled to appear in court again on February 12. According to the investigation and evidence presented to the court, the woman is accused of defrauding the company of more than \$5,000 between October 2019 and February 2022.

### MURDER TRIAL:

▶ *Cont'd from page 2*

Dallas Morrison and Peter Martin, respectively, first officer and captain of an Indigenous crab fishing boat. They confirmed having received a call from the accused in the middle of the afternoon, on May 15, while the house at 94 Riverside West, where he was located, was under surveillance by police officers. Brandon Metallic was in the house at that time.

Dallas Morrison, at the request of Peter Martin, recorded the second conversation between his captain and Brandon Metallic. At that time, Mr. Martin who, as a member of the War Chiefs Society, often acted as a first responder to calm people in crisis situations,

had already spoken to the accused once, and he knew that Brandon Metallic would call him again. Mr. Martin also spoke to his girlfriend and Listuguj police officers between these two calls.

During the first conversation, Peter Martin learned that one of his relatives had been hit by projectiles at 94 Riverside West. In his understanding of the accused's words, it was him who had fired.

During his testimony, Peter Martin indicated that the accused had apologized for having shot one of his relatives. Brandon Metallic said the relative had previously tried to poison him.

The court was able to hear the recording of the second conversation between Brandon Metallic and Peter Martin.

During this second conver-

sation with Mr. Martin, responding to a question of if he was injured, Brandon Metallic replied "my heart, yes".

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the fate of his relative, Peter Martin tried to calm Brandon Metallic, telling him that no one would come and shoot him in the house and that a mediator would call him soon.

"I didn't want to get mad and escalate the situation," Mr. Martin told Judge Guy De Blois and the jury of 14 people. Accustomed to offering his support to citizens of Mi'gmaq origin wherever they are in the Gaspé Peninsula, in the Maritimes, or in Maine, Mr. Martin noted that he had told the accused that he could not help further, being located in the open sea, off the coast of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé,

which is a three-hour drive to Listuguj.

Peter Martin said he knew Brandon Metallic, notably through a hunting trip perhaps dating back to the fall before the tragedy. He wasn't sure.

**The blood of the male victim**

While traces of blood from the young girl were found on almost all the clothes worn by the accused and in several rooms of the house, the blood of the man who died during the tragedy was concentrated in fewer places, mainly on the living room floor where his body was found, on his clothes, deeply soaked, and on an armchair, remarked expert Sonia Roy.

Small traces of the man's blood were also located out-

side, on the ground, near the garage.

Forensic pathologist Caroline Tanguay had indicated on January 29 that this man had been hit by two projectiles, each causing fatal damage and a rapid death, in particular because the heart had been hit.

Again on January 30, as it had been the case since January 19, Brandon Metallic refused again to leave his cell to come to court to cross-examine the prosecution's witnesses.

Shortly after his May 15, 2021, arrest, he was assigned to a hospital centre where he was assessed, notably to assess if he was fit to stand trial. A few months later, he was declared unfit to stand trial. That verdict prompted a tribunal to lengthen his stay at the Louis-Philippe-Pinel Institute in order to make him fit to stand trial.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

A slow shift towards more important private health services

We all require doctors at one point in our life. Even when we are healthy, we need someone to confirm that we are still in good shape. So considering we, as a society, decided 53 years ago to adopt public health care, we should be concerned when doctors are drawn away from the public system towards the private sector.

The Régie de l'assurance-maladie du Québec (RAMQ), a vital stakeholder in our public health system since doctors are generally associated with that organization, is losing an increasing number of doctors to clinics that are disaffiliated from the public system.

Since 2009, the number of doctors who left the RAMQ has risen by 307%, with currently 500 doctors opting for the private sector.

According to Marc-André Amyot, president of the Fédération des médecins omnipraticiens du Québec (FMOQ), the federation representing the province's general practitioners, the shortage of family doctors, unattractiveness of the position and shortcomings on the importance of strengthening the first line of care, in other words the lack of resources provided to the CLSCs and home care, have contributed to the erosion of the public system.

According to RAMQ statistics issued in 2022, there are roughly 9,800 family doctors and 10,900 specialists in Quebec. So, general practitioners compose 47% of all the doctors working in Quebec, while specialists fill 53% of the positions.

The proportion seems odd. Elsewhere in Canada, the statistical advantage goes to general practitioners, who make up 51% of all medical positions. In fact, between 2000 and 2013 in Quebec, the number of specialists and general practitioners was even.

According to Marc-André Amyot, the deterioration of the family doctors' practice conditions played a big role in the fact that general practition-

ers opt in greater numbers for the private sector. The red tape has increased and some hiring constraints play a role in the job's attractiveness. He admits that some family doctors refrain from moving to rural regions even when the work is there.

It gets worse. Since 2013, approximately 535 places in Quebec universities offering family medicine have remained unfilled. It means, if one subtracts a certain number of dropouts, that we have missed an opportunity to benefit from the services of 50 new general practitioners every year.

Dr. Amyot is of the opinion that we currently require 1,200 to 1,500 more general practitioners in Quebec. Had we been able to fill the vacant places in the faculties, we would already have solved between 33% and 42% of the shortage problem.

There is more. Annually, about 60 students in medicine decide to take a year off to get a chance to take a specialty instead of choosing family medicine. So, we must add an undetermined proportion to the 33% to 42% of problem resolution.

Faculties of medicine have increased their capacity by 660 students over four years, roughly by accepting 160 additional people annually but how many of them will choose family medicine? It will not be a lot, if current trends continue.

Financial considerations, as some specialists earn three to six times the salary of family doctors, might be a factor in the students' waiting time, but let's bet that Quebec still loses a certain number of general practitioners in that waiting process.

The position of family doctor would be more attractive if the shortage was reduced by 50% or 75%. The pressure for a general practitioner to deal with more patients would be alleviated, hence better practice conditions and a more attractive profession.

An upward spiral could arise from such favourable measures and solve the shortage within a reasonable amount of time.

Are humans being forgotten?

However, several variables must also be addressed if Quebec is to reach better health services and curtail the exodus of general practitioners who opt for the private sector.

Improving access to first line services, through CLSCs' improved schedules seems a must. People are not sick strictly during office hours.

What about increasing the number of doctors and nurses paying a visit to people at home? It would prevent sick people from going to hospital emergency units and spreading viruses and infections to additional people. Doctors and nurses know how to protect patients and themselves from such problems.

Longer appointment times per patient could be possible with a higher number of family doctors. Spending 45 to 60 minutes with a doctor is a way to make a general roundup of a patient's condition. It is way more productive than solving three problems through three appointments because the doctor is hurried to see the next patient.

Private clinics often offer long appointment periods to their clients who, in many cases, can afford to pay the bill, no matter its size.

Countries that prioritize first-line services, like the equivalent of CLSCs and home services, tend to have better outcomes than Quebec, Canada and the rest of North America. This is evident in various European countries, where people live longer and healthier lives.

Why aren't we headed there then? It would take a major change in the way those at the helm of Quebec's Ministry of Health, which is dominated by people organizing services around hospitals, think.

The better proof of that comes from the transition committee established to supervise the creation of Santé Québec, the new agency that will take over health care in the coming years.

Not a single expert in first-line services was appointed to that transition committee. So, who is going to speak on behalf of first-line services and their compulsory betterment? Nobody. Doctors and administrators already controlling the current hospital-centred system will dominate more than ever, leaving behind most improvement potential.

With an aging population and a system that is still downplaying prevention and sound life habits, it is hard to stay optimistic.

Quebecers will likely witness an increase in the recourse to private health services.

This is not good news for the middle class unless stronger reactions stem from the information provided over recent days about the rising importance of private health services.

Given the Coalition avenir Québec's recent sensitivity towards surveys, a strong pitch of the population to protect public health care could yield positive results.

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The Gaspe Spec

ESTABLISHED • MAY 1975

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

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

(Taxes included)  
1-year (paper or digital): \$50  
6-months (paper or digital): \$29  
Outside Canada:  
1-year paper to United States  
\$175, International \$370

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

Publisher:

Penny MacWhirter

News Editor:

Gilles Gagné

Circulation Manager

Holly Smith

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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.

Québec

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# Another 500 megawatts for the Eastern Energy Alliance

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINTE-ANNE-DESMONTS - The Eastern Energy Alliance has received 487 of the 1,550 megawatts of wind energy following the call for tenders launched on March 31, 2023.

In total, Hydro-Québec has selected eight projects from five different promoters.

The average cost of supply anticipated in the winning bids is 7.8 cents per kilowatt hour, not including transportation and balancing (adjustments to the grid).

“We are delighted with the announcement of two new projects that are being added to our portfolio,” says the vice president of the Alliance and president of the Gaspé Peninsula Magdalen Islands Inter-municipal Energy Board, Simon Deschênes.

The Saint-Paul-de-Montminy wind farm, with a capacity of 196 megawatts, will be

developed with Kruger in Saint-Paul-de-Montminy, near Montmagny in Chaudière-Appalache, and must be commissioned by December 1, 2027.

The second project is the Pohénégamook-Picard-Saint-Antonin-Wolastokuk 2 wind farm, with a capacity of 291.4 megawatts, in partnership with Invenergy in the Rivière-du-Loup region in the Lower Saint Lawrence. The wind farm must be operational by December 1, 2029.

The alliance had deposited projects for a total of 600 megawatts following the call for tenders.

“You have to understand the situation. We had areas targeted by Hydro-Québec because there were easy connections to the electricity network. With overlapping projects, the maximum we could obtain was around 500 megawatts,” explains Mr. Deschênes.

With the 922 megawatts obtained in March 2023, another

1,400 megawatts will have to be developed in several wind farms.

“We are in a series of impact measures, a mandatory step for the 922 megawatts. We are starting work to set up the two new wind farms,” mentions the vice president.

When it comes to local, regional or Quebec components, Mr. Deschênes hopes that businesses will be able to get their share of the pie.

“There is the game of calls for tenders and the criteria of the plans and specifications which ensures a competitive price. There is room for Quebec content. I believe that it is also up to the industry stakeholders to position themselves for what is coming in wind power in Quebec. In the 2035 action plan, Hydro-Québec wants to triple wind energy production. It’s up to our stakeholders to position themselves well,” says Mr. Deschênes.

Regarding the power lines

bottleneck, in November, Premier Francois Legault said that he was aware of the situation.

Located around Rivière-du-Loup, the bottleneck limits the construction of new wind farms east of that town.

Mr. Deschênes believes that dealing with the bottleneck situation is a priority for the government and Hydro-Québec.

“Talks are going well. We’re studying where new lines are needed. We know about the Gaspé Peninsula. Things are going really well with the representations and the steps we’re taking but it’s premature to say what’s going to happen. There are more meetings to come. We’ve always said that the Alliance is a must. Today proves it once again,” says Mr. Deschênes.

In March 2023, the alliance obtained, following another call for tenders, the Pohénégamook-Picard-Saint-Antonin wind farm in the MRCs of Rivière-du-Loup and Témiscouata

for a total of 350 megawatts with Invenergy and that of Madawaska, in Dégelis and Saint-Jean-de-la-Lande, in Témiscouata in tripartite partnership with EDF (Électricité de France) and Hydro-Québec for 270 megawatts.

The third was the Forêt Domaniale wind farm in the Montmagny region, with a capacity of 180 megawatts in partnership with EDF.

The Saint-Damase II wind farm was subsequently added, near Matane, in partnership with Algonquin Power Trust with a capacity of 122 megawatts.

With these new developments, the Eastern Energy Alliance will ultimately have a production capacity of just over 1,700 megawatts of wind energy distributed across the regions of

Chaudière-Appalaches, Lower Saint Lawrence, Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands.

## Energy Board confirms retailers are making higher profits

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Motorists in the Gaspé Peninsula pay, on average, four cents more for their gasoline than in Quebec as a whole, a widely denounced phenomenon that does not seem to particularly concern retailers who are reaping substantial profits.

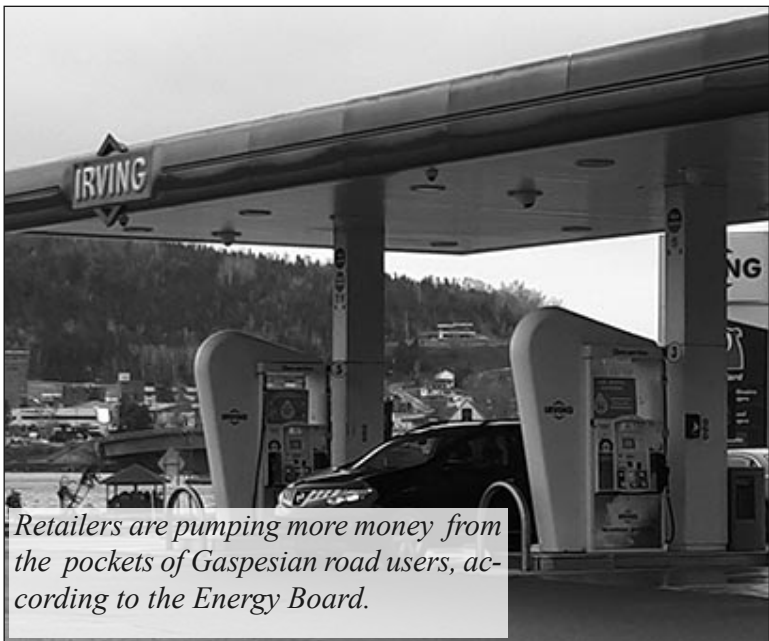
The Energy Board came to a similar conclusion as another report which was produced in 2019.

In a new report following increased monitoring of gasoline prices in the Gaspé Peninsula between October 30 and December 15, 2023, only the estimated retail margins appears to account for the observed price difference, notes the government organization.

Between 2018 and 2023, these margins increased from 9.4 cents/litre to 14.7 cents/litre compared to Quebec as a whole, where they increased from 6.5 cents/litre to 10.2 cents/litre for the same period.

The authority adds that taking into account the value of the operating costs of gas stations, the net retail margins are higher in the Gaspé Peninsula than in Quebec as a whole, with an average difference of 3.9 cents/ litre over the last five years.

In 2019, the Gaspésie Gas Price Monitoring Report indicated that the margin was 9.4 cents/litre in the region compared to 4.8 cents/litre in Que-



Retailers are pumping more money from the pockets of Gaspesian road users, according to the Energy Board.

Photo: N. Sergerie

bec, leaving a higher margin of 4.6 cents/litre.

In its most recent report, the average advertised prices of regular gasoline in the Gaspé Peninsula were generally higher than the average for all of Quebec.

From 2018 to 2023, the Gaspé Peninsula was in first place for the highest prices in Quebec, 48% of the time.

In 2023 alone, the Gaspé Peninsula was in first place for the highest prices 30% of the time.

The report was produced in response to requests from the Town of Gaspé, Haute-Gaspésie MRC, Rocher-Percé MRC and the Table of prefects received in the fall 2023.

Among other findings, in 2023, the Rocher Percé and the Haute Gaspésie MRCs showed gas prices that were generally

higher than elsewhere in the region.

However, the Bonaventure MRC posted the highest average gas prices and estimated net retail margins over the past five years.

The Energy Board notes that the average number of gas stations per 5,000 inhabitants is three times greater in the Gaspé Peninsula than for all of Quebec.

Another element: the Gaspé Peninsula has a market profile similar to that of the North Shore, although the average posted prices in the Gaspé Peninsula remain higher than prices on the North Shore.

The net and estimated retail margins of the Gaspé Peninsula are lower than the margins of the North Shore.

After analysis, the Energy Board cannot conclude that the

higher estimated retail prices and margins for gasoline in the Gaspé Peninsula are caused by specific parameters associated with acquisition costs.

Rather, it notes that the majority of independent retailers apply retail margins higher than those of all other regions of Quebec.

In its 2019 report, the authority noted that for the previous five years, Gaspésie was, in 19% of cases, the region displaying the highest price in Quebec.

For 2019, the percentage stood at 34% until November when the authority noted that the price had decreased, which corresponds to the time when increased price monitoring was launched.

### The mayor of Gaspé reacts

The mayor of Gaspé urges the Competition Bureau to intervene.

“The Competition Bureau must come and stick its nose in the matter. I am happy that the Energy Board has done its monitoring work. We realize once again that people in the Gaspésie pay much more for their gasoline than the rest of Quebec,” notes Daniel Côté.

The elected official still believes that market laws are not applied in the Gaspé Peninsula.

“The solution is to check how gasoline prices are controlled. There is likely some

form of control. Everyone changes their price at the same time. These are not the laws of the free market. There are sometimes massive differences between certain parts of the region and, overall, the Gaspésie is still more expensive than elsewhere in Quebec,” says Mr. Côté.

The mayor notes that the North Shore and Northern Quebec are often less expensive than the Gaspé Peninsula. “There is a form of control somewhere and it must be demystified. But I am not equipped to do it,” he says.

The mayor sent the report from the Energy Board to the Competition Bureau, requesting an investigation.

He questions whether retailers are as independent as they are led to believe, recalling his own parents' experience waiting for calls to advertise prices at the pump.

“The monitoring is done, the figures are there, and the management demonstrates beyond any doubt that there is a problem. It is not up to the Board to find the source of the problem, it is up to the Competition Bureau. We just ask them to do their job. This isn't the first time we've asked this. It's been four years. Whether they show us that there is a problem and correct it or they show that there is no problem and tell us that everything is normal. But I don't think everything is normal,” says the mayor.

# Two major infrastructure projects in New Richmond in 2024

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – Two important municipal infrastructure projects will be carried out in New Richmond over the coming months: the reconstruction of the west end of 4th Range and the construction of a new public works garage. Both initiatives will require a total investment of \$11 million.

The level of Quebec government support for both projects is considerable. The municipal garage, which will necessitate an investment of \$6.5 million, will be financed in a proportion of 83% by the province, while the 4th Range will get 90% in support.

A grant covering 83% of the municipal garage costs will allow the Town of New Richmond to invest a relatively modest sum of \$1.1 million for the \$6.5 million infrastructure. In this case, the construction will extend into 2025, with \$3.5 million invested in 2024 and \$3 million the following year.

“As for the 4th Range West, I have never seen a grant rate of 90% for that kind of

project. It means that we will inject \$500,000 at most for a \$4.5 million project. It will be carried out in 2024. It is part of a new program supporting local public works. The 3rd Range will likely be rebuilt in 2026. That’s our hope,” explains New Richmond mayor, Éric Dubé.

Both projects were presented during the mayor’s budget speech on December 18. The two initiatives are included in the town’s three-year infrastructure plan.

Peter Cyr, a concerned citizen, asked the municipal council what will happen if the 4th Range project’s tenders come out at \$5 million, which is \$500,000 above the budgeted amount.

“The great unknown is the price of asphalt. Currently, the cost of the project is aligned to the 2023 reality,” replied Mayor Dubé, hoping that inflation will be stabilized in the spring.

The call for tenders will be ready in April in the case of the 4th Range initiative.

The Town of New Richmond director general, Stéphane Cyr, points out that there is a bit of “wiggle” room



Photo: G. Gagné

regarding asphalt laying.

“The plans and specifications are made for a road that has 7.3 metres in width, however, the law calls for a width of 7 metres. Thirty centimetres represents a foot. The road has a length of four kilometres. How much can we save in asphalt if we reduce the width by a foot over four kilometres? That’s our “wiggle” room,” explains Mr. Cyr.

The reconstruction of the 4th Range will raise the road by 10 inches. “The contractor will

make the grading adjustment work for each driveway,” says Mr. Cyr.

The call for tenders related to the new municipal garage will close by mid-February. “We wanted to end the process at the end of January but the contractors asked us to lengthen it,” explains Éric Dubé.

The 83% grant percentage, exceeding the typical 75%, is attributed to the town’s decision for a wooden structure.

“There is a bonus in the

government program if we adopt a wooden structure and we decided to go for it,” adds Mr. Dubé.

The municipal garage will be built next to the current facility, whose fate remains to be decided.

With regards to other important capital expenditures in 2024, a sum of \$350,000 is earmarked for the acquisition of a snow plough, while \$100,000 is budgeted for the arena changing rooms and restrooms. A sum of \$70,000 is expected to go for a new softball field lighting system. The acquisition of a pickup truck and the renovation of the public library are supposed to cost \$55,000 and \$15,000 respectively.

In 2025, alongside the \$3 million earmarked for the second phase of the municipal garage, \$1 million is budgeted for the Berry and de Lesseps Streets pipe network, and \$250,000 is designated for a permanent structure for the public market and a ticket booth.

Municipalities undergo annual adjustments to their three-year infrastructure plans, as mandated by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

# SCFG suffers second consecutive traffic decline

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) experienced its second consecutive traffic decline in 2023, a situation caused mainly by delays in Transports Québec’s track upgrading work between New Richmond and Port Daniel, where Saint Mary’s cement plant is located.

The economic slump that hit North America in 2023 also impacted railway traffic, such as lumber, wood chips and cement.

“It was a bad year. Our main sources of business were hampered by the economic context. The Groupe Lebel woodchip traffic went down because the Rivière-du-Loup paper mill experienced several shutdowns. It produces newsprint and the market for that commodity is constantly declining,” analyzes Luc Lévesque, director general of the SCFG.

The number of carloads that circulated between New Richmond and Matapédia dropped to 1,998 cars in 2023, a 37% decrease from the 3,190 cars in 2022. Traf-

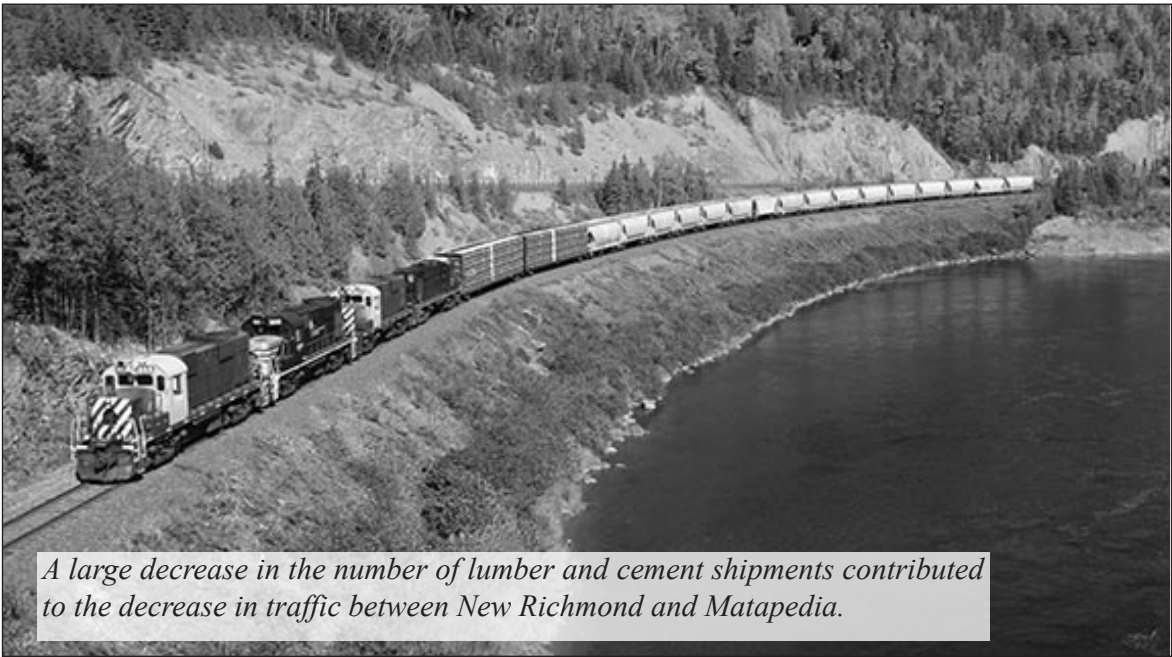


Photo: G. Gagné

fic in 2022 was also down 31% from the 4,636 cars of 2021. The windmill blade traffic, which ended in May 2022, statistically affected the last two years.

Between 2021 and 2022, the number of windmill blade cars decreased from 1,653 to 501, reaching zero between 2022 and 2023. The 501 cars of 2022 partly explain the 1,192-car drop of 2023.

SCFG’s two main customers, Groupe Lebel’s sawmill in Nouvelle and Saint Mary’s Cement, which loads cars in New Richmond because the railway is closed

between that town and Port Daniel, lost a total of 726 carloads in 2023 compared to 2022. The SCFG doesn’t provide accurate numbers for certain customers when they require that discretion for competitive purposes.

“Cement traffic was down not only due to the economic downturn but also because Saint Mary’s Cement has diminished its fleet of cars because the railway is not available to the cement plant. We lose some traffic to trucks because of that. At certain points in 2023, we were experiencing a shortage of ce-

ment cars as well due to the reduced fleet, however, the recent addition of a CN freight train between Mont-Joli and Matapédia over the fall has solved that specific car rotation problem. The cement cars are returning faster and we have not experienced a shortage of cars. We can’t wait to get to Port Daniel with the train now and increase our traffic,” explains Luc Lévesque.

Once cement is loaded in a truck, it is often hard to convince the customers to pay for a transfer to a railway car.

## Lumber market

The Groupe Lebel lumber market faced challenges due to the American downturn in 2022. “We were expecting to double the lumber traffic in 2023 compared to that of 2022 and it was cut in half instead,” says Mr. Lévesque.

Despite modest statistics, a positive note in lumber traffic was the return of the Association coopérative forestière of Saint-Elzéar sawmill to the railway after nearly 20 years of absence. Six cars were shipped by rail.

“We had to start somewhere and we did. We have regular talks with Mario Pouliot, the marketing director of the Saint-Elzéar sawmill, and we expect more shipments in 2024. As a matter of fact, the lumber market is picking up lately in the United States so we expect better numbers this year,” explains Luc Lévesque.

New Richmond-based Fabrication Delta also experienced positive developments, restarting the reception of steel after a quiet

Cont'd on page 11



# 2023 was a disastrous year for the pelagic fishery

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – 2023 was a disastrous year for Gaspé Peninsula herring fishermen and processors, whether one looks at volumes or overall revenues related to pelagic species.

In fact, volumes and revenues from Quebec pelagic fish have continued to fall in 2023 just the way they have done since 2018. Catches are almost four times lower than they were six years ago. In 2018, catches were 6,100 metric tons, compared to 1,684 metric tons in 2023.

“Revenues are five times lower, going from \$3.5 million five years ago to \$730,000 last year,” notes Fisheries and Oceans Canada economist, Alexandre Watier.

“The moratoriums on mackerel and the moratorium on catching spring herring have led to a 60% drop in volume compared to last year,” notes the economist.

Herring catches now make up to 97% of the total value of pelagic fish, at \$710,000. Capelin, which saw a 74% drop in volume, takes up the \$20,000 balance.

The statistics are so low in the pelagic fishery sector that Fisheries and Oceans Canada has not issued each region’s data regarding the revenues and volumes made by the Gaspé Peninsula, North Shore and the Magdalen Islands fishermen.

Economist Alexandre Watier, nevertheless, points out that a significant source of revenues for pelagic fish permit holders is not included in the statistics.

“We fish for tuna in Quebec, but the data is not available and there are tuna that are landed in Prince Edward Island,” he specifies, referring to a species that could play a role in improving the grim picture for the future.

## Halibut plays large role in groundfish numbers

Quebec landings of fish species other than lobster and snow crab evolved unequally in 2023. It would be fair to say that Atlantic halibut unequivocally dominates ground fish, while molluscs and echinoderms had a good year.

In 2023, ground fish volumes reached their lowest level since 2017 according to preliminary data collected by the Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The 1,627 tonnes delivered to Quebec

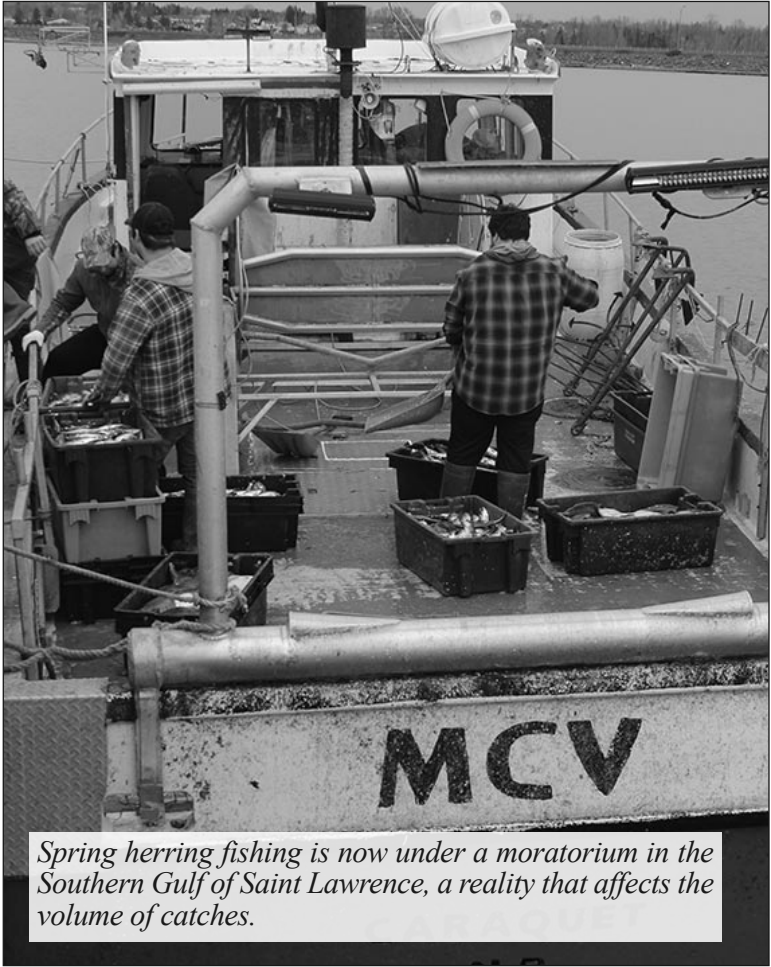


Photo: G. Gagné

harbours represent a decrease of 35.4% compared to the 2559 tonnes in 2022.

The value of these 1627 tonnes reached 12.3 million dollars, which is 21% less than the \$15.5 million in 2022. Atlantic halibut captured 87% of the value of all landings of Quebec ground fish, with a total catch value of \$10.7 million. This is \$2.5 million and 30% more than Atlantic halibut’s average value and average share over the last five years.

“The price has held up. It increased slightly for the two main species compared to 2022, by 1% for Atlantic halibut, by 3% for Greenland halibut, while it fell by 6% for cod,” explains economist Alexandre Watier.

The share of catches of Greenland halibut, or turbot, has melted like snow in the sun, having already been declining for several years. Many turbot fishermen have simply given up going to sea in search of this species in the middle of the season.

Turbot catches totalled \$780,000 in 2023, which represents 6% of the value of ground fish catches. However,

this is only 20% of its \$3.9 million value in 2022, while turbot took up 25% of total ground fish revenues. It’s also much less than the \$4.6 million average for the five seasons from 2018 to 2022 inclusively.

Cod landings represented only 4% of ground fish landed values, with catches worth \$500,000 compared to \$400,000 in 2022.

## Region by region results

The Gaspé Peninsula experienced a certain decline in ground fish landings and revenues. The value fell by 17.1%, from \$10.5 million in 2022 to \$8.7 million last year. The drop was more significant in catch volume since they went from 1,756 to 1,139 tonnes, a drop of 35.1%. The portion of this volume attributable to Atlantic halibut helped mitigate the loss of revenue, as it was lower than the volume drop.

In Quebec, concerning ground fish revenues and catches, the Gaspé Peninsula dominated in 2023 as well as was the case for the last decade. Up to 70.7% of the revenues made in ground fish went to

Gaspésians last year and 70% of the volumes landed.

The declines were more important in the archipelago last year. “It should be noted that, in the Magdalen Islands, catches decreased from 404 to 100 (precisely 103) tonnes between 2022 and 2023. We must also underline that a moratorium was imposed on yellow flounder and winter flounder,” points out Alexandre Watier about two important species for supplying bait to fishermen in the archipelago.

The value of ground fish catches in the Magdalen Islands reached \$1.2 million in 2023, a significant decline compared to \$2.7 million in 2022.

Ground fish landed on the North Shore were an exception last year compared to the two other fishing regions, both in volume and value, since they followed an upward curve. Catches increased from 364 to 385 tonnes between 2022 and 2023, and associated revenues increased from \$2.3 million to \$2.5 million.

In 2016, Quebec volumes and revenues associated with ground fish reached 4,350 tonnes and \$18 million, even if these data are much lower than those of the years preceding the moratorium on cod in 1993 and that on redfish in 1995.

Even a fairly modest recovery in commercial redfish fishing in 2024 could have a considerable effect on these landings and revenue statistics.

## Mollusks and echinoderms

The status of mollusks and echinoderms continued to improve, a trend that began following the 2020 pandemic, a year which was marked by a decrease in revenues and volumes. Since then, the growth of

these two categories has been constant. Echinoderms notably include sea urchins and sea cucumbers.

Quebec fishermen and gatherers landed 3,775 tonnes of molluscs and echinoderms in processing plants, an increase of 6% compared to 2022. The value of these landings increased from \$11.5 million to \$12.5 million between 2022 and 2023.

The main species making up this value are the sea urchin, which, with its \$4.1 million in revenue, account for 33% of the total revenue from molluscs and echinoderms, and the scallop, which generates \$3.1 million or 25% of the money. Sea cucumber brought in \$2.1 million and 17% of revenues.

“Scallops in the Magdalen Islands are doing well, as are sea urchins in the Gaspé Peninsula and sea cucumbers. It is the sea urchin market that is doing best among molluscs and echinoderms. The price increased by 59% and by 8% for whelk. The price of scallops increased by 48% in 2022 but suffered a slight decrease in 2023,” observes Alexandre Watier.

While the Gaspé Peninsula often leads several sectors of activity in fisheries, the North Shore leads quite clearly in terms of molluscs and echinoderms. The landings of 1,998 tons, which represents 53% of Quebec catches, bear witness to this, as do the revenues of \$6.3 million or 50.4% of the total.

For two years, the Magdalen Islands have slightly surpassed the Gaspé Peninsula in terms of revenue with nearly \$3.3 million in 2023, compared to \$2.9 million in the peninsula, which on the other hand supersedes the archipelago in volume, thanks to catches of tons, while they reached 759 tonnes for the Magdalen Islands.





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# Ottawa announces a 2-phase opening to the redfish fishery

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Ending a 30-year redfish moratorium, the federal government has announced the resumption of the fishery in two phases. However, the fishing community isn't pleased with the announcement following a sharp decrease in shrimp quotas for 2024.

On January 26, in Rivière-au-Renard, Diane Lebouthillier the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Member of Parliament for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Island unveiled her long-awaited plan as promised before the end of January. "For me, it's historic," she said.

The relaunch of the redfish fishery will occur in two phases. The first one will be a transitional phase lasting two years with a minimum quota of 25,000 tonnes, with 10% reserved for shrimp fishermen facing challenges due to declining stocks, and an additional 10% allocated to Indigenous communities.

"This phase will make it possible to collect more data, give all fleets time to prepare, further develop markets, strengthen processing capacity and, ultimately, give added value to redfish," states the minister.

Phase 2 will focus on development to establish a modernized allocation key for the fishery.

The Redfish Advisory Committee will meet in the coming weeks to establish a transitional quota.

"As part of the first phase, I already intend to set this quota at 25,000 tonnes. This figure is not only consistent with DFO's preliminary scientific recommendations but also constitutes the maximum quantity that the industry can process at this stage," specifies Ms. Lebouthillier.

The minister refrained from providing specific details regarding the historical shares allocated.

"We currently have four provinces where there is an increase in shares and one province where there is a slight drop in shares, but which still has a larger share, and that is Nova Scotia," stated the minister.

The ministry provided the following preliminary quotas: Newfoundland and Labrador: 19% (+2.0); Nova Scotia: 33% (-5.8); New Brunswick: 11% (+3.1); Prince Edward Island: 5% (+0.5); and Quebec: 32% (+0.2).



Minister Lebouthillier during the announcement in front of industry stakeholders on January 26.

Photo: DFO

Todd Williams, a senior director of the DFO, specified that the offshore fleet represents 58%, the coastal fleet of less than 65 feet will get 15%, and the mid-shore will receive 5.72% in addition to the allocations announced by the minister.

"We welcome the fact that redfish fishing has been announced. We would have liked the previous ministers to have been able to do the same several years ago because the damage caused by redfish to the ecosystem in recent years will take several years before we find a certain form of balance," mentions Claudio Bernatchez, the director of the Gaspé Peninsula Association of Captains and Owners.

The director of the Office of Shrimp Fishermen of Quebec expresses concerns about the quantity reserved for shrimp fishermen, wondering if it will be sufficient.

"From what I understand from the announcement, we are talking about 25,000 tonnes, 10% of which is reserved for Gulf shrimp boats, so 2,500 tonnes for all of the approximately 90 shrimp boats in Quebec, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador. If we calculate quickly, that's 80,000 pounds for a boat. It's a few days of fishing. No one is going to put their boat in the water for three days," says Patrice Element, the director of the office.

Another concern for him is the 58% allocation reserved for "processing boats" that have not fished in the Gulf for 30 years.

"We will have to see if the minister or the ministry really intends to allow the processing ships to return to the Gulf. Remember that these boats do not bring any economic benefits. These are boats that freeze and even process fish at sea. It's worrisome," adds Mr. Element.

However, at the time of the press briefing, DFO scientists

clarified that the first year's fishing capacity could be as high as 318,000 tonnes, causing the Captains Owners Association to widen their eyes.

"Our recommendations were for a minimum of 25,000 tonnes. We listened. On Wednesday, we learned, to our great amazement, that science recommended some 300,000 tonnes for this season. This is data that greatly questions the direction that the federal government has taken in refusing to launch this fishery," says Mr. Bernatchez.

He agrees, however, that a quota higher than that suggested would not allow the industry and the market to absorb enormous quantities at once.

## Shrimp

Unsurprisingly, the minister announced a steep decrease in the shrimp quota, a situation "which is the least worst of all", according to the Office of Shrimp Fishermen of Quebec.

The quota increases from

14,524 tonnes to 3,060 tonnes for 2024 which will be distributed as follows: 1,757 tonnes for Esquiman; 488 tonnes for Anticosti; 342 tonnes for Sept-Îles and 473 tonnes for the Estuary.

"The stocks of Sept-Îles, Anticosti and Esquiman have been in decline since 2005 and in 2023, they have reached the lowest estimated biomass since 1990," explains Diane Lebouthillier.

"In Quebec, only 31% of the total authorized catch was marketed. Many fishermen have not been able to cover their operating costs and have chosen to end their season earlier than planned," adds the minister.

"This figure is a happy medium that will ensure modest fishing while allowing the shrimp stock to rebuild. I think everyone can agree that no one wants to catch the last shrimp," she says.

The minister asked officials to allow flexibility for fishermen to fish on the same boat for twinning in order to manage their costs.

There is no program at this time for shrimp fishermen who wish to throw in the towel.

"The situation is difficult but for me there are discussions that will continue," maintains Ms. Lebouthillier.

"I think we couldn't reasonably expect much better," admits Patrice Element, the director of the Quebec Shrimp Fishermen's Office.

"At first glance, this looks like the least pessimistic scenario that was presented by the

science sector earlier this winter," he adds.

"For fishermen who do not have quotas in the estuary, people who had 900,000 pounds of shrimp to catch in 2015 will have perhaps 40,000 to 50,000 pounds. 50,000 pounds is not enough to launch a boat," he says.

He might think that four or five boats could fish this year, a door that the minister opened when there could be between two million and two and a half million pounds left to fish for Quebec fishermen.

The other challenge will be to see if the processing plants will operate.

"Are we going to open for such a small volume?" questions Mr. Element while three plants were processing shrimp in Quebec in 2023.

## Fisheries fund

Faced with these facts, the minister also finally announced the two-year extension of the Fisheries Fund, subject to future agreements with the government of Quebec.

"By giving priority to innovative projects linked to redfish fishing to give fishermen the financial means to transit to this new fishery," mentions Ms. Lebouthillier.

The federal government estimates its share of the remaining envelope at \$8 million. By adding that of Quebec, the fund would have a balance of approximately \$10.5 million.

The government of Quebec has been demanding such an extension for over a year.



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# Quebec Minister of Fisheries disappointed with redfish announcement

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

QUEBEC - The government of Quebec is very disappointed with the recent announcement from the government of Canada on January 26 by Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Diane Lebouthillier, regarding the resumption of redfish fishing and the significant drop in shrimp quotas.

The government of Canada is offering a minimum of 25,000 tonnes of redfish in a transitional phase starting this year, while the shrimp quota is reduced to 3,060 tonnes.

Quebec's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, André Lamontagne, expresses his profound disappointment.

"Everyone remains unsatisfied and there is a bit of disbelief after all these years and these consultations that this is their understanding of Que-



The Quebec Minister of Fisheries, André Lamontagne.

Photo: N. Sergerie

bec? It's a bit surreal," notes Mr. Lamontagne.

"God knows. Since I have been in office and in discussions with four Ministers of Fisheries, along with the work done with processors

and fishermen in Quebec to establish a common position, with this outcome, we have to wonder if they've listened at all," says the minister.

Redfish serves as a lever to help with the industry transi-

tion.

"We asked for a signal to support fisheries in difficulty," says Mr. Lamontagne.

"From the moment the verdict fell, and there was real disappointment, there will be demands made by fishermen and processors, and our role will be to be supportive in whatever form that takes. "It's something that really lies in the hands of the federal government," he said.

The minister hoped for a clearer direction from the federal government and greater support for shrimp fishermen facing difficulties.

While the Fisheries Fund receives a two-year extension, the minister does not want to celebrate too quickly.

"Quite honestly, I can't wait to see when it's done because what we want is not just about extending the disbursement period, but also the investment period so we can use

all the funds. It's not all tied up and I'm waiting for confirmation but it's not the residual of the Fisheries Fund that will be the only vehicle available to the sector to cope with the beginning of the transition. The federal government will have to show greater understanding of the impacts on Quebec and demonstrate its willingness to support and mitigate the difficulties," warns Mr. Lamontagne.

According to the latest figures, there would be approximately \$10.5 million remaining in the Quebec Fisheries Fund.

In the short term, the main focus is on reaching a consensus on Quebec's position and maintaining dialogue with the federal government, according to Minister Lamontagne.

"They haven't announced any moves to mitigate the impacts," concludes the provincial minister.

## Redfish: the Bloc Québécois remains hungry

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

OTTAWA - The Bloc Québécois describes the measures announced for redfish fishing as tardy and insufficient.

The Member of Parliament for Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, Kristina Michaud, remains dissatisfied even though the solution to the shrimp crisis had been heard for several months in the community.

Ottawa announced on January 26 a minimum quota of 25,000 tonnes of redfish, with 10% reserved for shrimp fishermen and 10% for Indigenous communities. A massive reduction of the shrimp quota to 3,060 tonnes was also announced.

"I am a little disappointed with the allocated quotas, particularly to shrimp fishermen who are experiencing a crisis. It's disappointing when we know that they will have to share a thin quota of shrimp with other provinces because the resource is not there. That's my first reaction," says Ms. Michaud.

According to her, the federal government does not have a comprehensive understanding of all fisheries.

"It's a very specific vision of a species or a sector when there are other fishermen and other species affected. It's a



MP Kristina Michaud remains dissatisfied

Photo: Courtesy Office of Kristina Michaud

shame not to have a broader vision of the crisis looming over the fishing sector and affecting the industry in Eastern Quebec," adds the MP.

Ms. Michaud doubts that the \$8 million federal dollars remaining in the Fisheries Fund will suffice given the current situation.

"It's going to take several resources to make the transition to redfish fishing. Do all fishermen who have been allowed to go to sea have the necessary equipment? Do processors have the necessary facilities in their plants to process redfish? Is the market sufficiently developed?" questions Ms. Michaud, noting that

ordinary people consume little of this fish at the moment.

"We need to have conversations with the fishermen who will be left behind. Those who will remain at the dock, what do we do? Do we lose their expertise or offer something else? Same thing for pelagic fishermen who have not been able to go to sea and who have never had federal support. These people want their expertise to be used. Let's give them the means!" says the elected official.

The minister has not made any progress on the terms of license repurchase for those wishing to leave the shrimp fishery.

Regarding the scientific evaluation which estimates the catch capacity at 318,000 tonnes, the MP wonders why there are still delays.

"It's difficult to understand this gap when we know that there is great potential. Why is it taking so long? We still have the majority of the figures. The assessments have been made. We even have the expertise of fishermen on the water who have seen the state of the resource. I would encourage the government to move faster," she says.

Ms. Michaud emphasizes the importance of assessing the processing capacity for redfish. Her Bloc Québécois colleague responsible for the fisheries file, Caroline Desbiens, criticizes the delays despite the availability of data since mid-autumn.

"Fishermen know very well that a fishing season cannot be organized in three days, with few resources. It's a struggle to reorganize to fish a quota of redfish that is too low, a quota of shrimp that we won't even talk about because it's not even half a trip. Fisheries are in crisis. It is only the Minister and the Ministry who don't know it,

or at least they aren't interpreting it that way," says Ms. Desbiens.

"We have been asking for predictability for a long time, since a fisheries table in 2022 and a conference in 2023. We still have proof that the industry has not been listened to. We will say it again and again. Fisheries in Quebec are an important issue. We are going to sound the alarm once again," says Ms. Desbiens, who vows to persist in what she describes as a chronic battle.

The Bloc Québécois placed a lot of hope in the appointment of Diane Lebouthillier last fall in the fisheries sector, assuming she understood the environment, met the fishermen, and "must have had a reasonable understanding of the situation, but that is not what we are seeing," adds Ms. Desbiens.

"Since she was appointed, she has made four press briefings to announce that she would make an announcement. You would have thought the announcement would be important. The community is disappointed. We are disappointed," says Ms. Desbiens.

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# Selling redfish to Quebecers is a priority

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - The Salon Fourchette bleue, set to take place for the third time from February 19 to 21 in La Malbaie, Charlevoix county, aims to reclaim markets for redfish.

With the fishing season approaching, the event seeks to facilitate connections between fishermen, processors, and buyers from various sectors.

“We know that there will be a massive return of this fish to Quebec (markets). What we want to do is ensure that the (processing) plants have buyers for this fish and above all that these buyers are in the Quebec markets rather than export. It’s very opportunistic on our part,” says the organizer of the Salon Fourchette bleue and director general of Exploramer in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Sandra Gauthier.

Major grocery store chains, restaurants and fancy dining rooms from Quebec will be present at the event to procure fish and seafood supplies sourced from Quebec.

“What is very interesting, particularly with redfish, is the institutional market. As it is a white fish, entry-level and affordable, all university cafeteria networks in particular, CHSLDs (long-term care facilities) and CPEs (Centre de la petite enfance daycares), have an interest in this fish. They have an obligation to increase the number of Quebec products on the plates of these institutions and redfish has everything

to gain from this market,” says Ms. Gauthier.

Redfish, with its delicate white, slightly sweet flesh, appeals to a wide audience and offers versatility in culinary applications.

“It really can suit everyone. The great chefs of Quebec can’t wait to see it arrive to put it in the spotlight on their table. It is also a fish that can be very versatile. Manufacturers are talking about making meatballs with it,” the director mentions as an example.

The Fourchette bleue aims to promote secondary and tertiary processing of redfish in Quebec to cater to diverse markets.

The show welcomes more and more exhibitors and continues to expand but could have reached cruising speed.

“It’s a small industry compared to others. It is an industry of high-end, very high quality products. What we want is to ensure that Quebec can get its hands on these products first and foremost and that we stop importing low-end products from abroad which are often dubious,” maintains Ms. Gauthier.

For food processors, the Quebec market is no more complicated to conquer than traditional markets and is becoming more and more accessible.

“What decision makers tell us in the plants is that it is not less profitable, but it is different, particularly because of the added value chain with second and third processing. It’s dif-

ferent, but we will adapt,” says Ms. Gauthier.

A commercial seal hunting industry is developing as the federal government presented a positive report to increase this hunt in the St. Lawrence River.

“MAPAQ is open to increasing the processing of seal meat via marine product plants during periods when they are closed. This means that we could send fishermen to hunt seals in winter. If we allowed plants to carry out this transformation, we would help resolve the problem of seal overpopulation, allow certain fish stocks to recover, add



Photo: DFO

weeks of employment to plant workers and allow plants to be productive several more months per year,” suggests Ms. Gauthier.

According to her, the large

restaurants in Quebec have an interest in integrating this meat and the supermarkets are looking for ready-to-eat products, such as meatballs, sausages or terrines.

## Resignation of the president of the board of directors of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

GASPÉ - The president of the board of directors of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) is stepping down from his position.

Richard Loiselle, whose term ended on January 31, has served as president of the board since the creation of the CISSS in April 2015.

“It’s not an easy decision. Certainly, personal considerations weighed in the balance, and a timeout is in order after many years. I am proud of the achievements reached over the last nine years as president of the board. We have, with conviction and determination, defended health care and social services in the Gaspésie. I have always been driven by the desire to offer quality care and services to Gaspésians and I am driven, among other things, by the desire to provide them with local services,” says Mr. Loiselle in a press release.

Mr. Loiselle was often absent from the board in the last year due to health problems.

The resigning president worked diligently last fall to ensure the project to renovate the emergency room at the Maria hospital centre was included in the next Quebec Infrastructure Plan, and even had a resolution adopted on the matter.

Mr. Loiselle indicated at that time that these steps could make it possible to intercede with the political authorities because he considered that this project is highly strategic for the quality of health care for the people who use the Maria hospital.

“I salute Mr. Loiselle’s unwavering volunteer contribution over the past nine years. I have retained the wise advice of Mr. Loiselle, a man who taught me a lot, first as Director of Technical Services between 2015 and 2017 and then as CEO (chief executive officer) for almost two years now. I would like to wish him good success in his future projects,” says President and CEO of the CISSS, Martin Pelletier.

The vice-president, Gilles Cormier, will replace Mr. Loiselle in the interim.

# Terry Shaw resigns as chief of Gespeg

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The resignation of Terry Shaw as the chief of the Micmac Nation of Gespeg, on February 2, came as a shock to many.

The Gespeg council has decided not to appoint an interim leader as elections are scheduled for next September.

In a press release issued on the Nation's Facebook page on January 26, the departing chief cited family reasons as the primary motivation for his resignation.

“This difficult decision is strictly motivated by personal and professional considerations. After a long reflection, I made the choice to prioritize my family life above all and to devote more



Photo: N. Sergerie

time to those close to me,” Mr. Shaw stated in the press release.

The father of two young children was elected leader in February 2020, promising

a wind of change.

At the time, he succeeded Manon Jeannotte, the now lieutenant-governor of Quebec, who left office in February 2019.

Coincidentally, Mr. Shaw resigned the day after attending Ms. Jeannotte’s swearing-in ceremony in Quebec.

Prior to his leadership role, Mr. Shaw served as a councillor for over 10 years in addition to being an employee of the Nation.

Mr. Shaw expressed his confidence in the Council's ability to continue managing the Nation's affairs, and was grateful for his dedicated contribution to the community since his election as Chief and during his time as Councillor.

In the meantime, Council spokesperson Céline Cassivi

stated that the elected officials of the Micmac Nation of Gespeg will collectively handle the files, with the eight councillors working together.

“As soon as we received the resignation of Chief Shaw, the council took on his responsibilities and the files to ensure sound management within the council. The files will be managed as a group and we will ensure good continuity,” explains Ms. Cassivi. Specific details were not provided regarding the files they will address.

The Electoral Code, which caused tensions within Gespeg prior to the February 2020 election, was accepted by referendum at the beginning of the current council’s mandate.

Prior to Mr. Shaw being

elected in 2020, a crisis unfolded within the Nation regarding electoral code reform.

In the fall of 2019, Mr. Shaw, who was a councillor at the time, wanted to resolve the issue before holding elections.

During Mr. Shaw’s tenure, the community faced challenges in obtaining aid from the federal government to address the health crisis and support members in need during the pandemic.

Highlights of his governance include the inauguration of a maple grove named Sigewigus (spring season in the Mi’kmaq language) and an agreement on access rights for Nation members to Forillon Park in July 2022.

Mr. Shaw declined an interview request.



# Maurice Quesnel retires as the Director General of the Baie des Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce

GILLES GAGNÉ

BONAVENTURE – Maurice Quesnel, the director general of the Baie des Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce, is retiring due to health problems, mainly caused by a prolonged battle with Covid-19 which he contracted in January 2022 while travelling in France.

“I am not even buying my groceries myself. I had to spend five days in the intensive care unit at the end of September. I caught another respiratory bacteria while hospitalized and it worsened my overall condition,” he explains.

While he was able to carry out some of his work at the Chamber of Commerce between 2022 and the end of the summer of 2023, his hospitalization and the time still required to heal convinced him to retire.

“I will support the Chamber of Commerce the best way I can and I offer my services to the board in their efforts to find a new director general. But, for now, I can’t keep going the way I used to. I take a short walk at home and I have to sit because I am out of breath,” says Mr. Quesnel.

He discovered the job at the Baie des Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce over the summer of 2008, upon a brief stop in Pointe-à-la-Croix after attending a convention in the Magdalen Islands. Mr. Quesnel moved to the Bay of Chaleur area shortly thereafter.

Prior to relocating to the Gaspé Peninsula, he had worked at three other Chambers of Commerce and had just finished a mandate with the Sherbrooke Chamber of Commerce.

## An interesting challenge

“I came to my interview on a Thursday and by the following Monday, I was told that I was hired. It was a drop in salary but the challenge interested me. I came to my interview by train, the best way to travel,” he remembers.

The first Chamber of Commerce he worked for in the Bay of Chaleur area was that of Bonaventure.

“It only served Bonaventure, Saint-Siméon and Saint-Elzéar. Maybe I should have checked before but a quick look at the books when I started showed me that the official revenues of the Bonaventure Chamber of Commerce had only reached \$11,546 the year before I arrived! I realized that things had to move,” he adds.

Things moved. He listened to what his board members said during the first meeting, and they listened to him during the second meeting. He proposed an amalgamation with the Paspébiac Chamber of Commerce.

“I was told right away that bringing together ‘Paspéyas’ and ‘Cayens’ would not work,” he says about the nicknames of the two towns’ inhabitants. “I told the board members that I didn’t care about families’ old stories and bickering.”

The first step towards a Bonaventure MRC-wide Chamber of Commerce had been made. The amalgamation with Paspébiac occurred in 2009 and a year later for the MRC.

He didn’t stop there. Eventually, the Avignon MRC joined in 2013 and, by that time, the Baie des Chaleurs



During his tenure, Maurice Quesnel forged links that convinced people to unify the Baie des Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce.

Photo: Baie des Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce

Chamber of Commerce was born. In 2014, the organization was selected as Quebec’s Chamber of Commerce of the year. The number of members rose from 86 members in 2008 to 437 in 2021.

The financial picture of the

expanded organization blossomed considerably, compared to that of Bonaventure, Saint-Siméon and Saint-Elzéar.

“From \$11,546, it climbed to \$1,045,524 in 2021, our record year. In the Gaspé Peninsula, we don’t have spon-

sors of \$50,000. Towns like Rimouski and Rivière-du-Loup don’t make that much. We reached that amount because we applied to get money for training programs from Services Québec. Training money was up to \$562,000 in 2021, and it had fallen to \$60,000 in 2022 because Services Québec didn’t want us to keep offering business training, even if the enterprises wanted us to stay. I was working on regaining that money when I became sick. I am convinced that the Chamber of Commerce can do it,” analyzes Mr. Quesnel.

He is animated when describing the challenge he would have liked to keep tackling.

“The bacteria affecting me will go. It can take two or 10 months. I will not regain my initial shape though. The doctor was clear on that, however, my morale remains good,” he concludes.

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## SCFG: Cont'd from page 6

period that saw only one car in six years. Six cars were received in 2023.

Ten woodchip cars were also sent to Edmundston, New Brunswick, for a test with the Two Rivers paper mill. The test was inconclusive, mainly due to a lack of proper equipment to unload the wood chips at the mill.

Additionally, the SCFG received ten cars loaded with new rails in 2023. The rails were installed on the bridges repaired or replaced by Transports Québec between Caplan and Port Daniel. Although the min-

istry has owned the Matapédia to Gaspé line since 2015, the network remains limited to the Matapédia to New Richmond stretch, despite benefitting from an \$872 million upgrading program launched in 2017.

“We are optimistic for 2024. Reopening the line to Port Daniel at the end of the year will help increase cement traffic in the Maritimes and our attempts to land some (Saint Mary’s Cement) input. It is always tough to reach shipping agreements as long as the line is not available. It will be the same thing when the line is reopened to Gaspé,” concluded Mr. Lévesque.

## Reflections

by  
Diane Skinner Flowers



### Doomscrolling

*The Doomsday Clock was recently set at 90 seconds to midnight, the closest to midnight it has ever reached. Since 1947, the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists has been estimating how close the world is to ending by stating how many “minutes to midnight” remain on its signature clock.*

Ominous trends seem to be pointing at possible global catastrophe. Watching the news has become a challenging experience. Wars. Climate catastrophe. COVID. Nuclear threats. Economic downturn. Price of gas and the rising cost of food. Ukraine. Middle East. Gun violence and mass shootings. Racism. Hate. In 2023 the world experienced its hottest year on record bringing massive flooding, wildfires and extreme heat. There is no shortage of shocking news. It is all doom and gloom. According to comedian Tracy Morgan, “Bad news travels at the speed of light. Good news travels at the speed of molasses.” However, there is not a lot of good news of late.

Wouldn't it be wonderful to wake up one morning to a newscast that is nothing but good news? News is everywhere: on tv, our phones, computers, and in conversations with everybody we encounter. Can we see some light at the end of this depressing tunnel? Can we deal with the news in a different way? The news is so difficult and even painful to process that some people are experiencing mental health issues. It has been and continues to be exhausting. There is even an innovative new word to describe this – doomscrolling.

Some have consciously made the decision to ignore the news, as much as possible, in a world where we are saturated with tragic and foreboding news but the news is how we are informed about the world. Despite the constant bombardment of negative and disheartening news, it is important to know about the world because it does affect our lives as well. War in Ukraine has contributed to high gas prices. Climate change means that the weather in your area is changing. COVID is still a concern in our world. You need to know about these issues because they will, eventually, touch your life too.

One way of handling the negative news is to manage our intake. After seeing the highlights, turn off the tv and limit the amount of news you consume online. In a sense, amend your relationship with the news. “Dear News, it's not you. It's me. Our relationship is not great lately, so we will have to see less of each other.”

Check your sources. This is critical because there is a lot of fake news out there. When you actively watch, listen to or read the news, make it worthwhile! Search for the sources that are from credible and dependable news outlets. Search for unbiased and experienced, trusted news outlets and reporters. Look for the facts and your opinions will follow. Facts first.

It is important to stay informed but let us not put our mental health at risk. Some professionals believe that the current news we are experiencing also affects our physical and emotional well-being because our mental health affects our entire being.

Information is good because we need to know the reason things are happening. Even bad news helps us to adjust our expectations. We didn't start the fire, but this is the world we are all living in. We can manage the impact of all the doomsday news by limiting our intake and using trusted sources.

# “No one leaves my workshops with a frown,” says Stephanie Bond

DIANE SKINNER  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

BARACHOIS: On Sunday, January 21 Stephanie Bond, artist and instructor, led a painting workshop that was funded through Vision Gaspé-Perce Now where Stephanie currently works. This one day activity took place at the Barachois Recreation Centre from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.. Participants were delighted that their workshop and all materials including acrylic paint were free of charge. Stephanie reminds future participants that the workshops are quite popular so signing up in advance is recommended because spaces are limited. The workshops are usually full, and the Midnight Deer workshop had 14 participants who were proud to display their finished products.

Though anyone over the age of 14 is welcome to sign up for the activities, the group was composed of all female artists, most of them were seniors and beginning level painters.

One of the participants, Judy Stiles, comments, “I had fun at Stephanie's workshop. Everyone painted the same picture - but at the end they were all different. Overall, I was very pleased with my painting. Stephanie is a great teacher - she is very motivated and patient and she's a wonderful artist herself.”

Stephanie says that the art workshops are impactful because, “Art takes our mind off things, and it is so relaxing and fun!” Aside from Vision, Stephanie also offers online painting workshops with other organizations.

Stephanie Bond,  
Gaspesian artist

Stephanie was born in the village of Barachois in Gaspé, Quebec, in 1979. Her passion for the arts led to a degree in Graphic Design from Dawson College in Montreal. After that, she lived in Montreal and worked as a designer for 10 years and then decided to move back home in 2008 to work as a graphic designer in Chandler. During this time, she decided to start painting again, having taken a 10-year break from painting while in Montreal.

After experimenting with

various mediums she gravitated more towards painting with acrylics and oils, with a specific interest in landscapes, wildlife, and historic seaside scenes.

Currently she is a full-time employee with Vision Gaspé-Perce Now for almost 10 years. Aside from doing Graphic Design for Vision, she also leads art workshops and takes care of the Barachois Wellness Centre

small crafts for local markets, including Christmas ornaments and painted signs. When asked who her favourite Gaspesian artist is she admits that she admires many local artists but mentions both John Wiseman and Tennyson Johnson.

Looking ahead, Stephanie will continue to offer workshops about every month that will be sponsored by Vision and states that, “No one leaves my workshops with a frown!”



The 14 participants in the painting workshop “Midnight Deer” proudly display their completed paintings, after just three hours!

Photo: courtesy Stephanie Bond

for Seniors.

“Living on the scenic and beautiful Gaspé Coast, I am constantly inspired by our large skies, ancient mountains and breathtaking ocean views. With well over two hundred paintings completed, I hope to continue to represent and promote this unique region of Canada,” she proudly states. She is inspired by the environment and occasionally refers to old historic photos to create her paintings.

Stephanie Bond also makes

She adds, “I still have the interest and drive to continue doing what I love to do - not planning on retirement quite yet!”

To learn more about Stephanie Bond visit her website at: <https://bondsteph.wixsite.com/stephaniebond> or search “Stephanie Bond” on facebook. Her home gallery is at 858 Rte. 132 East, Barachois. You are welcome to stop by, just make an appointment first.

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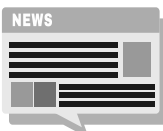
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# Announcements



## Obituaries



**MACNAUGHTON: Charles Cameron**  
**April 21, 1936 - January 19, 2024**

It is with much sadness that the family of Charles MacNaughton announces his passing at the age of 87.

Charles was devoted to his family and will be remembered lovingly by his children, Debbie, Bruce (Lisa), and Cynthia (Bill), as well as his cherished grandchildren, Tess, Sarah, Selena, and Jade.

Charles was predeceased by his wife of 65 years, Rita Willett, his parents Cameron and Evelyn; and his siblings: Ila, Rae, Joan, Vaughan, Gary, Baden, and Guy. He is survived lovingly by his brother Bob.

Charles was born in Grand Caspédia, Quebec, a place he always considered home no matter where life took him. He regaled all who knew him, and some who didn't, with the stories of his childhood in a home with lots of kids and lots of love.

Growing up Charles preferred spending time around large equipment as opposed to swimming in the river. This may have lead him to his work in heavy construction building roads and bridges In Quebec and Ontario.

In September of 1956 Charles married his forever partner, Rita, and they soon began to build their family together.

After the first two children were born, Debbie and Bruce, they moved from St. Catherines to Montreal, and a third child arrived, Cynthia. It was time to plant roots! Charles began a career in the oil industry to bring stability to the family.

In 1977 this career brought him to Ontario where he stayed until his retirement in 1991.

Charles and Rita's lifelong ambition to come home happened upon his retirement when they moved back to the MacNaughton house, which they lovingly restored.

During retirement Charles continued with his entrepreneurial skills and his love of heavy equipment by building roads to camps and through woodlots. Charles was also an unwavering supporter of the community as a councillor, firefighter, river guide, volunteer at St. Andrew's church, and all around handyman for those in need.

Charles was a sports fan! He loved the Expos and spent time passing on that love to

his family at Jarry Park. Charles was also "True Blue" when it came to the Toronto Maple Leafs. No team was more sacred to him.

Charles will be remebered as a man who did his best for his family and he did it with love and a great sense of humor—as anyone who knew him could attest.

A celebration of his life and love will be held at a later date.



**STANLEY: Eugene**  
Suddenly, while at home, Eugene Stanley passed away on January 27, 2024. Eugene was predeceased by his wife, Violet, and daughter, Amy. Survived by his three sons: Perry, Bart (Lee), and Mark (Pat); three grandchildren: Amanda, Robert, and Cole; and great-granddaughter, Alexis. Eugene is also survived by his three brothers, Francis (Sandra), Phil (Jill), and Robert (Joan). Eugene will be missed by many including his partner, Audrey, with whom he shared many happy years of joy, love, and companionship.

Eugene was born and raised in Gaspé, Quebec where he met Violet and went on to raise their family in Belle Anse, Quebec, until it was time for a new adventure that brought them to Branford, Ontario. Eugene had a passion for woodworking and gardening. Always up for a card game, he lit up when friends and family dropped by for a visit.

Cremation has taken place. A celebration of life was held on Sunday, February 4, from 1 to 4 at the Toll Funeral Home in Brantford. Interment will be held this summer in Gaspé. In lieu of flowers, please consider donating to a charity of your choice.



## In Memory

**BOURGAIZE: Eunice**  
In loving memory of our dear sister who passed away January 4, 2020.  
*No matter how life changes,  
No matter what we do,  
A special place within our hearts,  
Will always be with you.*

Forever in our hearts, loved and sadly missed by Dolly, Merle, Clayton (Eleanor), Bradford (Shirley) and families.



**KERR: May (Coulombe)**  
In loving memory of our mother (mommy) who we lost a year ago on January 24, 2023.  
*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 thinking of you mommy Helen, Nancy, Robert, your grandchildren, great-grandchildren and families.

### Thank you

I would like to thank, first and foremost, my daughter Heather, who along with some special friends, organized a beautiful surprise retirement party for me. It was a total surprise! Thanks to all the people who attended. It was so nice to see so many of my friends and family members together to help celebrate the occasion with me.

Many thanks for all the warm messages of congratulations I received, as well as gifts, and cards.

Special thanks to the board members of The Gaspé Spec for their generous gift and for keeping Spec on track for so many years.

To all the co-workers, customers and subscribers, thanks for making my 32 years at Spec such an enjoyable experience.

Joan Imhoff



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ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20  
There is a new person in your life who may become a source of inspiration, Aries. It's a new year and you are ready for all the novel experiences you can encounter.  
TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21  
Taurus, you could be feeling more grounded in your personal life than you have in some time. The people you surround yourself with accept and love you unconditionally.  
GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21  
Gemini, if a suggestion goes against your instincts this week, give it careful consideration nonetheless. This person may have some good ideas that you may not have thought of.  
CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22  
Cancer, you tend to be good about not letting work life bleed into your personal affairs. However, this week you may need to have some carryover to accomplish all that lies ahead.  
LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23  
Some good news may arrive this week that will put you on cloud nine, Leo. Just don't let this enthusiasm distract you from getting all of your business wrapped up on time.



VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22  
A charming person may come into your life this week, Virgo. At first he or she may be a whirlwind and confuse you for some time. Eventually, you may catch on and go with the flow.  
LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23  
Libra, use whatever opportunities you have to speak to older family members and jot down the memories they have. Time is fleeting and you want to learn all you can.  
SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22  
Surround yourself with people who bring positivity into your life, Scorpio. It is alright to take inventory and distance yourself from others who do not generate positive vibes.  
SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21  
People who believe they have a lot of power are going to be all around you this week, Sagittarius.


Don't fall prey to any intimidation tactics. Continue to do your own thing.  
CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20  
Dreams have been entertaining and awfully vivid lately, Capricorn. But you can't put too much stock in them. They may simply be your subconscious mind trying to work through things.  
AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18  
Express gratitude when you are gifted something both thoughtful and expensive, Aquarius. This is something you have had your eye on for some time but never purchased yourself.  
PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20  
You're likely to be very busy soon enough, Pisces. Some loud and busy people may come into your life in the next few days. It may prove hard to find a quiet moment afterwards.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

FEBRUARY 5: Cristiano Ronaldo, Athlete (39)  
FEBRUARY 6: Alice Eve, Actress (42)  
FEBRUARY 7: Chris Rock, Comic (59)  
FEBRUARY 8: Jaden Hossler, Singer (23)  
FEBRUARY 9: Tom Hiddleston, Actor (43)  
FEBRUARY 10: Emma Roberts, Actress (33)

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COAST ROUND-UP

**PORT DANIEL:**  
**Three Star Golden Age Club**  
**Tuesdays:** Pétanque from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. every Tuesday evening. Cost is \$3.

**PORT DANIEL:**  
**Saint James Anglican Church**  
**February 10:** Saint James Anglican Church will be holding a tea from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Three Star Golden Age Club, 177 Route 132, Port Daniel. If there is a storm the tea will be held on February 11 at the same time. Everyone welcome.

**HOPE:**  
**Hope Baptist Church**  
**Sundays:** Sunday School starting at 10 a.m. Worship service beginning at 11 a.m.

**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 CARLISLE:**  
**Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64**  
Please be advised that Legion memberships are available for \$45. Returning and new members welcome.  
**March 5:** General meeting at 7 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle.

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

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

**ROTARY CLUB WINNERS:** The winners for the week of January 1 to 6 are: Simon Vienneau, Garde Paroissiale, Julie Arsenault, Jean-Luc Jean, Marie-Rose L'Espérance and Kenneth Sexton.  
**The winners for the week of January 7 are:** Nancy Arbour, Danielle Bilodeau, Fabien Gagné, Alvine Huard, Eric Dion, Nicole Babin and Jasmine Rivière.  
**The winners for the week of January 14 are:** Sharon Murray, Lise Gendron, Raynald Leblanc, Laval Cyr, Pascal Poirier, Steeve Cormier and Luc Rivière.

**The winners for the week of January 21 are:** Line Cormier, Danny Lelièvre, Marielle Leblanc, Réjean Poirier, Matériaux St-Charles, Sylvie Robinson and Martine Lebrun.  
**The winners for the week of January 28 to 31 are:** Brigitte Grenon, Francis Leblanc, Ted Meredith and Michel Roy.

**UNITED CHURCH**  
**NEW RICHMOND**  
**Sunday, February 11**  
10 a.m. Service

**UNITED CHURCH**  
**HOPE TOWN**  
**Sunday, February 11**  
10 a.m. Service

**ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA**  
**Sunday, February 11**  
**NEW CARLISLE**  
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
**PORT DANIEL**  
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
**Wednesday, February 14**  
**NEW CARLISLE**  
3:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service with Imposition of Ashes.

**PARISH OF GASPÉ**  
**Sunday, February 11**  
**St. Paul's - Gaspé**  
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
**Every Wednesday**  
**St. Paul's - Gaspé**  
10 a.m. BCP Morning Prayer  
**Wednesday, February 14**  
**St. Andrew's - York**  
7 p.m. Ash Wednesday Service with Imposition of Ashes.

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Social notes can be emailed to:  
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Do you miss reading the Social Notes section?  
If so, you are not alone.  
We would like to bring the Social Notes back but in a new and revamped way. Easy peasy, you'll be able to submit your own news by email or by calling the office and leaving a message (be sure to include your name and number)



# Maria yoga teacher offers service in English

CYNTHIA DOW

MARIA: - A new yoga studio, Yoga Shala, has opened in Maria and SPEC readers will be delighted to hear that the services are available in English as well as French. “Shala” means “home” and the young woman at the helm of Yoga Shala, Julie Gauthier, wants her clients to feel at home in the space she has designed.

Raised in Laval, Ms Gauthier spent summers with her grandmother in St Omer. After following yoga courses in Bali, and teaching in Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia, for the past few years, she decided to move to the East Coast to be closer to family.

“Yoga truly helped me to be aware that I needed help, and it keeps me on track,” says Ms. Gauthier. She has suffered from eating disorders for the

past 33 years, but finds the physical and mental practice of yoga very healing.

Ms Gauthier has been teaching “here and there” since she arrived on the Coast about a year and a half ago, including leading the teachers of Carleton Polyvalent in yoga poses on Wednesday mornings. Eventually she decided that she needed a stable space to house her mats, blocks and pillows used during the classes.

The Yoga Shala studio is located in the basement of the MRC Avignon building at 473, Boulevard Perron in Maria. It’s a lovely space with soft lighting, bright windows,



Julie Gauthier has created a relaxing space at her Yoga Shala studio in Maria.

Photo: C. Dow

and a teapot with herbal tea that simmers all through the class. Soft music in the background really helps students relax.

“My mission is to help people find inner peace,” Ms. Gau-

thier told SPEC during a recent visit to the studio., “If we all meditated a little bit the world would truly be a different place.”

“I also want to bring the community together,” she noted, and expressed how happy she was with the significant turnout on January 6 when she hosted a grand opening event. “More than 60 people came to immerse themselves in the atmosphere and try some yoga offerings for all kinds of tastes.”

Besides leading people through standard yoga poses, Ms. Gauthier intends to offer workshops on Yin yoga (which involves holding poses for several minutes at a time to allow for deep relaxation), mindful breathing techniques, meditation, and sound therapy.

Ms. Gauthier offers packages of 10 or 20 tickets, and

students can also pay by the class at \$20 an hour. Yoga Gala offers monthly memberships for \$99 plus tax, and members can attend any session they want. They also get discounts at local businesses such as La Mie Véritable in Carleton and Salon Octobre in Maria.

As a way to celebrate Valentine’s Day on the week of February 12, regular students are invited to bring a loved one with them to class for free. “Show your love with the gift of yoga!”

Yoga classes are available at the studio five days a week at various times, and you can check out the schedule at <https://layogashala.fliipapp.com>. To reach Ms Gauthier for more information, you can email her at [info@juliegauthier.co](mailto:info@juliegauthier.co) or by calling 581-993-9083. Namasté!



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