

## Shaina Hayes releases second album: *Kindergarten Heart*

CYNTHIA DOW

Shigawake's well-known folk singer, Shaina Hayes, has released her second album following an original "pandemic album" called *To Coax a Waltz*.

"What if it was possible to time travel back into our child's brain, to bypass anxiety and perfectionism," Ms. Hayes tells SPEC, "before our negative tendencies take hold." That was the main inspiration behind the title song, *Kindergarten Heart*, which is also the title of the album.

The musician mentions that the pandemic isolation did not cause a real struggle for her, since she is an introvert. However, she admitted that she has not been able to feel as excited about social engagements as before the COVID outbreak. Thus the interest in trying to rekindle "childhood wonder, looking back on younger versions of myself."

About one-third of the album was actually recorded in December 2022 in Jeffrey Vauthier's house in Shigawake, "...where there is a wood stove giving off good vibes, and a fishermen's aesthetic," the musician noted. The "good vibes" can certainly be heard on the album as the artist's skillful lyrics and gentle, sylphlike voice create a dreamscape of sound.

The album contains nine songs, including *Early Riser* and *Sun and Time*, both of which, along with the title song, are trending on iTunes. The album can be downloaded from the iTunes store, and is also available in vinyl and CD versions from Ms. Hayes' production company, Bonsound.

*Kindergarten Heart* was released in Montreal on February 23 with an official launch planned for April 4 at Le Ministère on the Main. A series of concerts is being organized,



Folk singer, Shaina Hayes.

Photo: Bonsound/ Lawrence Fafard

with Ms. Hayes set to tour much of the province, starting later this month in Maskinongé and including a stop at the Théâtre Petit Champlain in Quebec City on April 6. Additional tour dates can be found at <https://bonsound.co/sh-spec-tacles>.

Asked when her fellow Gaspésians will have a chance to see and hear her in person again, Ms. Hayes said she could not yet confirm her presence at the Shigawake Fair this year. There will be shows in the Gaspé but "we are still booking into the summer and fall," she

noted.

The folk singer was delighted to be included in a few concerts with Inuk artist Elisapie Isaac earlier this winter. "She's incredible, the most beautiful person I've ever been in contact with," Ms. Hayes said.

## Girard Budget: lukewarm reception in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula region was hoping for much more from Éric Girard's budget tabled on March 12 in Quebec City, particularly in terms of tackling the housing crisis that has plagued the region for several years now.

The budget does not allocate any new money for housing despite studies demonstrating the shortage of housing in the Gaspé Peninsula region.

"There are no budgetary measures as such but, if we were able to increase the eligible thresholds for housing, it would help us with affordable housing," says a very disappointed Mathieu Lapointe, president of the Regroupement of Gaspé Peninsula MRCs.

Housing is also a priority for the mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, who remains positive re-



The mayor of Gaspé will wait for budgetary appropriations to see if Quebec will move forward with new housing funding

Photo: N. Sergerie

garding the vast project of 84 apartments near the MAPAQ (Ministère de l'Agriculture des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec) building in Sandy Beach.

"The appropriation study in the coming months will give us

more details but, for the moment, it seems to be the status quo in programs and, therefore, the status quo in projects as well," notes the mayor of Gaspé.

The submitted budget also provides for investments in

cellular service, air transportation and tourism.

Mathieu Lapointe is especially happy that last fall when Quebec's finances were not so tight, the new fiscal pact was settled with several positive aspects for municipalities.

Budgetary rigour is a concern for the two elected officials "It remains a concern, especially when it comes to housing. I repeat: it is our number one priority and there is no significant additional amount in the 2024 budget," reiterates Mathieu Lapointe.

### Concerns at ROCGIM-CDC

The ROCGIM-CDC, which regroups independent community organizations in the region, also has concerns following the presentation of the budget considering the amounts promised in 2022 are

documented in the budget.

In 2022, the organizations were promised \$1.1 billion over five years. This year, \$40 million was planned but the general coordinator, Geneviève Giguère, has noted an amount lower than promised

"The real announcements are made one year at a time and, this year, we are seeing \$10 million for everyone," she notes.

Other amounts have been announced, notably for food aid, organizations in difficulty, family organizations and education organizations.

Another source of concern for the ROCGIM-CDC is the envelope reduced almost by half for the Alliance for Solidarity fund. The amounts allocated go from \$160 million to \$89 million for the next five years. This decline makes





Photo: G. Gagné

# No new project in the PQI for the Gaspé Peninsula

**NELSON SERGERIE**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Quebec Infrastructure Plan (PQI), unveiled alongside the Girard budget on March 12 in Quebec, does not include any new projects for the Gaspé Peninsula. It even leaves out the renovation project for Maria Hospital's emergency and intensive care departments.

This revelation sparked disappointment among local officials. "I'm looking at the PQI. Maria hospital is not there. It's a big disappointment. The premier repeated in every forum for two days that the project was going to be included in the PQI. There is no modernization of the emergency room, nor of intensive care," thunders the prefect of the MRC of Avignon, Mathieu Lapointe.

However, Premier François Legault had affirmed in November in Gaspé that the project would be included in the PQI this spring.

The conversion of Villa

Pabos in Chandler into a Seniors' Home is also mentioned in the PQI document. The conversion began this winter and will cost a total of \$75.6 million.

The PQI outlines all projects requiring at least \$20 million in investments.

Rail infrastructure retains an important place as the Quebec government plans to inject \$233 million into section three between Port-Daniel-Gascons-Gaspé this year and \$259 million next year. The total renovation cost for this section is listed at \$517 million.

Planned last year, this component has now been backed by numbers following last June's announcements in Gaspé.

Additionally, over \$83 million is earmarked for the Caplan-Port-Daniel-Gascons section, including \$73 million this year.

No additional major construction sites are indicated in the plan for the area between Matapédia and Caplan.

Even though the Espaces bleus project was recently aborted, the Villa Frederick-James in Percé is still listed at \$20.8 million, although the project is now estimated at \$25.5 million.

In education, the new Eastern Shores School Board secondary school in New Carlisle is listed. Its construction was estimated at \$32 million following its September 2021 announcement.

In research, the Grande-Rivière Fisheries Innovation Hub remains under construction with a total cost of \$31.2 million. The Quebec government plans to allocate \$5.2 million this year.

Regarding the road network, the Petit Pabos River bridge in Chandler is listed in the PQI for a total investment of \$28.2 million and is nearing completion with \$10.2 million this year and \$17.4 million in the next few years. Emergency work was carried out on the bridge on a couple of occasions.

## Petition launched to save the Percé Tourist Information Office

**NELSON SERGERIE**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - An online petition is underway in an attempt to overturn the decision of the Percé municipal council to close the Tourist Information Office, announced during the tabling of the municipality's 2024 budget last December.

In a press release, the Committee for a Tourist Information Office in Percé requests that the town postpone the closure of the Tourist Information Office for one year to "undertake, without delay, a process of finding a solution in consultation and in a concerted way

with, in particular representatives of the tourism industry, merchants, community organizations, and the cultural community."

The committee describes itself as "a group of citizens interested in collaborating in the search for a solution, as quickly as possible and in the interest of the entire community."

In February, the mayor of Percé, Cathy Poirier, mentioned that the \$230,000 in payroll was a significant obstacle to relaunching the office. She stated that she had taken steps, particularly with the office of the Member of the Na-

tional Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, Tourisme and Commerce Rocher-Percé, the Rocher-Percé MRC, and Tourisme Gaspésie, to explore possible solutions.

Mayor Poirier also specified that maintaining the office would result in a 4.5% tax increase for taxpayers. She noted that the decision was inconceivable for a tourist destination such as Percé, but unfortunately, the municipality no longer has the means to pay.

The online petition had almost 1,500 signatures on the evening of March 14.

### BUDGET REACTIONS:

**Cont'd from cover**

community organizations feel insecure. "Their basic funding does not meet their needs. Envelopes like the Alliance became important and essential. It will certainly create concerns and insecurity in the community," says Ms. Giguère.

The community sector is concerned about the word "budgetary rigour" mentioned by Quebec.

#### Positive news in forestry

From the budget, \$347 million over five years has been released for forestry, which satisfies the president of the Forestry Committee of the Fédération québécoise des municipalités and prefect of Haute-Gaspésie, Guy Bernatchez.

Of this amount, \$29 million is reserved for SOPFEU (Société de protection des forêts contre le feu). This amount

comes following the devastating forest fires that occurred last summer in Quebec.

The rest is distributed equally in the development of the public and the private forests.

"We must not lose sight of the fact that this is our future. Our forest is like a collective RRSP (Registered retirement savings plan). We really have to see it as good news," says Mr. Bernatchez, who has worked in forestry management all his life.

Seeing amounts defined for private forests is viewed as a positive move. "In the last 15 years, there were annual amounts given for private forests which were not adjusted to the cost of living. It will help with the necessary catching-up," notes the prefect of Haute-Gaspésie, who maintains that private forests will help compensate for the loss of volume in public forests during fires like Quebec experienced last summer.

# MADE IN IRON

L'intégrale Musicale et Visuelle du Légendaire Spectacle

Live After Death de IRON MAIDEN

STANDING SECTION + BAR SERVICE

« The complete musical and visual experience of the legendary 1985 metal concert »

**Thursday, April 11<sup>th</sup> | 8 PM**

**Ticket information: 418-392-4238**

**WWW.SPECTACLESNEWRICHMOND.COM**

Salle de spectacles régionale  
**Desjardins**  
de New Richmond

A.P. CHEVROLET - BUICK  
Santés et Confort - Truck Center  
NEW RICHMOND

**THEGASPESPEC.COM**  
**418-752-5400**

# Jean Saint-Pierre becomes vice president of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - On February 14, the Council of Ministers announced the appointment of Jean Saint-Pierre as vice president and vice chief executive officer of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS). He took office the following day, replacing Connie Jacques who announced a year ago that she'd be retiring in January 2024.

Mr. Saint-Pierre spent his entire professional career in Chandler. He began his career in 1989 at the Chandler Hospital Centre as a physiotherapist before becoming coordinator of the Physiotherapy Service in 1997. In 2000, he assumed the interim leadership of various departments including Respiratory Therapy services, Medical Electrophysiology, Nuclear medicine, Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy and Social Services.

In 2002, Mr. Saint-Pierre was head of Accommodations and Physical Rehabilitation services, as well as administrative coordinator of the Pharmacy department. In 2003 he also became interim director of Hospital services while maintaining his existing positions.

After holding various posi-



Photo: Gaspé Peninsula CISSS

*Jean Saint-Pierre was appointed vice president of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS by the Government of Quebec on February 14.*

tions at the Rocher-Percé Health and Social Services Centre between 2004 and 2015, Mr. Saint-Pierre became director of Multidisciplinary services in 2015 when the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS was created.

In 2016 he became the director of the CISSS Autonomous Support Program for the elderly, as well as the director of Multidisciplinary services. He also served as interim director of the Intellectual disability, Autism and Physical Disability programs.

## Education

Mr. Saint-Pierre obtained a bachelor's degree in health science in physiotherapy in 1989 from Laval University, a master's degree in gerontology from the University of Sherbrooke in 1998, and another in public administration from the National School of Public Administration in 2004. He is also a member of the Professional Order of Physiotherapy of Quebec.

"I had been preparing to take over this role for several years. Based on my background, my training and my previous experience, several elements prepared me to take over from Ms. Jacques," says Mr. Saint-Pierre

He participated in a succession program with the Ministry of Health for non-executive positions of president, vice president and CEO.

Mr. Saint-Pierre has set himself the objectives of maintaining and improving the health care services in the Gaspé Peninsula while actively working with the President and CEO, Martin Pelletier, to facilitate the transition from the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS to Santé Québec, following the health reform adopted in June 2023 by the Quebec Government.

## Police report

The case of Michael Martin, 36, from Gesgapegiag, charged with break-and-enter and assault with a weapon, will return to court for his preliminary pro forma hearing on May 13, according to criminal prosecutor Cédric Leblanc Falardeau. The actual date of the pro forma hearing will likely be determined then. He waived his bail hearing on February 5. Michael Martin and his alleged accomplice, Marc-André Lavoie, are charged in connection with a January 30 attack.

They respectively face 18 and 17 charges regarding the January 30 altercation that took place at a house on Miguasha Road in Nouvelle at approximately 1:30 a.m.. They were arrested on Indian Drive in Gesgapegiag a few hours after the incident. They notably face charges of 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.

The first judge to hear the case, Annick Boivin, issued an order barring the defendants from contacting the victims. The investigation determined that there was a link between all the individuals involved in the incident and that the occupants of the house were targeted by the two accused before and during the altercation.

The preliminary hearing of one of the two men charged in the fatal Rivière-au-Renard collision on May 10, 2023, Simon Dufort-Chouinard, began on March 13 at the Percé Courthouse. Around thirty witnesses which include civilians, experts and an accident reconstructionist, will be heard by Court of Quebec Judge Martin Gagnon. The preliminary hearing is expected to last six days. The case will resume between April 2 and April 5. Simon Dufort-Chouinard is charged with the premeditated murder of Gabriel Noël and the non-premeditated murder of Dylan Samuel Francoeur. The three young men lived in Rivière-au-Renard.

The preliminary hearing is normally used to evaluate the evidence to determine if there will be a trial. A publication ban prevents reporting what was said during court. In the case of Simon Dufort-Chouinard, the defence has already admitted that there is sufficient evidence for a trial. The preliminary hearing is nevertheless being held at the request of the defence.

Simon Dufort-Chouinard has been detained at the New Carlisle detention centre since his May 10, 2023, arrest. The father of the accused, Marc-Jules Chouinard, faces manslaughter charges in this case. He was conditionally released on November 20, 2023, pending further proceedings.

The case of Claude Blais, 60, from Paspebiac, who faces drug-related charges, will return to court for the orientation and declaration stage of procedure on April 22, according to criminal prosecutor Cédric Leblanc Falardeau. The postponement was approved by Quebec Court Judge Celestina Almeida on March 12. Claude Blais was arrested following a Sûreté du Québec drug search on February 29 in Paspebiac. He first appeared on March 1 at the New Carlisle Courthouse to face charges of possession of drugs for the purpose of trafficking and possession of property obtained by crime. The search led to the seizure of a certain quantity of illicit cannabis, about 15 grams of cocaine, equipment used in drug trafficking, and money.

Quebec Court Judge Denis Paradis postponed the case of Pierre-André Roussy, 37, from Grande-Rivière charged with break-and-enter and assault until March 25 at the Percé Courthouse. According to criminal prosecutor Émilie Landry-Therriault, the accused, who last appeared in court on March 11, will come back for an orientation appearance pertaining to his bail hearing. Pierre-André Roussy was arrested by the Chandler detachment Sûreté du Québec Major Crimes Squad during a February 1 and 2 operation that also led to the arrest of Tommy Albert-Lantin, 25, from Chandler.

Their arrests were related to a break-and-enter and assault dating back to December 18, 2023, events that took place in a residence in the area of Baril Street in Percé. The suspects left the scene before the police arrived and the victim, a man in his twenties, suffered from minor injuries. On January 3, the Sûreté du Québec asked the population via a press release to help find Jonathan Racette, 29, and Michael Bourque, 28, both from the Chandler area, in connection with the incident as well. On January 4, Jonathan Racette was arrested. Michael Bourque is still actively sought by the police.

## The Ministry of Wildlife is collecting data on ice fishing in Escuminac

Nelson Sergerie, LJI

ESCUMINAC - A study to document the popular winter activity of ice fishing for rainbow smelt in the Escuminac sector is currently underway.

"The main objective is to characterize the rainbow smelt ice fishing activity. This is the way preferred by the ministry to obtain information. The aim is to estimate traffic on fishing sites, what we call fishing effort. We also aim to estimate the catches of fishermen, the total catches, and estimate the fishing success, that is to say, whether the fishing was good this year," explains biologist Antoine Richard from the Ministry of Wildlife.

This data will be useful to ensure the sound management of smelt in this sector. A similar study was already conducted in this sector in 2003. "It will be interesting to compare the statistics," says Mr. Richard. Annual monitoring of commercial fishing is also conducted in Escuminac. "In recent years there has been less ice, which means there has been less commercial fishing, but there seems to be a certain trend where fishing success has decreased. We aim to explain this trend and we are interested in sport fishing to see if we will see the same trend," mentions Mr. Richard.

The Escuminac site was chosen for its popularity, more precisely between Pointe Fleurant and Pointe-à-la-Garde. "We are going to look for data on this sector and we want to use this knowledge to set up a larger scale survey which was to take place next winter and which should include the York River sector in Gaspé, another site very popular in the Gaspésie," says the biologist. The ministry would like to carry out this type of survey every five years to have better monitoring of this fishing.

Wildlife technicians went on the ice to meet fishermen with a short form to find out their fishing times and catches made. The fishermen can also send their results by mail or email to the ministry for data accounting.

"The survey began on February 1, and the reception from fishermen has been excellent. People understand the work we do," says Mr. Richard.

The milder winter could influence the results, particularly regarding the number of fishermen. "On the other hand, in terms of fishing success, it should have less impact on this year's figures. This is why we want to do it over two years to get a better picture," he says.

The survey is expected to continue until March 31.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Quebec’s deficit: no panic but a different approach would help

There is no reason to panic about the size of Quebec’s recent deficit, even if it reaches a whopping \$11 billion, which is three-and-a-half times the size expected in November when Finance Minister Éric Girard presented his economic update.

However, there is reason to criticize the way the Coalition avenir Québec government (CAQ) reached that hole because a sizable portion of that could have been avoided.

In nominal terms, the March 12 budget featured the worst deficit in the history of Quebec. In actualized terms though, the worst deficits were tabled by other Finance ministers.

For example, in the spring of 1994, the government of Daniel Johnson Junior’s Finance Minister, Monique Gagnon-Tremblay, tabled a budget characterized by a deficit of \$4.4 billion. In today’s dollars, it would mean a déficit of \$9.25 billion, given that a dollar in 1994 is worth \$2.09 in 2024.

In reality, the budget tabled on March 12 by Finance Minister Éric Girard includes a reserve of \$1.5 billion for unexpected expenses which are, therefore, still not earmarked and a \$2.2 billion payment to the Generation Fund which is an asset for the future. So, the real deficit of the financial year starting on April 1 will be \$7.3 billion. In indexed, or actualized, dollars, the deficit is lower than that of 1994. The Generation Fund did not exist back then.

The upcoming deficit, as a fraction of the gross domestic product (GDP), should not be a big cause of concern either. Even at \$11 billion, it represents 1.5% of Quebec’s GDP, which is the annual output of all the goods and services produced in a year.

During the economic slump of 2008-2009, the share of the deficit compared to the gross domestic product reached a 2.5% ratio. During the terrible economic crash of 1981, when the interest rate reached 21%, three times the current level, the deficit/gross domestic product ratio reached 3.5%, sometimes more over quarterly periods.

Moreover, the Quebec long-term debt, although increasing a bit in nominal terms, now represents 38.3% of Quebec’s gross domestic product. That ratio reached 48.9% in 2017. The situation has therefore improved sharply, and the government plans a 30% ratio in 2037-2038.

Positives notes

Two elements of Éric Girard’s budget could be reassuring. There is an increase of 9% in the Department of Education expenditures, which have been long neglected, and a rise of 4.2% in the health care budget.

When the money is spent wisely, education expenditures should be seen as an investment. As it is often said, if you think education is costly, try ignorance.

Of course, the impact of the last negotiation rush with public sector employees played a big role in the money earmarked for education. However, it remains to be seen if the overall management of the education system and the better support requested by the teachers will be enough to attract additional qualified labour in classrooms. Between 20 to 25% of young teachers abandon the profession before five years because the working conditions are unbearable.

This will be Education Minister Bernard Drainville’s main test over the years to come if he stays at the helm of the department. Quebec has had 32 Education ministers in 60 years. They last a tad under two years. It is difficult to enforce a vision under those circumstances.

Health Minister Christian Dubé seems satisfied with a 4.2% budget increase for his department. It is good but, nevertheless, lower than the average annual rise of 6% in recent years. He affirms seeing some positive signs in hospitals after a tough winter start. In January, some emergency departments were being overwhelmed with a number of patients exceeding the care capacity by 100%, sometimes more.

Budget-wise, the Quebec government will have to tackle soon a negotiation bout with the general practitioners and specialists. They rarely settle for less than the other public sector employees and usually get a little bonus. It might explain why Finance Minister Girard put \$1.5 billion in a reserve for unexpected blows.

The budget shortcomings

The main aspects of a budget are essentially prepared and planned by a very limited team of four or five ministers, the premier and a couple of high-ranked civil servants. François Legault, Éric Girard, and Christian Dubé, who are three trained accountants; Treasury Board Minister Sonia Lebel; and Bernard Drainville were undoubtedly around the table and not many more people.

It means that all the other ministers holding portfolios like Transport, Environment, Municipal Affairs and Housing as well as Social Services were waiting elsewhere with very few occasions to influence how the budget would be designed.

The March 12 budget is short on housing incentives, funds forwarded to community groups, public transportation and environmental measures.

Quebec’s main association of municipalities is rightfully complaining about the lack of new housing monies. Minister Girard has replied that last fall his government announced \$1.8 billion for housing. He fails to mention that half of the sum comes from the federal government. It is also clear that Premier Legault fails, as previous governments have failed for at least 20 years, in recognizing that Quebec doesn’t build enough social housing, namely units that allow low-income families and young adults to be supported in their attempt to improve their economic status.

The housing shortage, a fact only recognized in

April 2022 by Premier Legault, creates social problems that, when not addressed appropriately, add a burden on the health system. Housing is an essential component in life.

The underfinancing of community groups, whose managers see a reduction of their envelopes in the recent budget, will inevitably impact health institutions if social problems cannot be dealt with before they degenerate.

The failure to enhance commuting transport, which Minister Girard explained through the adoption of previous measures, will have an impact on people’s habits and greenhouse effect gas emissions. Having to buy vehicles when it could be avoided puts a burden on families. A failure to lower our polluting gas emissions will inevitably impact our health system. A growing number of medicine specialists are studying this overall impact on people’s health, and the first analyses are quite worrying.

During the COVID crisis and just before the October 2022 election, the Quebec government, led by Premier Legault and Minister Girard, primarily opted for tax breaks offered to 4.6 million taxpayers. At the time, a vast majority of those taxpayers were already counting on record amounts of pandemic benefits. There had never been so much money in the economic system.

Out of tax breaks amounting to \$7 billion handed out directly to citizens through two rounds of cheques, approximately \$4 billion were deemed unnecessary, given the good financial conditions of their beneficiaries.

A sum of \$4 billion today could have significantly reduced the deficit for 2024-2025, especially when we subtract from \$11 billion the \$1.5 billion reserve and \$2.2 billion going to the Generation Fund.

Measures to support farmers, who have seen their net income melt increasingly over the last few years, would have also been welcomed on March 12. A society cannot prosper if it neglects its food providers. Minister Girard suggests that Quebec’s budgetary situation will likely improve later in 2024, as the international economic context is expected to improve, and considering the high probability that the policy interest rate will decline.

However, this optimism relies on terms such as likely and expected, or on externalities. We understand that a small economy of 9 million people heavily depends on factors beyond its control but the Coalition avenir Québec government diverted some of its wiggle room through unnecessary and untimely tax breaks. That money would have been better used now.



ESTABLISHED • MAY 1975



**Publisher:**  
Penny MacWhirter



**News Editor:**  
Gilles Gagné



**Circulation/Office Manager**  
Holly Smith

**JOURNALISTS:**  
Nelson Sergerie  
Diane Skinner  
Cynthia Dow,  
Jeanie LeLacheur

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

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

(Taxes included)  
1-year (paper or digital): \$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.)





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

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

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

Page 4, March 20, 2024 - Spec



# CAQ MNAs from the Gaspé Peninsula defend their government's budget

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Catherine Blouin, the Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Bonaventure understands the disappointment caused by the Quebec government decision not to include the redevelopment of Maria Hospital's Emergency and Intensive Care departments in the Quebec Infrastructure Program (PQI). She promises "not to give up".

"I would have liked Maria Hospital to be in the PQI. I won't hide it. I won't pretend to be happy about it. I understand that people are angry. I am disappointed myself. I will continue to work on this file fiercely. I'm not going to give up," says Catherine Blouin.

However, the Premier of Quebec, François Legault, was clear during his visit to the Gaspé Peninsula last November.

"It's an issue that Catherine (Blouin) and Stéphane (Sainte-Croix, MNA for Gaspé) talk to me about a lot. The next PQI is in the spring budget, so in April 2024. I hope to be able to include it in the PQI in the spring because we really need to renovate the Maria hospital," mentioned the Premier.

The board of directors of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre even adopted a resolution last fall to pressure the Quebec government to include the project in the plan.

Catherine Blouin mentions that there are two presentations of the PQI remaining before the end of the mandate in Oc-



Photo: N. Sergerie

*MNAs Stéphane Sainte-Croix and Catherine Blouin stand with Premier François Legault (centre) during a visit to Gaspé during the electoral campaign.*

tober 2025. She also says that the funds available were very limited as the government presented a deficit budget of \$11 billion on March 12.

"It is recognized by the entire government. We know that we must deliver this file, but the current economic situation did not allow us to move forward this year," she adds.

The Minister of Finance, Éric Girard, spoke of future budgetary rigour. Should we fear that the project will be postponed until much later?

"I will not give up as I did with electoral reform. Since Tuesday, the phone has been ringing with people concerned. I will not give up to go as quickly as possible," says the MNA.

"Being a government agency, we have a certain duty of discretion and we will not grant interviews outside of the provincial budget. Regarding the redevelopment of the emergency room and intensive care

departments at Maria Hospital, we will continue to have discussions and work on this file in conjunction with the MSSS (Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux) so that the project eventually sees the light of day. It is clear that this project remains a priority for the CISSS (Integrated Health and Social Services Centre) de la Gaspésie," declared in writing the CISSS following this news. Housing

The region's top priority is housing and this budget was criticized widely throughout the province since nothing new was announced.

"In the fall, we added \$1.5 billion in housing and \$1.3 billion consolidated support for Quebecers and in this \$1.3 billion, there are measures to promote access to housing," says Catherine Blouin.

Her colleague from Gaspé provides a broader explanation. "It is important to say that, in recent years, our government

has invested historic sums in housing. We're talking roughly \$6 billion on the table. What we have noticed is not a money problem. This is the challenge of delivering the projects," asserts Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

Among all the measures put in place, the Quebec Affordable Housing Program has been revised. The Quebec government has launched accelerated training in construction to increase the labour pool and facilitate the mobility of workers, which will lead to gains in the housing sector.

"The money is on the table. There are some great projects in the Gaspésie. We are planning an announcement very soon for interesting projects in the region," continues Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Both Ms. Blouin and Mr. Sainte-Croix would like developers to come forward to speed up the groundbreaking process. Fisheries sector

Another major regional concern is the crisis in the fisheries sector.

The Quebec government maintains that it will still be there for the fisheries in the future, even if there were no specific allocations in the last budget.

"We responded to the urgency of the situation with our latest announcements requested by the MRC de la Côte-de-Gaspé in terms of supporting economic diversification, job retention and skills development. We responded. For the future, we are waiting for a signal from the federal government as a resource manager and the implementation of

solutions that will ensure a transition and sustainability of our affected communities," explains the Gaspé MNA.

In air transport, the Quebec government is adding \$27 million over the next three years to the Regional Air Access Program, a program which consists of \$500 airfares.

However, a long-term improvement plan is once again absent.

"I am confident that in moving forward with the stakeholders we will come up with solutions that will allow a more regular service offering and fill in less profitable periods. We are talking about nearly \$340 million over the next five years," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Also absent from the budget is the renovation of the New Carlisle prison, which has been in the news for its dilapidated condition.

"I had several discussions with Minister François Bonnardel of Public Security. There is work that must be done as quickly as possible that does not appear in the PQI," Ms. Blouin limits herself to saying.

Some \$25 million has been allocated for the next year to improve cell phone service, particularly in the Gaspé Peninsula. One hundred locations were chosen across the province.

"That's very good news. What we want is for the Gaspésie to be in phase 1 of the work. I cannot make an announcement before the (official) announcements, but we are very well positioned," maintains Ms. Blouin.

## One more step towards incentive pricing at the RITMRG

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - The Régie intermunicipale de traitement des matières résiduelles de la Gaspésie (RITMRG) which serves the Rocher-Percé MRC and the Town of Gaspé is moving towards incentive pricing.

Last year, the board explained the principle to citizens, that the cost could be tied to the amount of waste generated.

"This year, we sent a little note to the citizens of the Rocher-Percé MRC. We said that we will continue to implement it gradually. We will focus on residences where

there is a higher frequency of waste collection," explains Nathalie Drapeau, director of the Gaspé Peninsula Intermunicipal Residual Materials Treatment Board (RITMRG).

Approximately 450 residences received a letter explaining the number of green bin collections in 2023 and the potential impact of incentive pricing if it were applied.

"We are really targeting the largest generators, providing them with information so that they can prepare or modify their practices at home," notes Ms. Drapeau.

People who receive this letter are invited to contact the agency to report possible errors or seek advice.

"This exchange will make it possible to validate practices and perhaps provide tips for changing behaviour to avoid an additional bill in the years to come," says the director.

At the start of the year, the characterization of residual materials carried out in 2023 indicated that 65% of items in the green bin should have been sorted into the blue or brown bin.

"There is so much money associated with the management of these materials that we must use all angles to reduce this bill and incentive pricing is a way of encouraging better practices," explains Ms. Drapeau.

This incentive pricing could

be accompanied by a reduction for citizens who have excellent practices, as long as operating costs are covered.

"We submitted several scenarios to elected officials based on simulations which cover the

expense associated with the budget. In an ideal world, it would be fun next year to have a reduction in spending," says the manager. An expense reduction would allow for a broader range of options.





VILLAGE  
Real Estate Agency

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

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

# Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 2 wind farm: A minor noise addition, according to experts

GILLES GAGNÉ

POINTE-À-LA-CROIX – Despite some concerns, the addition of 18 to 24 wind turbines to the existing Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 1 wind farm in Escuminac's backcountry would result in minimal additional noise, according to acoustic experts who participated on March 12 in the "targeted consultation" of the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement (BAPE), held in Pointe-à-la-Croix.

During the session that lasted over four hours, various parties discussed issues specific to the next wind farm in the Gaspé Peninsula, which is called Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 2, with general wind energy issues also on the agenda. Mesgi'g Ugju's'n translates to "big winds" in Mi'gmaq.

The main questions came from Pascal Bergeron, spokesperson for the Environnement Vert-plus group, and from a citizen speaking on the phone, Alexandre Richard, whose place of residence was not provided. Their questions submitted in January to the BAPE justified the targeted consultation chaired by Antoine Morissette.

In addition to noise concerns, questions from Pascal Bergeron and Alexandre Richard focused on the cumulative effects of a second wind farm on wildlife habitat, particularly due to logging, the possible dismantling of the two wind farms, and the effects of infrasound on wildlife.

The Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 2 project, also known as MU2, will be adjacent to the first of the name, which has produced electricity since December 2016 with a capacity of 150 megawatts. The Innergex firm and the three Mi'gmaq communities of Gespeg, Gesgapegiag and Listuguj, through the Migmawei Mawiomni Business Corporation, are equal partners in the two wind farms.

MU2 will produce 102 megawatts and will require a \$250 million investment, with commissioning scheduled for December 2026.

## Noise

Responding to Pascal Bergeron's fears about the cumulative noise effect potentially generated by the two wind farms on wildlife, Innergex spokesperson Luc



Pascal Bergeron, of Environnement Vert-plus, is concerned about habitat loss resulting from new wind farms, but he notes that the MU2 wind farm will take advantage of an already occupied location.

Leblanc specified that his group is committed to respecting a maximum threshold of 40 decibels at a certain distance from the wind towers, even though zoning regulations would allow up to 45 decibels.

"Forty decibels is the noise we currently make when conversing," emphasized Luc Leblanc. The president of the BAPE targeted consultation, Antoine Morissette, asked him if other factors can worsen or attenuate the noise generated by wind turbines.

"The modelling will take into consideration the most favourable propagation factors as if they were coming from all directions, which is unlikely. Manufacturers (of wind turbines) try to reduce the impact of noise as much as possible because more and more wind turbines are built in inhabited areas," replied Mr. Leblanc.

He specified that the MU1 and MU2 wind farms are far from permanently inhabited areas, with only a handful of chalets and camps located a few kilometres from the windmills.

Luc Leblanc indicated that "we can install serrated trailing edges at the end of the

blades, which reduce the noise by three decibels", a practice done particularly in France, where wind farms are located 500 metres from inhabited areas.

Mr. Morissette asked Luc Leblanc if Innergex considered noise criteria when choosing turbine manufacturers.

"The decision is not completely made but practically made. If I choose a wind turbine that makes one decibel more, we will locate it a little further from the chalet, if necessary," noted Mr. Leblanc.

In response to Mr. Morissette, Mr. Leblanc confirmed that a wind turbine, at the height of 120 metres in the air in the case of MU2, generates up to 107 decibels.

"At the foot of the wind turbine, the noise heard is already well below 107 decibels. At 100 metres, we could have the conversation we are having here," explained Luc Leblanc.

Michel Ducharme, an expert from the atmospheric policy department at the Ministry of the Environment, indicated that "a sound propagates in the atmosphere and is perceived by humans. I am not sure that animals hear the same thing. (...) When we speak, we are at

50-60 decibels. A quiet place is at 40 decibels."

He added that we "understand that the wind turbines, up close, do more than that; 40 decibels is the beginning of what wind turbines produce. (...) Wind turbines, according to the documentation, go from 20 to 100 decibels."

Regarding the impact of infrasound, sounds not perceptible to humans, Danielle Gauthier, from the Gaspé regional management of the Wildlife sector, indicated that certain animals perceive them.

"I haven't found any studies showing that infrasound affects animals. Ambient noises are more disturbing. It is quite well known, but there are no precise standards indicating that noise has an impact on animals (...) We look at the disturbance on a large scale," emphasized Ms. Gauthier.

## Dismantling

Alexandre Richard wondered if there are mechanisms to ensure the dismantling of wind farms, in the event that the Innergex-MMBC tandem experiences financial difficulties.

"This is a 30-year contract. From the 25th year, we evaluate the total amount of the dismantling cost, with a letter of credit, in case the (contract of the) park is not renewed," indicated Luc Leblanc.

This dismantling cost is difficult to estimate at the moment, considering the period, but it will certainly require "millions of dollars," says the Innergex spokesperson.

## Bats

Alexandre Richard also asked questions about the impact of windmill blades on bats, several varieties of which have been threatened in recent years, especially due to

white-nose syndrome.

Danielle Gauthier responded that there is currently no recent data in Canada and Quebec on the overall impact of blades on bats.

"The impact data in Quebec is lower than in other regions (of Canada). It is possible that this is because of lower sampling or a smaller population," indicated Ms. Gauthier.

In 2016, the time of the last available Canadian count, 47,000 bats were killed by windmills.

Danielle Gauthier specified that adjusting the start-up speeds of wind turbines could significantly reduce impacts between bats and blades, "The time when the bat flies and the time when the wind turbine operates are not the same."

Starting turbines and blades when the wind speed is six metres per second would virtually eliminate all of these impacts because bats don't fly in that type of wind, she said. A start at five metres per second would cut the impact in half.

In his final remarks, Pascal Bergeron, from Environnement Vert-plus, highlighted the difference in treatment between a huge industrial project like Northvolt and the MU2 wind farm.

"The largest project in Quebec, Northvolt, is not aligned to have a BAPE while we are talking about a BAPE for a wind farm which has social acceptability," he lamented.

"If I had one recommendation to make to the Commission, it would be not to create wind farms on new sites. This is not the case here," noted Mr. Bergeron, while expressing hope that wind power development would fall to Hydro-Québec and not to private companies which, he said, doesn't exclude partnerships with First Nations and MRCs.

He also wants more studies to be carried out on the effects of infrasound on wildlife.

Antoine Morissette must submit his report by June 11 at the latest. Given the rules of a targeted consultation, his recommendations cannot jeopardize the project but can improve some of its aspects. The minister will have three weeks to make the report public. Interested groups can submit briefs to the BAPE until March 19.



Terry Shaw of the MMBC, Paul Madrennes and Luc Leblanc of Innergex, and Mathieu Férét of Pesca Environnement assure that, on the ground, the noise impact of a wind farm is limited.

Photos: G. Gagné

# Stéphane Sainte-Croix favours preserving Villa Frederick-James’ artistic focus

GILLES GAGNÉ

PERCÉ – Stéphane Sainte-Croix, the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, is hopeful that the Villa Frederick-James will maintain its connection to the arts. He plans to hold meetings with local stakeholders in April to develop a new vision for the imposing house built in 1888.

The Villa was selected by the Quebec government to become the Espace Bleu in the Gaspé, but the provincewide project to establish a network of 17 regional museums based on pride, an idea that had been announced in June 2021 by Premier François Legault, was officially abandoned on March 4 due to staggering cost overruns.

The Villa Frederick-James’ renovation, a \$25.5 million initiative, is almost completed and another initiative must be found for the residence.

Stéphane Sainte-Croix is aware that Quebec’s Minister



Photo: G. Gagné

*Gaspé MNA, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, is certain citizens of Percé will want to maintain artistic activities at Villa Frederick-James.*

of Culture, Mathieu Lacombe, is open to changing the artistic vocation of the four Blue Space buildings that were already in the works.

“We will work with the community on the most consensual project possible and

one that will correspond to the structure of the Villa and its capacity to accommodate activities,” he says.

“The minister was clear. The mandate assigned must ensure that we seek out as many inputs as possible, re-

spect the popular opinion and bring these heritage spaces to life. I can't see how it could become anything other than what it has always been,” he adds.

Frederick James was an American artist from the East Coast who built the house to make sure that he could keep creating art while spending time in Percé.

Mr. Sainte-Croix, having recently visited the residence, notes that renovation work is more than 90% completed, with landscaping set to commence once the weather permits.

He will favour the input of the residents of Percé in finding another use for the house, without excluding the reflection of all Gaspésians. This approach stems from criticism surrounding the Espace Bleu concept, which led to the creation of a regional committee, to ensure consultation.

The planning of a new concept will take some time,

points out Mr. Sainte-Croix, who is not too worried about landing an operational budget.

“A planned budget remains within the current scenario, according to the minister's commitment. The house will not be open in 2024. We're giving ourselves the year 2024 to tie all that together. We would like to bring together the winning conditions in 2025,” he specifies.

Regarding ownership, Mr. Sainte-Croix believes the Government of Quebec will keep ownership of the four sites where work and planning were already underway to become the first sites in the Espace Bleu network.

“We haven't had these thoughts yet. Maybe it (an ownership decision) will happen in the process. We will take the time to analyze the pros and cons,” he says.

The management structure of the Villa will be determined following the selection of the project, he concludes.

## Solar eclipse: Afternoon classes on April 8 cancelled across Gaspé Peninsula

GILLES GAGNÉ  
NELSON SERGERIE

NEW CARLISLE - After weeks of waiting for directives from provincial authorities regarding the solar eclipse that will occur on April 8, the Eastern Shores School Board along with the Chic-Chocs and René-Lévesque Service Centres have decided that afternoon classes will be cancelled on that day.

This half-day pedagogical break is being implemented because a partial solar eclipse, with varying degrees of intensity depending on the location, will occur between 2:11 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. within the territory of the organizations. The decision aims to ensure a safe return home for all students.

“After analyzing various scenarios and ministerial guidelines, we concluded that it was impossible to safely return students home between 2:11 p.m. and 4:45 p.m. As many buses serve both elementary and secondary routes consecutively, the vast majority of our students would

have to wait until 6:15 p.m. before returning home, which is not a feasible option,” says Denise Simoneau, director general of the Eastern Shores School Board (ESSB).

“This captivating event, during which the Moon casts its shadow on Earth, presents both educational opportunities and safety considerations, especially as it coincides with school dismissal time. Concerned with prioritizing the safety and well-being of our students, we have decided to dismiss classes at noon on April 8, 2024,” she adds.

Students will thus leave school either at the end of the morning or during the lunch period, before the onset of the solar eclipse, according to a schedule that will be communicated to them later. Additionally, daycare services will be closed during the afternoon.

Despite the educational shutdown, ESSB finds it important to take advantage of this rare natural phenomenon as a learning opportunity. Therefore, teachers have been preparing activities for several weeks and sensitizing



Photo: G. Gagné

*Despite the educational shutdown, ESSB finds it important to take advantage of this rare natural phenomenon as a learning opportunity, according to Denise Simoneau, Director General of ESSB.*

students to the safety measures to be implemented so they can safely observe and experience the partial eclipse.

“This decision, which focuses above all on ensuring the safety of all our students, was made jointly on the issue

taking into account ministerial guidelines. This decision, according to our analysis, makes it possible to ensure the necessary conditions for a safe return home for all our students,” specifies the interim general director of the Chic-Chocs School Service Centre, Josée Synnott.

“As several buses make two trips successively for the elementary and secondary schools, the vast majority of our students would have to wait until 6:15 p.m. before returning home, which does not represent a viable solution,” says Sandra Nicol, of the René-Lévesque School Service Centre, echoing the explanation provided by Denise Simoneau.

“Although the solar eclipse is a fascinating event, it also presents considerable logistical challenges in managing school transportation,” adds Ms. Nicol.

The René-Lévesque and Chic-Chocs School Service Centres will also benefit from this rare natural phenomenon as a learning situation. Teachers will be invited to discuss the topic with their students

before and after the solar eclipse. They will talk about the phenomenon, and its causes, as well as instructions on how to carry out a safe observation.

Adult education, professional training centres and daycare services within the Chic-Chocs School Service Centre will remain open.

It is worth noting that direct observation of the solar eclipse can cause permanent eye damage. The Public Health Department mentions that direct observation of the sun should be avoided at all times as it can cause eye damage, even with conventional sun protection such as sunglasses or lenses.

Moreover, according to the Public Health Department, this risk is increased during an eclipse due to the decrease in sunlight, which reduces the eye's protective reflex. The Ministry of Health and Social Services (MSSS) reminds people not to observe the solar eclipse with the naked eye for its entire duration.

*(With information from an ESSB press release)*



# The Canadian Dental Care Plan is here

Oral health is vital to your overall health. The Canadian Dental Care Plan will help millions of Canadians access the dental care they need.

Applications are opening in phases, **starting with seniors**. The Plan will provide coverage to those with:

- no dental insurance
- a family income under \$90,000

Find out if you are eligible and when you can apply at **[Canada.ca/Dental](https://Canada.ca/Dental)**

**Canadian  
Dental  
Care Plan**

Accessible. Affordable. Essential.



Canada



CASA PRESENTS

# HOMEGROWN 2024

*Art and Music Show*

APRIL 5TH, 7PM: \$10

**NORM & DAVE DUO**  
**THE TRICULTURALS - ALBUM LAUNCH**  
**LIVE JAM SESSION**

APRIL 6TH, 7PM: \$20

**LIVE MUSIC WITH OVER 30 MUSICIANS FROM THE**  
**ENGLISH SPEAKING COMMUNITY OF**  
**THE GASPE COAST**

## PASPEBIAC CULTURAL CENTRE

LIMITED AVAILABILITY. ORDER TICKETS AT :  
[LEPOINTDEVENTE.COM](http://LEPOINTDEVENTE.COM) OR CALL 418-752-5200 EXT 1

**VISUAL ART EXHIBIT in the FOYER**  
**APRIL 5, 4PM to 10PM**  
**APRIL 6, 10AM to 10PM**  
**(free admission)**

**ARTISAN MARKET in the CENTRE**  
**APRIL 6, 10AM to 2PM**  
**(free admission)**

Secrétariat aux relations  
avec les Québécois  
d'expression anglaise

Québec



MRC de  
BONAVENTURE

SADC

Société  
d'aide au développement  
de la communauté  
DE GASPE



culture  
GASPESIE

SADC

Société  
d'aide au développement  
de la communauté  
DU ROCHER-PERCÉ



Canada



# Work on Gaspé Cathedral will soon enter the final stage

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The final phase of restoration work on Gaspé's Christ-Roi Cathedral will get underway in early spring. This last stage of the vast project, which was launched in 2014, consists of replacing the roof of the bell tower and certain windows that have reached the end of their useful life. Estimated in 2021 at \$600,000, the bill now exceeds

\$750,000, 80% of which will be covered by the Government of Quebec. "We started in 2014 with wood cladding. We did the slate roof in two other phases. And now the bell tower remains. This includes the structure to replace the wood that is deteriorated. There is also the restoration of the carillon. These engines are 60 years old or more and they need to be refurbished," says the vice-president of the Fabrique

Saint-Albert de Gaspé and project manager for the restoration of the cathedral, Yvan Landry. Tenders have been launched and proposals will be opened in early March. The work on the bell tower will cost \$575,000 while the replacement of the upper windows will cost more than \$200,000. "The work is in its final phase. This is why we have a fundraising campaign launched to collect the money needed to pay our 20% share, about \$180,000," says the vice president. "If we had not been subsidized, we would have had a lot of difficulty doing this work, if not impossible," says Mr. Landry. Over the past 10 years, a sum of around \$4 million has been needed to refurbish the church. "We will have to think about repainting the exterior cladding in a few years. There will always be something to do but the structure will have been taken care of," mentions the project manager.



Photo: N. Sergerie  
*The Cathedral bell tower is the last stage of the major rehabilitation.*

## Female politicians demand the same benefits for maternity leave

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Women elected at the municipal level are demanding a better work/life balance, in particular the same conditions as ordinary citizens, especially during maternity leave. The Municipal Young Mothers Network recently met with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Andrée Laforest, to propose improvements to balance work/life. "The last time the law was changed must have been 45 years ago. We are talking about 18 weeks of parental leave for elected officials. We find that it's really archaic and it can slow down some women from running (for office) since we never want to have to make a decision about our family versus our career," says Town of Gaspé councillor, Charlie Maude Giroux Bossé, who became a mother during her mandate. "Modernizing and extending parental leave could make it easier for future mothers who could be elected," she says. Andrée Laforest indicated to the network that their request will be analyzed and that



Photo: Courtesy of Charlie Maude Giroux Bossé  
*Charlie Maude Giroux Bossé at the municipal council meeting with Mayor Daniel Côté*

a response will be provided shortly. "What we are suggesting is a question of fairness. We also want it to remain a choice for young mothers. For me, it was my choice to sit with my baby, but I had an easier situation. For me, it was going really well. For some, it can be an obstacle with breastfeeding and the baby's health. We want women to be able to have the choice and have a fair situation with other women in other professions in Quebec," adds Ms. Giroux Bossé.

According to the elected official, people are surprised to learn about the limited parental leave available to municipal councillors. "If we want more women around the decision-making table, we need laws that govern their reality," says the councillor. Among other suggestions, the network proposes enabling remote participation, voting by proxy and the creation of a national fund for hiring temporary support for absent elected officials.

The Fabrique isn't ruling out the possibility of creating an endowment fund to ensure financial resources are available when the next major repairs are needed. "Probably we should move towards that: a heritage fund to see the significant costs coming from afar. The parish of Gaspé is experiencing the same problems as all the other parishes with financial difficulties due to the decline in practice. It's difficult to set up a fund and carry out day-to-day manage-

ment. It would be the right thing to do," says Mr. Landry. Parishioners have never hesitated to contribute money when major work is necessary. The Cathedral was opened in 1969. The building, clad in red cedar, is made up of an assembly of volumes with modern lines and was recognized as a historic monument by the Ministry of Culture and Communication of Quebec in 2001. The Cathedral is the only wooden one in North America.

## Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouse will reopen

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Fisheries and Oceans Canada says its objective is to reopen the Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouse to the public this summer. The site was closed last July following an inspection by the ministry on June 20. The monument was fenced off to prevent access, sparking public outcry, and prompted a demonstration of nearly 100 people. Last fall, the ministry received an expert report on the structure's condition and the presence of mold. For the structure, the report recommended having the window casings inspected by a mason and anchored, if necessary, to ensure ventilation of the interior of the lighthouse limiting humidity. It also suggested repairing some stair steps and limiting the number of people on the same floor to five. Regarding the issue of mold, the report concluded that moss and lichen do not represent a risk for the health of users. Currently, the lead-based paint is not hazardous, but some areas with mold need cleaning before reopening the lighthouse. Work carried out in October and November has made it possible to anchor the exterior window casings, as well

as unstable stones, and to block the exterior openings to limit water infiltration. A call for tenders was launched in January for cleaning the interior of the lighthouse, managing the presence of mold, and the replacement of some wood inside the lighthouse. In an email, the ministry stated that it continues to work tirelessly to complete the work by the start of the next tourist season. It is specified that all aspects allowing reopening during the next tourist season are covered by the work that has already been carried out or is being planned. The lighthouse, constructed between 1853 and 1858, remains a landmark at the entrance to the St. Lawrence River and is designated as a navigation reference. It attracts around 8,000 visitors annually. This is not the first time the lighthouse has been closed due to its structural problems. In 2017, emergency work was carried out to ensure the safety of visitors following an inspection in September 2016. At that time, the restoration work was estimated at \$6.5 million. The Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouse was recognized as a National Historic Site on June 11, 1973, and a heritage building on March 31, 1994.



Photo: N. Sergerie  
*The Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouse was closed last July.*



# Quebec protects part of ZEC des Anses territory

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - The Quebec government has announced its intention to protect approximately 60 square kilometres of the ZEC des Anses in Chandler, following a vast movement launched in favour of the protection of this territory rich in biodiversity.

“The intention eventually leads to recognition of the protected area,” mentions Pierre-Luc Arsenaault, a Chandler municipal councillor very involved in the matter.

The targeted sector is the North-East of the ZEC, a rich and fragile environment. “I think we really demonstrated that we had ecosystem potential 15 minutes from downtown Chandler. With the Ministry of the Environment, we agree that there is very good potential and perhaps possibly more,” says Mr. Arsenaault.

“It is certain that throughout the territory, there are still many



Photo: G. Gagné

*Pierre-Luc Arsenaault and Denis Michaud, have been advocating for the protection of the ZEC des Anses since 2020.*

areas to characterize,” adds Mr. Arsenaault.

However, the presence of mining claims in certain sectors raises concerns. “Over the 60 square kilometres, there are claims that were granted within the proposed territory during negotiations with the Ministry of Forests. This somewhat compromises the entire devel-

opment project because, with the mining claims which take precedence, especially in the middle of the Grand Pabos Nord salmon river, this causes a problem,” mentions Mr. Arsenaault, noting that 20 mining claims have been granted.

Analyses have revealed the presence of rare flora such as the bulbous calypso or the

royal lady's slipper, as well as wetlands, amphibians, and many other species with precarious statuses.

The area also includes cedar forests, which are several centuries old. Some specimens have metre-long diameters. There are maple groves in the area as well.

The recreational tourism project or development of the territory was intended to be the basis for the protection of this territory. “It was to show a project other than logging. It will introduce people and tourists to the territory. The ZEC is known for hunting and fishing but there we are talking about hiking, mountain biking, interpretation and an academic component,” says the municipal councillor.

“There is very good potential and there is more and more interest in ecosystems,” he adds.

The exact boundaries of the protected area are currently de-

termined and will be announced upon reservation.

Mr. Arsenaault also expresses concerns about proposed logging activities near the possible protected area. “There are still proposed cuts on watersheds that lead to the river and the salmon retention barriers. We must keep our eyes open to protect this territory at its true value. We cannot carry out logging in the area bordering the proposed project,” says Mr. Arsenaault.

The government of Quebec says administrative measures aimed at preventing the carrying out of certain activities for commercial purposes that could degrade natural environments have been put in place for this territory.

Thus, a temporary suspension of the right to stake and designate on maps, as well as a complete and immediate halt of all forms of logging for commercial purposes, have been put into effect.

## A major storm hits Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The storm that hit Gaspé from March 10 to 12 left 69.4 centimetres of fresh snow.

On March 11, a record was set with 40.8 centimetres, surpassing the previous mark of 39 centimetres set in 1980.

Over the two days, nearly a month's worth of precipitation fell, considering the typical March amount is 72 centimetres.

Despite this heavy snowfall, a gap remains. As of March 14, Gaspé received 243 centimetres since the start of the winter, while the typical total by March 31 is 330 centimetres. To meet the seasonal norm, another 90 centimetres would need to fall by the end of the month. It is not unheard of to receive such huge quantities of snow this time of the year. For example, in March 2014, 116 centimetres fell during the last two weeks.

Environment Canada has not provided official data on the amount of snow that fell in the Bay of Chaleur area during this storm.



*A lot of snow fell on Gaspé during the storm from March 10 to 12.*

Photo: N. Sergerie

ment Canada, only 35.6 centimetres fell at Michel-Pouliot airport in Gaspé during February, a 56% deficit compared to the normal 63.2 centimetres.

With warm temperatures on February 28 and 29, the snow cover diminished by 30 centimetres, leaving only 10 centimetres on the ground by month's end.

This lack of snow has forced snowmobile clubs to close trails, disappointing winter sports enthusiasts.

The warm weather also brought a lot of rain: 16 millimetres was recorded on February 28 and 29, which was

the total for the month.

Gaspé received a total of 43 millimetres of water equivalent (the total of rain and snow converted into water), or two-thirds of the normal 65 millimetres for February.

In terms of temperature, the month was very hot with an average deviation of 3.5°C from the normal of -10.6°C. The average temperature in Gaspé was -7.1°C.

A new warm temperature record was set in Carleton-sur-Mer on February 28, when the mercury climbed to 11.3°C, surpassing the previous record of 6.9°C set in 2009.

## Still no suitable stop for Orléans Express in Carleton-sur-Mer

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CARLETON-SUR-MER - Two years after being forced to leave the Héron restaurant, Orléans Express has yet to find a permanent location in Carleton-sur-Mer.

Currently, buses stop at the municipal church, but the location is not designed to accommodate passengers waiting for the bus to arrive. “This is not a favourable situation for welcoming travellers. We deplore this situation,” admits the mayor of Carleton-sur-Mer, Mathieu Lapointe.

According to the mayor, merchants have expressed dissatisfaction with the Orléans Express business model. “Orléans does not offer attractive conditions for hosting the service. It becomes more of a burden than an asset. We would like Orléans to offer better conditions to the merchants who welcome visitors,” suggests Mr. Lapointe.

Despite the town's desire to make improvements to the location currently being used in Carleton-sur-Mer, the land

is owned by the church's Fabrique.

“We don't have a long-term horizon. It would be difficult to make adjustments without knowing whether the service will change from one day to the next or from one month to the next. The ideal solution would be for the bus to stop at an existing business,” explains the mayor.

The absence of a suitable stop for the Orléans bus is tarnishing Carleton-sur-Mer's image.

“More and more, companies have stopped offering parcel service because it is not advantageous. Orléans Express should have better sensitivity and consideration of the needs of the regions to adjust their (service) offer,” urges Mayor Lapointe.



Photo: N. Sergerie

*Orléans Express has not had a terminus in Carleton-sur-Mer for more than two years.*

**Very little snow in February**

According to Environ-



Mariya, held by her father Pavlo Razvodov, his wife Hanna Vydrygan, their son Oleksiy, Lyudmyla Vydrygan, Volodymyr Zmazhenko, his daughters Véronique and Ariana, his wife Iuliia Zmazhenko, Tatiana Ovadenko and Olena Sokolova. Olena has been living in the Gaspé Peninsula for several years.

Photos: G. Gagné

# Vladimir Putin will attack NATO European countries within two years, says Volodymyr Zmazhenko

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND — Volodymyr Zmazhenko, a New Richmond citizen originally from Ukraine, predicts that Russian President Vladimir Putin will likely attack other European countries within two years, possibly sooner, as part of the ongoing war initiated when Russia invaded Ukraine two years and one month ago.

Participating in a Ukraine-Baie-des-Chaleurs Committee event to allow people to exchange with the Ukrainian refugees who have settled in the area over the last two years, Mr. Zmazhenko, who moved to New Richmond 12 years ago, was asked by various attendees what he thinks will happen in the foreseeable future between Russia and Ukraine.

“The situation is deteriorating in Ukraine. In reality, the war started with the invasion of Crimea in 2014. Most (industrialized countries) people shut their eyes at the time. It came back in 2022 as Russia initiated the war against Ukraine. Ukrainians held

their own for a while but it is tougher now, as Russians are gaining experience on our land. Thanks to drones, we have a certain advantage in that aspect of the war but, overall, the situation is deteriorating because Russia is a much bigger country,” explains Volodymyr Zmazhenko.

The population of Russia is about three times that of Ukraine and Russia’s economy is boosted by oil and gas sales, and the emphasis put on the war effort, he adds.

“The simple solution is providing additional help to Ukraine. It is normal that people don’t want to participate in that war. We understand that. For example, there is a shortage of (explosive) shells in the Ukrainian army. Canada is a big producer of shells, and they are made in Quebec. However, Canada doesn’t deliver them to Ukraine. It is hard to understand why. There are 1.3 million Canadians of Ukrainian descent and Canada’s contribution to Ukraine is far from that of the leading countries. There is more talking than ac-

tion from the Canadian government,” he adds.

He mentions that Canada initiated a boycott of Russian vodka, which looked good at first. “It ended there. We can find here many products made recently in Russia. So, the impact of the boycott was minimal.”

Vladimir Putin, stresses Mr. Zmazhenko, will invade another country, or several other European countries at one point. He refers to Poland or the Baltic Sea nations like Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

“As I said, I understand the people who avoid getting involved directly in the Russia-Ukraine war but once a NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) country is invaded, the other countries (that are part of the organization) will have to send troops. This can be avoided by supporting Ukraine better,” explains Mr. Zmazhenko.

He understands that people have a hard time grasping Vladimir Putin’s behaviour. “He doesn’t listen to anyone. He will do what he wants and he thinks that Russia is superior. Russia might hit a wall at one point but he doesn’t care. He doesn’t mind being the only one to think the way he thinks,” says Mr. Zmazhenko.

A majority of the Russian population follows Vladimir Putin because some people are scared of him but also because a lot of people believe him.

“I have a Russian friend who has been living in Canada for 20 years and he believes in Putin. There is very little information reaching some Russians and even when they hear the truth, they don’t believe it,” points out Volodymyr Zmazhenko.

Cont'd on page 15



Lyudmyla Vydrygan says she found peace in the Gaspé Peninsula, as Annie Chénier from New Richmond listens attentively.

## Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



### Time changes everything

With very mixed emotions I am concluding my journey as a columnist, journalist, and proofreader for The Gaspé Spec and the Spec Tourist Guides, the extraordinary and unique community newspaper that continues to bring all the news from the coast to our loyal readers. Bringing the news to anglophone readers has been a privilege that I have not taken lightly, but it has sure been a lot of fun too.

From the excitement I felt in August, 2008 upon seeing my first article published in the Spec to 16 years later and some 3,000 of my bespoke pieces published, I have never lost that wonderful feeling of knowing I have been given the opportunity to chronicle the lives and times of the people of the Gaspé. We are people who are connected in so many ways: historically, culturally, economically, linguistically and environmentally.

Many Anglo-Gaspesians share the same challenges that are unique to being part of a minority group, in this case based on language. We often face roadblocks to full employment and access to medical care particularly when travelling outside the community. Sometimes these challenges are so daunting that we resign ourselves to being second-class citizens in our own communities and beyond.

But there is light! Over the past 16 years that I have been writing for The Gaspé Spec strong community organizations have made a huge impact on the daily lives of anglophones. Examples include Family Ties, Vision Gaspé-Percé Now and CASA who offer a variety of impactful, innovative programs and supports that improve the quality of our lives. To add another important organization that works tirelessly for the Anglophone population that is, of course, The Gaspé Spec.

The Spec is unique because there is no other newspaper that keeps shining a light on our past and present. Some of my favourite articles to work on have included talking to Gaspesian seniors who are the keepers of the wisdom; musicians, authors and artists; the change-makers from the organizations listed above; indigenous peoples and communities; and in particular the individuals and organizations who have challenged the establishment that sometimes locks us out.

Heartfelt thank you to those I have met along the way on my journalistic path: my colleagues, people who allowed me to intrude on their lives to be interviewed, readers who sent me letters and books, the grandfather who recently renewed a Spec subscription for his 7-year-old grandson (keeping the Spec alive for the future!) and a special thanks to the very first person who commented so positively to me after my first column was published in Spec in 2008, whose title was “Can you go home again?” Spoiler: You can.

A final parting message; After writing an article about two young entrepreneurial ladies a few years back, I asked their father if they liked the article. His reply at first felt quite insulting. His comment was “I don’t know but their grandfather did.” If he meant the Spec is written for older people in mind then I am flattered. Besides, if we do not honour our older citizens then who are we?

Namaste.

# SUBSCRIBE TODAY

Stay connected to your community and support local journalism!



# Bargain hunters

## Shopping locally for secondhand clothing

DIANE SKINNER  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

NEW CARLISLE/NEW RICHMOND: Inflation continues to climb, and many are struggling to pay all the bills, both expected and unexpected. There is one way that buying clothing can be less of a challenge for your budget and that is to buy secondhand. There are many advantages to buying used clothing, not just the obvious financial ones.

Searching for interesting and reasonably priced used clothing can become a passion. Culling garage sales, antique shops, vintage clothing stores, flea markets and even online can reveal clothing treasures. A recent purchase made locally online netted the new owner a pair of hardly worn Blundstones for \$50 which if purchased new would be over \$250.

However, the best source is your local marché aux puces (flea market), often located in a church basement like the popular one in New Carlisle at the Église of Saint-Étienne or the Friperie at Full Gospel Church in New Richmond. There are several locations on the coast where you can buy decent quality used clothing at bargain prices including Nouvelle, Caplan, Maria, Carleton and St. Omer. These locations provide a service that has an impact on the citizens who struggle to make ends meet.

If you spend some time and look around at Hidden Treasures (Les Trésors Cachés) in New Carlisle, you may be pleasantly surprised by what you find. “Take a few minutes to drop in to see for yourself what Hidden Treasures has to offer. We have gently used clothing items for the entire family and many other items such as sporting equipment, small appliances and décor items,” says Tammy Chatterton, Hidden Treasures.

Fay Gallon, programs manager at the Committee for Anglopophone Social Action (CASA) tells Spec, “During the fall of 2022 it was announced that the Marché aux Puces in New Carlisle was going to close at the end of December 2022. For over 30 years, the volunteer-run Marché aux Puces service supported community members from Port-Daniel to Bonaventure by providing access to low-cost clothing and household goods. The pandemic



Photo: Louissette Leblanc

*Tammy Chatterton, manager of Hidden Treasures, New Carlisle, suggests that it is worthwhile to take a few minutes to drop in and see for yourself what is offered for sale there, you never know what you might find..*

caused a significant decrease in revenue and volunteers (the majority were over 70 years of age) were reluctant to continue. The volunteer committee could no longer continue to lead activities and approached the Municipality of New Carlisle and CASA to help. Without assistance, the service would be forced to cease operations.”

CASA decided to apply for funding to the MRC of Bonaventure for a period of one year to hire a coordinator, assist with rental costs, repairs/renovations and training for the new coordinator.

In March 2023, Hidden Treasures reopened with a new coordinator, Tammy Chatterton, and a new look inside. Over the past year, Tammy and CASA have been working to have Hidden Treasures become a nonprofit organization. The paperwork is near completion and the new organization will have its own board of directors moving forward.

The Friperie in New Richmond located in the Full Gospel Church (Église du Plein Evangile) also offers a valuable resource to the community. The money received for the clothing and other small household goods does not go to the church, but rather is given back to the community. Each week a draw is held for a \$100 gift card for the Maxi grocery store. Any person who buys an item can enter their name in the weekly draw. Pastor Paul Bernatchez and his wife Annette Poirier oversee the Friperie and Sarah Campbell, manager, and Jocelyne Burton, seamstress, handle the day-to-day operations of receiving donations, sorting and hanging

the items as well as greeting shoppers. In the last year a family whose home was destroyed by fire along with all their belongings were each given, at no charge, a large garbage bag to fill with clothing.

Both locations tell SPEC that they have shoppers who come most weeks and who are a mix of ages, with a lot of families with young children and seniors who are searching for a bargain! “But,” states Sarah Campbell, “We really have all ages, and people from all over, including a lady from Gaspé who won the \$100 gift card from Maxi!” Tammy reports that on average she sees 75 – 150 shoppers each week.

### What are the advantages of buying secondhand?

As mentioned, secondhand items cost significantly less. You must love it when somebody else pays full price first. Look at it this way – they also broke the clothes in for you. It is good for the environment! The manufacturing of new clothing uses a substantial number of resources. “Fast fashion” is the second most polluting industry, while oil is the first. Clothes manufactured in some countries use underpaid and overworked labourers. The more brand-new clothing you buy (sometimes referred to as disposable clothing because it is inferior quality and trendy) the more of the Earth’s precious resources are wasted. Secondhand is the new organic.

Buying used items keeps unwanted things out of landfills.

Pre-loved items do not need to be transported, thereby cutting down on fossil fuel consumption.

You may find unique items. Vintage clothing is unique and nobody else will have, for example, the same jacket as the cool suede jacket with a long fringe that you scored for \$35! Vintage clothing comes from another time and another place. Be unique.

It is fun to browse while searching for items. You are a hunter searching for just the right items that please you. Be open, though, because chances are you won’t know what you are looking for until you spy it. It can be so exciting when you find just what you wanted – even though you didn’t know you wanted it until you spied it! A secondhand shopper’s thrill!

You are buying a little piece of personal history. Every item has a history, though you will never know it. It is still fun to wonder about who the previous owners were. I recall a young lady who bought a little black dress, and the original owner spied the garment on the young lady at a function but did not mention that she had previously owned it. That’s tact.

“Thriftng” as it is sometimes referred to, can inspire you. Finding a 1960s pair of bell-bottom blue jeans may inspire you to make a tie-dye T-shirt to go with it! Buy rose-coloured glasses to complete your fun hippie look. Just have fun with it!

Secondhand clothing can inspire a cool Halloween costume. You just need to be open-minded about what your costume will be. Last Halloween a local found a little

boy’s formal suit, size 5 (jacket and pants) for just \$5 (likely bought for a wedding), and her child was instantly Baby Boss! The addition of cool shades and a briefcase completed that precious but not expensive look.

If you buy an item secondhand, feel absolutely no guilt about modifying it. An old formal dress can be shortened, or the sleeves removed. It’s not about what it is, it’s about what it can become.

The last two advantages are suggested by Tammy Chatterton: “Have a long overdue conversation with a friend that you haven’t seen for a while and support your community.” Sarah Campbell adds, “Come to the Friperie in New Richmond and enjoy a cup of tea and a sweet!”

You will appreciate what you have when you realize that you need less. You do not always need to buy shiny and new clothes, particularly the “disposable” cheap clothing. The world produces so much – and a lot of it is not necessary for our survival or happiness as a species. Think of the used item you purchase as used but pre-loved. Then when you choose to buy it, it becomes reloved.

The Friperie is located at 248 Perron West, New Richmond, in the basement of the Full Gospel Church and is open Thursday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. and Friday from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. Hidden Treasures is located at 166 G.D. Levesque Blvd. in St. Étienne Church and is open Wednesday from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Thursday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m., and Friday 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.



Photo: S. Campbell

*If you shop at the Friperie (thrift shop) in New Richmond your name will be entered into a weekly draw for a \$100 Maxi gift card! The dedicated group that oversees and the Friperie are Pastor Paul (Full Gospel Church), his wife Annette, Sarah Campbell and seamstress Jocelyne Burton.*

# Announcements



## In Memory

**BOUDREAU: Jean (Buttle)**

March 23, 1945 - March 22, 2005  
*The depths of sorrow we cannot tell  
Of the loss of one we loved so well,  
And while she sleeps a peaceful sleep,  
Her memory we shall always keep.*

Always yours. Your loving husband, Fred and family.

**COUTURE: Martial**

July 6, 1940 - March 18, 2018  
In loving memory of a dear father and grandfather who passed away two years ago, March 14, 2018.  
*You were a dad who was so special  
And who was loved so very much,  
You brought so much happiness  
To the many hearts you touched.  
You were always kind and caring,  
And so understanding too,  
And, if help was ever needed, Dad,  
It so freely came from you.  
You were a gift to all the world  
And brought joy to everyone,  
And life has never been the same,  
Since God has called you home.*

Always loved and remembered by your son Michael (Holly); and grandchildren: Brad, Ethan, Luke, Lucy and Leah.



**DUGUAY: Russell**

September 1, 1927 - March 14, 2004  
*Those we love don't go away,  
They walk beside us every day,  
Unseen, unheard, but always near,  
Still loved, still missed, and very dear.*  
The family.

**FLOWERS: Alma**

In loving memory of precious grandmother who passed away March 2, 1983.  
*Within our hearts we always keep,  
A special place for you;  
And try to do our best to live,  
As you would want us to.  
As we loved you, so we miss you.  
In our memory you are near;  
Loved, remembered, longed for always  
With the passing of each year.  
Dearer still as the years depart,  
Your live forever in our hearts.*  
Lovingly remembered and cherished forever by Carol and Richard Smollett.

**SMOLLETT: Robert**

In loving memory of a very dear brother who passed away March 2, 2014  
*May the winds of love blow softly,  
And whisper for you to hear.  
That we'll always love and miss you,  
And wish that you were here.  
They say there is a reason,  
They time will heal,  
But neither time nor reason,  
Will change how we feel.*  
Lovingly remembered by brother Richard and sister-in-law Carol.

Deadline for  
this page is  
Wednesday at 4 p.m



**Four Generations  
of Monument Craftsmen**

**HIGHEST QUALITY - BEST PRICES**

MONUMENTS, MARKERS, CEMETERY LETTERING,  
LASER DESIGNS AND PORTRAITS

**SALES REP:**

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

*Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond*

# COAST ROUND-UP

COAST ROUND-UP: \$8 per week  
CLASSIFIED: \$8 per week

**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.

**SHIGAWAKE:  
Community Centre**

**April 2:** The Shigawake community centre will be holding a gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. \$20 per series. Canteen service available. Hope to see you there.

**SHIGAWAKE:  
St. Paul's  
Anglican Church**

**April 20:** The St. Paul's Anglican church will be holding a spaghetti supper from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Shigawake Community Centre. \$15 per adult and \$8 for children under 12. Includes dinner, tea/coffee, bun and dessert. Take-out will be available beginning at 4:30 p.m.

**HOPE:  
Hope Baptist Church**

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

**HOPE TOWN:  
Sports Club  
Gift Bingo**

**March 22:** The Hope Town Sports club will be holding a gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. at the Hope Town Community Centre. Everyone welcome. Bring your dabbers.

**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 Le-

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

**March 23:** A double header, Darts and Shuffleboard Tournament will start at 11 a.m. Register before March 21 at 8 p.m. with Stephen at 418-752-8159. (Late registrations will not be accepted.) Darts is singles and shuffleboard is teams of two. You do not have to play in both events. \$25 per player.

**April 2:** 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.

**ANGLICAN  
CHURCH  
OF CANADA**

**Sunday, March 24  
NEW CARLISLE**  
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**PORT DANIEL**  
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

**UNITED CHURCH  
NEW RICHMOND  
Sunday, March 24**  
10 a.m. Service

**UNITED CHURCH  
HOPE TOWN  
Sunday, March 24**  
10 a.m. Service

**Monday, March 25**  
10 a.m. Service

**PARISH  
OF GASPÉ**

**Sunday, March 24  
St. Andrew's - York**  
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist with Palm Procession

**Monday, March 25  
St. Andrew's - York**  
7 p.m. Evening Prayer

**Tuesday, March 26  
St. Paul's - Gaspé**  
7 p.m. Evening Prayer

**Wednesday, March 27  
St. Andrew's - York**  
7 p.m. Healing Service

**Thursday, March 28  
St. Paul's - Gaspé**  
7 p.m. Holy Eucharist with Foot-Washing and Stripping of the Altar

**Friday, March 29  
St. Paul's - Gaspé**  
11 a.m. Service of the word with meditation on the cross

**Saturday, March 30  
St. Andrew's - York**  
7 p.m. Easter Vigil with Holy Eucharist and Blessing of the Holy Fire

**Sunday, March 31  
St. Paul's - Gaspé**  
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist



UKRAINE:

▶ Cont'd from page 12

They find peace in the Gaspé Peninsula

Since the spring of 2022, Mr. Zmazhenko, his family, and the Ukraine-Baie-des-Chaleurs Committee have helped Ukrainian refugees settle in the Gaspé Peninsula, in Bonaventure and Maria, for example. "Everybody has found work. I am sorry if we don't

often say thanks," he sums up.

The Ukrainians living in the Bay of Chaleur area are quite thankful and they often express it. Such is the case of Iullia, Volodymyr's wife.

"We have a roof, we have a job and we even have a family doctor," she says with a grin.

Lyudmyla Vydrygan is also quite thankful, as she and her daughter Hanna settled in the Bay of Chaleur area almost two years ago.

"This war is really sad. The Russians never see

something good in their country, and they think that it is the same everywhere. They are not open to criticism," she deplores.

She was fluent in French before moving to the coast, which tremendously helped her integration. "I have already read two books about the history of the Gaspé Peninsula," she says.

When asked by Gaspésians who attended the March 13 meeting how she sees her future, Ms. Vydrygan replies: "I would like to stay here. I found peace here."

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, this week you need to get back to business, especially if hobbies or other interests have been taking up much of your time lately. Avoid distractions at all costs.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

You may be excited about new prospects that are on the horizon, Taurus. With so much change coming, it can be exciting to see what lies in wait.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, you may discover that you are devoting a lot of attention to others of late, sometimes cutting into your own needs. Be attentive and caring, but pay attention to your own needs as well.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, if you check the calendar lately you are bound to find a number of dates are filled. You may want to consider slowing down; otherwise, you may prematurely burnout.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, if expenses and finances have been troubling you of late, you can breathe a sigh of relief when things lighten up this week. Right now you are in a good spot financially.



VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you will need to uphold your end of the bargain for the time being as others are counting on you delivering. You cannot dodge any responsibilities right now.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, over the next few days you may receive some offers from employers or entrepreneurs that seem very appealing. Before you jump into something new, do your homework.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, it will become obvious how others rely on you for advice and to get jobs done correctly. All of that responsibility can put extra pressure on you, so take it all in stride.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

This week you may discover that people are flocking to you left and right, Sagittarius. You will not have trouble making new friends if you so desire.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, take ownership of any actions that may have put you into a strained relationship with those close to you. Admitting mistakes is the first step in mending fences.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, you may only now be getting to those resolutions you made a few months ago, but better late than never. Focus on projects around the home that will revitalize your spaces.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Physical activity can do wonders for you, Pisces. If you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed or even tired, take a walk or hit the gym for some exercise that can alleviate many symptoms.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

MARCH 20

Ruby Rose, Model (38)

MARCH 21

Gary Oldman, Actor (66)

MARCH 22

J.J. Watt, TV personality (35)

MARCH 23

Kyrie Irving, Athlete (32)



# Business & Professional DIRECTORY

**Grenier, Grenier & Grenier**  
LAWYERS



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

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



**Gagnon Claveau Law Firm**

**Isabelle Gagnon**

Attorney and family law mediator

**Ann-Chloé Boudreau**

Attorney

418-392-3542

www.gagnonclaveau.com

info@gagnonclaveau.com

*Fully  
bilingual  
services in  
the whole  
Gaspé pen-  
insula*

**GAËL TREMBLAY**

Notary and legal counsel

**TREMBLAY & BARRIAULT, NOTAIRES INC.**

119B Perron Blvd West

New Richmond, (Québec) G0C 2B0

Tel.: (418) 392-5282

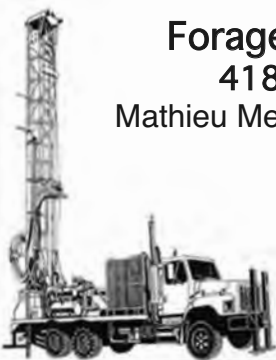
Fax: (418) 392-6155

E-mail: gaeltremblay@notarius.net



Notaries and legal counsel

**FULLY  
BILINGUAL  
SERVICE**



**Forage Moreau Inc.**

**418-392-9501**

Mathieu Mercier - Driller/Owner

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

foragemoreaumercier@gmail.com

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

Contact our

**Advertising Representative**

**Heather Imhoff**

**581-233-2062**

gaspespec.revitalization@gmail.com



**OHMEGA**

Going beyond and reliable since 1982



**Electricity - Plumbing  
Automation  
Industrial computing  
Counter sales**

3 Rue Cerisiers

Gaspé, Québec G4X 2M1

Tel. (418) 368-5425

Fax (418) 368-7290

www.groupeohmega.com



**Dr. Pascal Cyr**  
Optometrist



**Dr. Stacey Starrak**  
Optometrist

**CLINIQUE D'OPTOMÉTRIE**

**L'ÉMERILLON**

**LENSES CRAFTED ON THE PREMISES**

**PASPÉBIAC: 104 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd West • 418-752-5553**

**CHANDLER: 260 René Lévesque Blvd East • 418-689-5553**

**MARIA: 435 Perron Blvd West • 418-759-5553**



**BILINGUAL  
SERVICE**

**MEMBER  
OF**



Canada's Largest Network of Optometrists

# Corporation du Mont-Saint-Joseph: a Non-profit Organization Promoting a Rich Heritage

**SADC**  
Société  
d'aide au développement  
de la collectivité  
DE BAIE-DES-CHALEURS

Incorporated as a non-profit organization (NPO) in 1998, the Corporation de gestion et de mise en valeur du mont Saint-Joseph, in Carleton-sur-Mer, preserves and values the cultural and natural heritage of this exceptional site. A meeting with its Director General, Olivier Côté-Vaillancourt.

## IN WHAT WAY IS THE CORPORATION UNIQUE ?

As an NPO, the Corporation is under the responsibility of a volunteer Board of Directors. According to Olivier, as an NPO, it can devote itself to its mission without being solely profit-driven. "Everything gets reinvested for social or economic development." The site sets itself apart by offering "the highest summit in Quebec accessible by asphalted roadway. It's interesting for the mobility aspect and to appreciate the magnificent view of the heritage that surrounds us, both historical and cultural." Other unique attractions include mountain bike trails, unconventional accommodation, and a chapel.

## HOW DID SUPPORT FROM THE SADC HELP YOU?

In recent years, the Corporation has acquired new infrastructures such as geodomes and a reception building.

In the post-pandemic period, it obtained a preferential-rate loan from the SADC to cover part of the costs. "There was an increase in the cost of materials and construction," says Olivier. "We had to absorb these costs to complete the project."

## TELL US ABOUT A RECENT NOTEWORTHY ACHIEVEMENT OF WHICH YOU ARE ESPECIALLY PROUD IN THE FIELD OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

"We're involved in a number of initiatives and approaches (e.g. regenerative tourism) so that in the future, we can include more and more good practices in our management and planning," affirms Olivier. He also highlights the introduction of a shuttle service linking the campground, the beach, and the summit of the mountain seven times a day in summer. "This reduces the strain of vehicles both in the city and on the mountain."

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANYONE WHO IS CONSIDERING STARTING UP A BUSINESS IN THE BAIE-DES-CHALEURS REGION?

"Listen to the community, get involved in your community and try to form partnerships," says Olivier. To maximize the chances of success, he believes that the proposed offer must meet a genuine need in the community.



The Corporation ensures the sustainability and development of the Mont-Saint-Joseph Regional Park. Highlights include hiking and mountain biking trails, geodomes and aiguilles (small chalets), a heritage chapel and lookouts at an altitude of 555 metres offering spectacular views of the Baie-des-Chaleurs..

**WITH YOU  
FOR YOUR  
SUCCESS!**

**Canada** Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions  
offers a financial support to the SADC

**YOU HAVE A PROJECT? CONTACT US!**  
**sadcbbc.ca**



## WELDING AND FITTING COURSE STARTS AUGUST 2024

### Do you:

- Have good shape perception?
- Enjoy physical and manual tasks?
- Have good visual acuity, dexterity and good execution precision?
- Have excellent powers of observation?

**If so, WELDING is for you!**

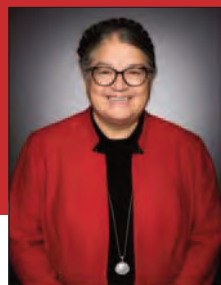


**Register**  
by August 2024  
**100%**  
placement rate  
**FREE**  
residence



Centre de formation  
DE LA  
**CÔTE-DE-GASPÉ**

# Business & Professional Directory



## DIANE LEBOUTHILLIER

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

Serving the English-speaking community of our beautiful region!

Grande-Rivière office  
418 385-4264

Magdalen Islands office  
418 986-1489

Sainte-Anne-des-Monts office  
418 764-2890

New Richmond office  
581 355-0060

Email: [diane.lebouthillier@parl.gc.ca](mailto:diane.lebouthillier@parl.gc.ca)

**LFG**  
CONSTRUCTION

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

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

**constructionlfg.com**

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

**BUILDINGS** **ENERGY AND CIVIL ENGINEERING** **INDUSTRIAL MECHANIC**

**AXIO**  
ARPENTEURS - GÉOMÈTRES

**AXIO**  
arpenteurs-géomètres inc.  
land surveyors

151B, Avenue de Grand-Pré, Bonaventure (Québec) G0C 1E0

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

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

Membre de l'Ordre  
des Arpenteurs-Géomètres du Québec

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

**ENERGY**  
TRANSPORTATION GROUP

**WHAT MAKES US  
DRIVEN TO BE DIFFERENT?**

**www.shipENERGY.com**

DISCOVER MORE