

Osisko Metals provides update on copper deposit in Murdochville

Quantities higher than previous assessment

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – Osisko Metals announces a higher quantity of copper at Murdochville's Copper Mountain ore in its latest mineral resource estimate. Initiated at the beginning of 2022 as part of the Gaspé Copper Project, the number of mineralized rocks in the open pit mine now stands at 495 million tonnes, compared to 456 million tonnes in April 2022.

The low-grade ore contains a copper concentration of 0.37% equivalent in copper, compared to 0.31% in April 2022. The company says that the increase represents a 30% increase in copper-equivalent metal content over the previously reported copper-only resource reported in April 2022.

The concentration of recoverable copper, evaluated at 99% of the deposit, would yield 1.47 million tonnes of copper, or 3.25 billion pounds of that metal, once processed by a smelter.

"By including the quantities of molybdenum, 180 million pounds, and silver, 28 million ounces, the Copper Mountain in-pit indicated resource hosts the largest undeveloped copper asset in Eastern North America," indicates Osisko Metals in an updated document covering the latest exploration results and analyses.

The document also mentions an improvement in the updated mineral resource estimates a 38% reduction of the strip ratio, which is the quantity of sterile rocks that has to be removed before an eventual exploitation of the deposit. That reduced strip ratio is based on the mineralization geometry that surrounds the former open pit mine.

"We are extremely pleased with the results of the updated mineral resource estimate for the Copper Mountain deposit.

The overall copper resource has increased since we announced the maiden resource estimate in 2022 with significant molybdenum and silver credits now included in the estimate. Integrating the 'recently-announced' positive metallurgical testing results, the Gaspé Copper project is showing excellent potential towards becoming a key Canadian copper-molybdenum producer, located in one of the world's safest mining jurisdictions," comments Robert Wares, Osisko Metals' chief executive officer and chairman of the Board.

"This mineral resource estimate will provide the basis for a preliminary economic assessment scheduled to be released early in the first quarter of 2025 in the context of what we believe is the start of a strong long-term copper market. Furthermore, we strongly believe that this important asset could become a core component of Quebec's critical mineral development strategy that aims to provide essential metals for global decarbonization initiatives," adds Mr. Wares.

Independent assessment

Independent qualified engineers carried out the mineral resource estimate, namely Pierre-Luc Richard, of PLR Resources Inc., who headed the process, with contributions from Carl Michaud, G-Mining for cutoff grade and pit shell optimization, and Colin Hardie, from BBA, for metallurgical parameters. The effective date of the mineral resource estimate is April 22, 2024.

The three experts specify that further drilling will have to be carried out to go from the "inferred" category to an "indicated" category. In other words, the drillings carried out so far allow the company to

make deductions about the deposit but further drillings will be needed to prove that the deductions were right.

"These mineral resources are not mineral reserves as they have no demonstrated economic viability. No economic evaluation of these mineral resources has been produced. The quantity and grade of reported inferred resources in this mineral resource estimate are uncertain in nature and there has been in-

sufficient drilling to define these inferred resources as indicated (resource). However, it is reasonably expected that the majority of inferred mineral resources could be upgraded to the indicated category with continued drilling," states an Osisko Metals press release.

The three engineers add that they are not aware of any known environmental, permitting, legal, title-related, taxation, socio-political, marketing or other relevant issues that

could materially affect their mineral resource estimate.

Mount Needle to be assessed as well

Osisko Metals also announces that building upon the information released in the recently updated mineral resource estimate, an 8,000 to 10,000-metre drill program is planned to commence this

Cont'd on page 2



Photo: G. Gagné

Railway retaining wall is progressing in Port Daniel

GILLES GAGNÉ

PORT DANIEL – On April 28, the progress on the construction of the railway retaining wall just west of the Port Daniel railway tunnel was apparent.

Despite it being the weekend, heavy equipment was on-site, as well as the Couillard Construction team.

Valued at \$23,682,014, the contract also includes widening the tunnel. The contractor has committed to completing both elements by November, as stipulated by the agreement signed with Quebec's Department of Transport.

The retaining wall and work on the tunnel are key elements that will ensure the resumption of rail traffic between New Richmond and Port Daniel's cement plant.

The federal government contributed \$10 million to the contract awarded to Couillard Construction, a sum announced on July 4, 2023.

Serving the cement plant directly will likely increase overall freight traffic managed by the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie and it will increase its competitiveness. A railway car can accommodate the cargo equivalent to two-and-a-half truck trailers.

month that aims to partially define measured resources and improve grades in the higher grade core of the Copper Mountain deposit.

This program could provide approximately 60 million tonnes of higher grade “starter-pit” material estimated from a 0.40% copper lower cutoff grade and test the potential for near-surface mineralization around the historical Needle Mountain mine that was the starter operation for Gaspé Copper in the 1950s. In that case, Zones A and B would be targeted for the first drillings.

This resource is pit-constrained to mineralization surrounding the past-producing Copper Mountain open pit mine and uses, amongst other parameters, a long-term price of US\$4.00 per pound of copper.

The company will determine preset eastern and south-eastern geographical constraints on pit limits to



Photo: Osisko Metals

Further drillings are scheduled before the end of May at Copper Mountain.

minimize impacts on the town of Murdochville from future potential mining operations. Osisko Metals is using data from historical drilling completed between the 1950s and 2019 and 37,390 metres of drilling completed by the company in 2022 and 2023.

The company also uses end-of-mine historical mineral resources at Gaspé Copper that are reported in the No-

randa/Falconbridge Annual Reports 1998-2000, Quebec government mining assessment reports and in Hussey & Bernard, bearing the names of the two geologists that supervised the closure of the underground mine in 1999.

Still, according to documents issued by Osisko Metals on May 6, the company describes areas of remaining mineralization at Gaspé Cop-

per that could offer excellent potential for additional mineral resources. Osisko Metals' strategy, at present, is to focus on the economic viability of the currently defined Copper Mountain resource and, if this can be achieved, evaluation of other mineralized zones described below will follow with additional drill programs.

Osisko Metals chief executive officer, Robert Wares,

has often mentioned that the Murdochville mines were closed by Noranda-Falconbridge essentially because the content in copper was not high enough to be profitable at the beginning of the 1980s in the case of Copper Mountain and at the end of the 1990s for the underground operations. Over the last 25 years, the price of copper has risen considerably, in nominal and real terms.

LOBSTER FISHING: Season start price to be higher than \$8 per pound

GILLES GAGNÉ

SAINT-GODEFROI: – The Gaspesian lobster fishermen based between Bonaventure and Cape Gaspé will receive a minimum price of \$8 per pound for the first two weeks of the season. The exact price, however, had not been determined as of May 9, following 12 days of landings.

A base price of \$7.50 per pound was set at the beginning of the season on April 28, the day of the first landings. However, it was increased to \$8 by May 6, according to Roch Lelièvre, president of the firm Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan, based in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé.

“There is nothing stabilized yet. We settled on \$8 this week (at the beginning of the second week on May 6) as the base price. The price will be a little more than that. The adjustment for the first week will also be \$8 retroactively,” specified Mr. Lelièvre.

As of May 9, the price that Gaspesian lobster fishermen would receive had not yet been finalized. Historically, it has been aligned with that of the Magdalen Islands, where



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Jeffrey Vautier, right, says his catches of 2024 are comparable to that of 2023 after 10 days.

the first landings occurred on May 6 this year.

The price paid to the Magdalen Island lobster fishermen is determined by averaging prices on the markets, after undergoing a pre-determined equation. As the SPEC was reaching its May 10 deadline, the final price was expected to be released on Monday, May 13, after a full week of catches in the Maggies.

Jeffrey Vautier, a lobster

fisherman from Shigawake based at the Saint-Godefroi wharf, stated that the starts of the 2023 and 2024 seasons were similar.

“There was one day when it went down but it was still going well. I had a 250-pound day on Saturday (May 4). There was a strong current under the surface of the water. I saw it because my cages were dirty. But 250 pounds in a single day is okay. Below 100 pounds is

not good. But 700 pounds is good. My first week is comparable to the first week of last year,” he said.

Roch Lelièvre calculated the landings of the 14 lobster boats delivering their catches to his plant after 10 days of fishing.

“It’s good, but it’s not as good as last year at the same time. We always compare ourselves to the best years. I see a drop of 6%. I don’t see that as a worry yet. The situ-

ation can still improve,” he said.

In 2023 Gaspesian lobster fishermen experienced a record year in terms of both volume and revenue.

“The fishermen say the currents are strong. There has been no ice again this winter. They (the fishermen, during scientific trials) did tests last year and the cages were full. They haven’t left,” reports Roch Lelièvre, referring to the lobster population.

Initial sales reports were good for Quebec but slower elsewhere.

“At the start of the season, we work to sell live lobster on the Quebec market, and it does well. On the American market, things are brewing. We make offers, we receive counter offers, and we negotiate. There is nothing stabilized,” explains Mr. Lelièvre, noting that the company also sells live lobster in the United States.

His company will likely export again to Europe and Asia in 2024 “if we agree on prices. They are buyers if the prices are there. The dollar is favourable for exports, at \$1.35 (per US dollar),” he emphasizes.

Railway rehabilitation underway between Port-Daniel and Gaspé

GILLES GAGNÉ

PORT-DANIEL: – Quebec’s Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility awarded a contract worth nearly \$75 million in early May for repairs on the third section of the Gaspésie railway rehabilitation project. This section spans 127 kilometres between Port-Daniel and Gaspé.

The contract has been awarded to Sainte-Flavie-based Groupe Sema Structures Ferroviaires, which will be responsible for construction sites in Grande-Rivière, Percé and Gaspé. These works involve nine structures, namely the reconstruction of five culverts and a bridge, as well as the rehabilitation of three other bridges. It is expected that the interventions will begin during the summer and be completed by the end of 2026.

The bidding process for this contract closed on March 7, marking the first major call for bids on the Port-Daniel to Gaspé stretch of railroad. This call for tenders was launched on November 17, 2023. Three additional calls for bids are underway for that stretch, either published or in preparation.

The contract awarded to Sema includes some well-known structures, including the large bridge passing over the Grande Rivière, along Highway 132, in the town bearing the same name, and the Prevel trestle which is less visible but at least as long, as it is located at a certain distance from Highway 132 in the Anse à Brillant area.

Three construction firms bid on that contract, and Groupe Sema secured the tender for \$74,877,385.

The amount necessary to upgrade the whole line between Matapédia and Gaspé reaches \$871.8 million, as announced on June 27, 2023, in Gaspé by Transport Minister Geneviève Guilbault. The allocated funds for the Port-Daniel to Gaspé section of the railroad amounts to \$517 million.

The section between New Richmond and Port-Daniel is still undergoing repairs and is expected to reopen by late fall of this year.

Transports Québec, which acquired the line during the spring of 2015, had previously announced that the line was functional between Matapédia and Caplan. However, since

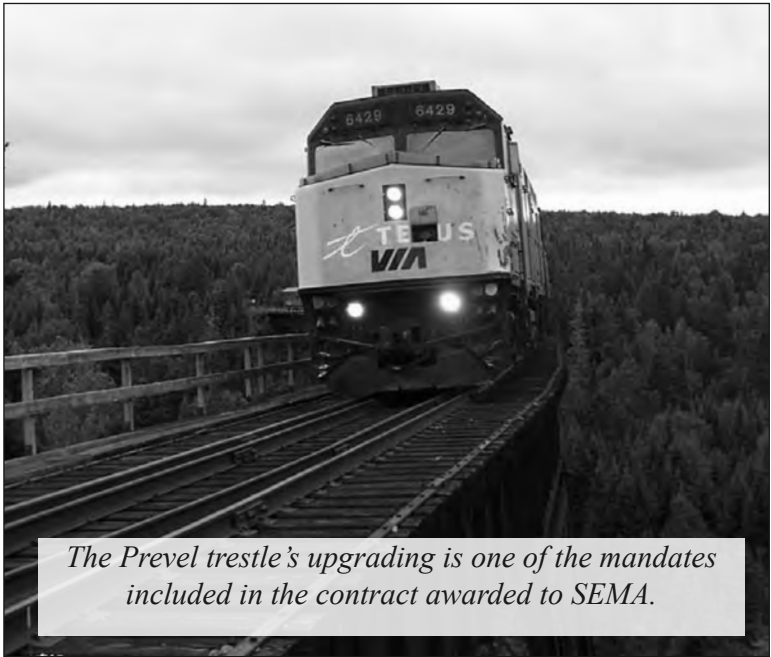


Photo: Gilles Gagné

the summer of 2023, a culvert replacement and a decision to move the track in the Black Cape area have led to the closure of the line in that eastern part of New Richmond until midsummer.

Optimism for the 2026 deadline

Éric Dubé, president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, is more confident than ever that the line will be reopened to Gaspé by the end of 2026, the commitment made by Minister Guilbault.

“Other contracts will be awarded later this year over that Port-Daniel-Gaspé section. From what I understand, two bids are closed and under analysis for the calls for bids 2 and 3. Call for tender number 2 could be awarded at \$102 million. That’s for one contract,” he specifies.

Some smaller contracts, including the replacement of thousands of ties and some grade work, were previously carried out, a few of them as far back as 2020.

“I think the Ministry (of Transport) will respect the deadline now. Delivering for 2026 is part of the conditions included in the calls for tenders. One must be aware that all the contracts will be carried out during the same period,” notes Éric Dubé.

When the upgrading of the entire line was announced by ‘then-premier’ Philippe Couillard, on May 5, 2017, the deadline for the reopening of the line to Port Daniel was set for 2020, but reopening it to Gaspé remained essentially vague.

In April 2019, current Premier François Legault affirmed that the reopening of

the line to Gaspé would take seven years, meaning trains would only circulate in Gaspé in 2026.

That statement caused a lot of criticism and, in August 2019, Premier Legault modified his commitment, stating a target of 2025 for Gaspé and 2022 for the return of rail service in Port-Daniel.

The pandemic, although productive for the contractors that had been selected before March 2020, greatly slowed down Transports Québec’s call for tender process. The ministry went 20 months without issuing any call for tenders, from June 2020 and February 2022, consequently postponing the resumption of traffic to Port-Daniel until the end of 2024.

Reaching the Port-Daniel cement plant is expected to boost traffic out of the Saint Mary’s Cement facility and reduce the number of trucks serving some customers. Some cement volumes are transported entirely by truck because of the cost associated with transshipment in New Richmond, where the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie operates a silo to load freight cars.

At the beginning of 2024, up to \$310 million had been invested and committed to the upgrade of the railroad between Matapédia and Gaspé.

In the Quebec Infrastructure Plan published following the March 2024 budget, \$233 million is allocated for the Port-Daniel-Gaspé section of the network this year, and \$259 million in 2025. Just over \$83 million is also planned for the completion of the Caplan-Port-Daniel section, including \$73 million this year.

Police report

A 70-year-old man died on May 5 in an all-terrain vehicle accident in the Newport sector of Chandler. At around 1:45 p.m., the Sûreté du Québec received a call about an all-terrain vehicle rider found inert under his machine. A relative of the 70-year-old man, concerned about his absence, discovered him and called for help. “The accident occurred near the railroad and did not require a complicated rescue operation. The victim was sent to the (Chandler) hospital where he was pronounced dead. A technician in accident reconstitution was sent to the location. As of now, it looks as if the victim lost control of his vehicle, which rolled over him. The investigation is ongoing. We have no reason to believe in foul play or the intervention of a third party to explain the accident,” explains Frédéric Deshaies, Sûreté du Québec communication officer for the Gaspé Peninsula.

Holly Stanley, 44, from Gaspé, who is being sued by the Public Curator for fraud of \$286,000, admitted the facts linked to her fraudulent actions from the start of her trial in Superior Court on the morning of May 7 at the Percé Courthouse. In March 2021, the court relieved Ms. Stanley of her role as liquidator of the estate of a man who had died in an accident in 2017. The court then appointed a notary to carry out succession duties.

The Public Curator had been appointed guardian of the property of a minor child. Judge Marie-France Vincent ordered the seizure of the woman’s property before judgment. Judge Vincent will render her final decision in the coming weeks. Negotiations are underway between the criminal prosecutor and the defence to resolve the criminal charges against Ms. Stanley for making a false will. A decision is expected on June 25.

Several people could face charges following an October 2023 operation to counter poaching in the Rocher-Percé MRC. Wildlife protection wardens then put an end to the activities of a group of eight people in the Pellegrin sector of Chandler who allegedly killed big game beyond the permitted limit and gave false information to agents.

Additionally, in November, two individuals, also from the Rocher-Percé MRC, allegedly engaged in illegal deer hunting activities in the Bonaventure area. The four infractions include hunting without a license and hunting deer with antlers less than seven centimetres. In this case, the minimum fine is \$2,500, and the hunter’s licence could be suspended for two years.

Finally, between September and October 2022, three individuals were arrested for offences related to the Fisheries Act near Grande-Rivière. The investigation, which took more than a year, shows that the individuals used weapons and crossbows to capture salmon and brook trout. The investigation is ongoing. According to the Department of Wildlife, fines could reach up to \$100,000 in the latter case if the individuals are found guilty.

A man in his thirties died following a head-on collision that occurred on May 9 at approximately 11:30 p.m. in Maria on Highway 132 near its intersection with Lapointe Road. The victim attempted to pass the car ahead of his vehicle and hit a large truck coming in the other direction. The victim was declared deceased at the scene of the accident. Highway 132 was closed for several hours. “A technician in accident reconstitution was called to the location of the accident to determine the cause of the crash. On the morning of May 10, Highway 132 was reopened to traffic but only on one lane for a few hours because decontamination was necessary to remove the diesel fuel that had spilled as a result of the collision,” explains Sûreté du Québec communication officer Frédéric Deshaies. The truck driver was not injured in the accident. The victim is not a resident of the Gaspé Peninsula.

Notice of Closure of Inventory Estate of Erwin Gray

Notice is hereby given that Erwin Gray, born May 7, 1939, passed away March 1, 2023 at the Centre d’Hébergement de Maria, Quebec, where he had been residing. Mr. Gray was formerly from Fleurant Point, Escuminac, Quebec.

In accordance with the Civil Code of Quebec, the Inventory of the Property, completed by the liquidator, may be consulted by persons demonstrating sufficient cause, before June 1, 2024, by prior appointment only, at:

176, rte Wafer, Nouvelle, Quebec, Tel: (418) 794-2596.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Will Justin Trudeau lead the Liberal Party over the next election?

The Liberal Party of Canada is regularly trailing behind the Conservative Party in polls by around 20%. Despite recent efforts, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau seems unable to regain popularity and cut the margin between his party and Pierre Poilievre's Conservatives.

Mr. Trudeau has regularly stated that he will stay at the helm of the Liberal Party, for the next election, which is unlikely to take place before 2025, even if he currently leads a minority government. Since the October 2021 election, the Liberal Party has maintained a working relationship with the New Democratic Party, enabling Justin Trudeau to run something that looks more like a majority government.

Despite stagnant poll results for the Liberal Party, Justin Trudeau has maintained the same position.

He is stubborn, not as much as his father Pierre Elliot, but pushing him to quit, if it only comes from a handful of Members of Parliament, might only convince him to stay.

However, a few factors could get in the way of Justin Trudeau's ambition to win a fourth straight election.

A turning point

An upcoming by-election in a riding called Toronto-St. Paul's, a Liberal stronghold, will be telling. Liberal Party candidates have been elected there with clear majorities since 1993. Carolyn Bennett retired from politics at the beginning of the year. She had won two of the last three elections with more votes than all her opponents combined, and almost achieved the same victory margin in 2021, with 48.86% of the ballots.

If the Liberal Party doesn't maintain a strong majority in the upcoming Toronto-St. Paul's by-election or, worse, if the party loses it, this would send strong signals to Justin Trudeau to the effect that he is no longer the right person for the job.

However, some people find that July 2024 would be too early to send Mr. Trudeau packing his belongings and leaving politics since the next election will be held in October 2025, and considering that 15

months is an eternity in politics. After all, Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party were third in polls six months before the October 2015 election and they won a majority government.

The context today is different. In 2015, a lot of electors were tired of Stephen Harper, who had been there for nine years and who had used some bullying methods to adopt certain bills, including mammoth bills containing hundreds of legislative modifications.

Back then, Justin Trudeau's youth and promise of change resonated with voters. Now, he has been in power for nearly nine years, approaching a decade by spring 2025. The dynamics have shifted.

Why the spring and not October 2025? Because the New Democratic Party (NDP) will unlikely support another Liberal budget. Over the last four-and-a-half years, the NDP has kept the Liberal Party at the top of the government by reaching agreements that included measures included in the New Democrat platform. However, the NDP platform is hardly different from that of the Liberals.

Let's remember that in 2015, Justin Trudeau's platform was more progressive than then NDP leader Thomas Mulcair's, who was rooting for austerity measures in an attempt to stay close to Stephen Harper's program.

In a way, the Liberal party passed the NDP to the left, the left being strong social measures and an openness to run budgetary deficits.

However, since 2015, the NDP has also experienced very little wiggle room, financially. We are talking here about the finances of the party, not governmental orientations. Since 2015, the NDP has simply not been able to afford an election.

Following the April 16 budget tabled by the government, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh took days of "reflection" before indicating that his party would vote for it at the House of Commons. That was theatre. He had no intention of voting against the budget.

The situation might be different in April 2025. The NDP is nearing a point of oblivion. The capacity of the party to stand out will be a determining factor in 2025, because an important proportion of the electorate already foresees the eventual campaign as a personal battle between Justin Trudeau and Pierre Poilievre, not even between the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party.

Who could replace Justin Trudeau?

If Prime Minister Trudeau fails to convince voters in Toronto-St. Paul's that his party still has some gas in its tank and, if economic conditions like the interest and the inflation rates, don't improve the Liberal Party's position in polls, he will be strongly suggested to call it a political career. Moreover, the party will

need some time to organize a leadership race.

Will he listen? There is nothing certain but if he does, there will be people to take over.

A lot of Liberals would like to see Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland replace Justin Trudeau. We hear less of that lately though. The value of her "stock" has diminished since she talked about the relevance of increasing Canada's exploitation of natural resources, including oil and gas. This leaves very little room for a potent environmental platform the Liberal Party will have to promote in order to single out its positions compared to Pierre Poilievre's.

Recently, Mark Carney, the former chairman of the Bank of Canada, who later occupied a similar position in England, made a couple of public appearances. At once, he indicated following Canadian politics and not coveting a leadership role in that regard. We have seen in the past people expressing the same position, only to run once the occasion arises. If Justin Trudeau pulls out of politics, we might hear more of Mark Carney. His lack of experience in politics is considered a handicap as of now. The Liberal Party certainly doesn't need another Michael Ignatieff, an intellectual who was never able to make a successful transition into politics.

Public Security and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic Leblanc recently said that he is not interested in succeeding his boyhood friend Justin Trudeau, whom he babysat in the 1970s. He added that he was excited about running again as a member of the Liberal Party team. He too could change his mind if Mr. Trudeau calls it quits.

Innovation, Science and Industry Minister François-Philippe Champagne has said in the past that the role of Canada's prime minister would eventually be of some interest to him. He had a career in business before entering politics, which could be an advantage. He has a lot of energy, some people say too much energy, as he is sometimes called the Duracell rabbit along the sidelines. His capacity to listen is not proven.

Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly is another interested person in running the Liberal Party of Canada, and she said so when she made the switch from an attempt at being elected mayor of Montreal and federal politics. She is only 45 years old, and she plays an important role representing Canada internationally but she might need a few more years before proving that she is solid enough for the job.

Most Canadians expect a street fight, come the next electoral campaign. Come voting day, though, the winner, if he is the Liberal Party leader, might be the one calm enough to show Canadians that Pierre Poilievre has very little to offer other than criticism, especially if the Conservative Party leader sticks to the strategy he has used since winning the 2022 leadership race.



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Renovations underway at Paspébiac Town Hall

GILLES GAGNÉ

PASPEBIAC – Since April 8, passersby have noticed that the Paspébiac Town Hall is undergoing renovations to its roof, evidenced by the presence of scaffolding. Additionally, plans are in motion to upgrade the exterior of the former presbytery situated just east of the town hall.

The Town of Paspébiac director general, Daniel Langlois, explains that the two mandates were merged into a single call for tender and it was awarded to Carleton's Constructions Scandinaves.

"Two contractors made a bid and Constructions Scandinaves won it with a tender of \$1.2 million. The work is divided in two parts and it will last a total of 13 weeks, with a bit of wiggle room because it started slowly. As for the presbytery, we will protect the exterior. So, the roof will be replaced and so will the siding," says Mr. Langlois.

A new purpose for the presbytery, which was built in 1929, remains to be deter-



Photo: G. Gagné

Paspébiac's town hall gets a new roof.

mined by the community, he adds.

"The building was cited for heritage protection in 2008. We had to protect it and maintain it in a good state. In fact, we also carried out some maintenance work on St. James Church, where our library is, and some work on two municipal buildings: the water supply building, and the

pump house. We are keeping an eye on our buildings in order to maintain them in good shape. It is cheaper than new constructions," points out Daniel Langlois.

Also called the Citizens' House, the town hall building was erected in 1933 and was used for decades as a convent called Notre-Dame du Saint-Rosaire. An elementary school

was later built in the back.

Several years after the closure of the convent and the school, the Town of Paspébiac acquired them with the project to move the town hall, then located adjacent to the former arena at the other end of the town, into the convent

The old elementary school was demolished in 2008, and the former convent was up-

graded in 2012-2013 at the same time as the Cultural Centre was erected on the former elementary school location.

The first fair-sized Catholic church of Paspébiac was built in 1860, in the current location of the old convent. In 1879, the church was demolished and a second place of worship was erected on the same location. A small house was likely built nearby, according to the municipal documentation. The current presbytery was built in 1929 and replaced the first curial residence.

In 1957, the church burned down, which also damaged the presbytery. Repair work was carried out on it. Then, the church was rebuilt in 1959 and 1960 with a much more modern design. At one point, major work was carried out on the presbytery. The exterior cladding was replaced as well as most of the openings. Interior work was also carried out, especially on the ground floor, depriving the building of its characteristic and heritage architectural elements.

CISSS announces smaller than expected deficit

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The projected deficit at the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) for the current financial year has decreased from \$37 to \$30 million and is essentially the result of independent labour costs reduction.

The president and chief executive officer (CEO), Martin Pelletier, notes that \$25 million is attributable to outside workers.

The leader wants a recovery plan from Quebec. "Last year, it was finally resolved. This year, the overall (Quebec-wide) deficit in the health network is quite a bit higher than last year. We have a little less hope," notes Mr. Pelletier.

If a balanced budget plan must be tabled, cuts will be necessary without compromising services. "By maintaining the independent workforce, it will cost more. This will be the challenge of the balanced budget plan and the negotiations that will take place with Quebec. The budget we have allows us to maintain services. This is the perspective that we find ourselves in," explains Mr. Pel-



Photo: N. Sergerie

The president of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS, Martin Pelletier

letier.

Although an exact figure is not provided, Mr. Pelletier suggests that next year's deficit is likely to be large.

Travel expenses

A pilot project is underway to offset the travel costs of patients who must receive a series of treatments in the region.

The CISSS launched a project a few months ago to assist people who travel more than 200 kilometres to receive a series of treatments

over three months.

"From the moment it totals more than 200 kilometres, we now take them into account, which was not the case before. We pay the difference between the total travelled minus 200 kilometres with supporting evidence. We will measure all of this to see the impact on the organization's finances," explains Mr. Pelletier.

The CISSS is using funds from its regular budget to carry out the pilot project between May 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025. For the

CEO, this is a calculated risk, as the measure could represent a cost of \$1.5 million.

Nephrology

Taking into account the caseload volume the CISSS is considering requesting a nephrologist position to serve its four hemodialysis centres.

"We don't have enough volume that would justify the presence of a nephrologist all week in the Gaspésie. On the other hand, telemedicine is well developed," mentions the CEO.

The number of people, however, needing a nephrologist is increasing and there may come a time when demand justifies it.

The Gaspé nephrology centre is under construction, which could provide more places. "Once these arrangements are made, will we be able to open for longer periods rather than expanding and being open half the time. It remains a human resources challenge," he says.

Sainte-Anne-des-Monts operating department

One year after the crisis that struck the Sainte-Anne-

des-Monts operating department, a regulatory framework was established to ensure the proper functioning of the department.

"Things are going well at the moment. It's certain that we still use a lot of independent labour and we also seek to optimize the operation of the rooms," explains Mr. Pelletier.

Efforts will be made to increase the volume of activity because the financing will come with the patient.

"There is the possibility of carrying out operations in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts to relieve congestion in other hospitals. There is the avenue of developing ophthalmology, which is a file that is not easy (because we have) to find the ophthalmologist. We are trying to have an agreement with the Lower Saint Lawrence and if this specialist can carry out operations, that is an addition. There are already other surgeons who come from other (surgery) blocks of the Gaspésie," mentions the CEO.

All operating rooms in the Gaspé Peninsula could increase their activities to obtain full weeks.

Possible maritime crossing between North Shore, Anticosti Island and Rivière-au-Renard to be studied

NELSON SERGERIE

HAVRE-SAINT-PIERRE - An economic, tourist and social study is underway by the promoter of the maritime link between Havre-Saint-Pierre in the North Shore, Anticosti Island and Rivière-au-Renard.

The Quebec government, via the Ministry of Tourism, is financing the study of the port of Havre-Saint-Pierre, which two years ago started seriously looking into the 30-year-old idea of developing a ferry service between the three locations

“Thanks to their financial participation, we were able to award the mandate and begin the study, which is the essential element for the advancement of this project,” notes the director of the port of Havre-Saint-Pierre, Odessa Thériault.

“We are going to look at what this service will bring as leverage, for example, the developments and investments that will be possible to make in Anticosti, the possible investments in the two affected regions because there will be better mobility of people. (...) We also think of UNESCO which is now in Anticosti. Quebecers and the whole world will want to see it (Anticosti). This does not only affect the immediate expense but everything that it will create in the two regions,” states Ms. Thériault.

Several studies have been done in the past, but the port wants to have up-to-date data.

“What we want to demonstrate is that the benefit will be greater than the cost. A crossing is loss-making by definition. With a ferry service, there is always a contribution from the government to support these services of opening up and access to the territory. We talked about a deficit of \$8 million when we submitted the project. The study casts a very wide net and the benefit for the regions, communities and the government will be significantly higher than the investment cost that we are asking of the government,” believes the director.

The port will also revise its basic studies when the project is launched to take into account inflation, which affects all sectors of activity.

“The project always provokes enthusiasm, particularly among the tourist community because everyone sees the



The port of Havre-Saint-Pierre, on the North Shore.

Photo: Courtesy Port of Havre-Saint-Pierre

added value of linking all these tourist riches. This will create an exceptional circuit but it will add development and jobs,” says Ms. Thériault.

The study should be submitted this fall, another study on governance which will be launched in the coming weeks.

“(The studies will be used) to define the service and what would be the best option to file,” she said.

The mayor of Gaspé, who has supported the port of Havre-Saint-Pierre by financing preliminary studies, is delighted with the launch of this study.

“What are the opportunities that we perhaps hadn’t seen before? For us, this remains an extremely important issue. We know that Rivière-au-Renard is going through an economic crisis linked to shrimp and turbot fishing. We have to bring money into the village. Tourism is a good way. We have already carried out \$9 million in work for the Rivière-au-Renard Fishing Capital project. This type of project could bring grist to the mill in terms of economic benefits, while we get through the fisheries crisis,” says Daniel Côté. In particular, he mentions more accommodation or catering linked to the crossing.

On governance, the mayor of Gaspé evokes several scenarios such as intermunicipal management, the private sector, a non-profit organization or the Société des traversiers du Québec.

“We spoke with so many people that we left all the scenarios open and the study must determine the best scenario,” notes Mr. Côté.

The fact that Quebec is investing money is seen as an interest on the part of the government.

“With the recognition of Anticosti as a UNESCO world heritage site, everyone realizes that it is beautiful to have this site in our hands, but should we have access to it at a more reasonable cost than thousands of dollars in plane tickets? This can be proposed as a route for tourism development in Anticosti, but also in Rivière-au-Renard and Havre-Saint-Pierre,” say the elected official.

Daily service between Havre-Saint-Pierre, Anticosti

Island and Rivière-au-Renard would be deployed over a minimum operating period of 160 days per year, from June to November.

The roll-on/roll-off (RORO) ship will be able to accommodate up to 350 passengers, between 55 and 65 cars, and between 10 and 15 trucks for the transport of goods.

A previous study estimated the crossing deficit between \$5 and \$7 million per year.

Two operating models are suggested: either Quebec finances the ship, absorbs part of the deficit, and finances the operation, or it would be en-

tirely taken care of by the Société des traversiers du Québec.

The ferry would leave Havre-Saint-Pierre and take 7.5 hours to get to Anticosti, make a 4-hour stopover, and then take 5 hours before docking in Rivière-au-Renard. The return would be the next day.

This idea returns 30 years after the failure of the crossing between Rivière-au-Renard and the Côte-Nord between 1994 and 1996.

The project experienced a new chapter in 2014.

The Liberal government of Philippe Couillard finally commissioned a feasibility study published in April 2019, which concluded that such a crossing with a used vessel would have generated an operating deficit of \$7.5 million for the years 2025-2030, a figure that would have climbed to \$12.9 million with a new ship.

Infrastructure costs with the use of a new ship were estimated at \$136 million while using a used ship was estimated at \$44 million.

Infrastructure improvements were projected to cost \$5 million in Rivière-au-Renard, \$4.3 million in Havre-Saint-Pierre and \$6 million in Port-Meunier.

The customer potential had been estimated at nearly 33,000 people annually for the period 2025-2030.

Government considers keeping caribou from the Parc de la Gaspésie in captivity

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Ministry of Wildlife is evaluating the possibility of keeping the caribou captured in February in temporary captivity.

Ten females and three males are currently being kept in an enclosure located at Mount McGerigle in the Parc de la Gaspésie, considering that there are only 24 of the species remaining, according to the Minister of the Environment, Benoît Charrette.

When announcing the capture data on May 1, the ministry did not specify when the animals would be released, unlike the operation held last year where it was specified that they would be released at the end of summer.

In an email, the ministry indicates “that given the precarious state of the Gaspésie population, in particular the low productivity and recruitment rates observed in recent years, the ministry intends to evaluate temporary captivity for the caribou of Gaspésie in the coming weeks,” without adding further details.

“The duration of recourse to this management measure will be evaluated through a multi-criteria analysis taking into account, among other things, the abundance of the population in nature and in captivity, recruitment, survival rates, the ratio of sexes and the deployment of other complementary management measures such as predator control,” adds the ministry.

The minister mentioned last week that this was a very vulnerable sector. “We want to protect them from predators. We think we can encourage a more active pregnancy with this way (enclosure), but there is no doubt that the Gaspésie herd is vulnerable,” he stated.

The Val-d’Or and Charlevoix herds are already in captivity.

Despite a request to know if females were pregnant following an ultrasound as was the case last year, the ministry repeats that the birth report will be revealed in July.

As of 2023, six females had been captured, and two were pregnant. Unfortunately, the fawns did not survive, one female died during birth and another was poached after being released.

Percé backtracks on two important files

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - Percé is reversing its stance on two significant matters by deciding to open the tourist office this summer and putting an end to the Piedmont Commercial Street project announced in December 2020.

Piedmont Commercial Street

For several months, councillors have been wavering over this project, which has encountered several obstacles. With Mayor Cathy Poirier being absent, the council put a stop to the project.

“We need a lot of money for infrastructure, and we are at that point,” says pro-mayor Doris Réhel, who chaired the May 7 council meeting.

According to the Percé council, the economic situation is not conducive to such a large investment.

The change in the council’s position was noted during the discussions for the development of the 2024 budget. In January, the councillors had addressed the council, stating that the town’s economic and budgetary situations didn’t allow for the construction of this street, which was intended to connect Highway 132 to the Geoparc.

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

The land for the future street was subdivided, and two promises to purchase out of the six available were submitted to the Town.

Faced with this development, the Town could be vulnerable to prosecution. “We’ll see what happens. We will inform them (interested parties) of the decision. We will see what happens next,” said Town Director, Jean-François Coderre.

One of the two owners who had purchased the land expects to receive compensation following the abandonment of the project.

The co-owner of the Pit Caribou microbrewery, Jean-François Nellis, is disappointed by the turn of events and wonders what vision elected officials now have for the town’s development.

Mr. Nellis acknowledges that Percé has extended a hand and has the intention to take further action. “The plans and specifications were made three years ago. We participated in



Photos: N. Sergerie

The pro-mayor of Percé, Doris Réhel.

the call for tenders in September 2021. I believe in the good faith of the Town and I think that the best thing to do is to sit down and find a way to resolve the situation and perhaps talk about the vision of the Town of Percé in the coming years,” says the entrepreneur.

Without wanting to go into details, Mr. Nellis indicates that he has invested several tens of thousands of dollars in the process.

The Town was not able to say, following the municipal council meeting, how much money had been invested in this project to date.

The citizens present at the council meeting applauded the decision.

Tourist Information Office

Another decision reversed by the council is the closure of the Tourist Information office. The decision to close the office was made when adopting the budget last December.

The council is now releasing \$100,000 for the summer operation of the office for the 2024 tourist season, which is fast approaching.

“We have a little more money because we had a lot less snow last winter, which gives us several thousand dollars,” explains the pro-mayor.

The office costs \$168,000 to operate, but a reduction in the payroll and less advertising will make it possible to operate at lower costs, according to the town’s director general.

This reprieve is only for one year, which will give the council time to find a solution for 2025.

“There are merchants who have questioned Ms. Poirier. There were meetings and there was great unanimity around the

table. Merchants want to get involved,” mentions Mr. Coderre.

Once again, the decision was applauded by those present at the council meeting.

Planning director suspension

Furthermore, the saga surrounding the suspension of the town’s planning director has cost taxpayers \$46,000 to date.

Ghislain Pitre was suspended on October 30 while an administrative investigation to shed light on allegations of fraud, theft of large sums of money from the municipality, and falsification of documents, are being carried out.

The municipal council officially approved the mandate for an administrative investigation into labour law involving the executive with the law firm Therrien, Couture et Joli-Cœur. “We hear citizens are fed-up. We respected the rules of law



Jean-François Coderre will vacate his position as director general on June 21.

and case law and our way of doing things was validated by the Municipal Commission. This is good news for citizens because we did things the right way,” says Mr. Coderre.

The director general is hopeful the situation will be resolved before summer begins.

In addition to the Quebec Municipal Commission, the Permanent Anti-Corruption Unit was also interested in the matter.

Resignations

In addition, two important figures in the municipal administration are leaving their posts. The prosecutor who worked within the Town of Percé has resigned. Simon Cossette Lachance was with the municipality for almost a year and is leaving for professional reasons.

Furthermore, the municipal council also announced the departure of the director general

of Percé on June 21. Hired a year ago, Jean-François Coderre and the municipal council decided on a mutual agreement.

It’s a difficult decision, admits the director, who has respect for Mayor Cathy Poirier and the existing council. The mandate was not an easy one.

“There is nostalgia and sadness when I think of the beautiful moments we experienced, despite this crisis. We won’t hide it. This is perhaps one of the most complex crises in the municipal world that we are currently experiencing. I began my mandate with the council in place. We are in the middle of a royalty crisis and, after that, everything happened one after the other. We didn’t have any relief,” says Mr. Coderre.

The Municipal Commission continues its support to supervise municipal operations better. Subsequently, Mr. Coderre believes the town will remain attractive to future directors.

SOPFEU reports a slightly above average start of the season

Press release

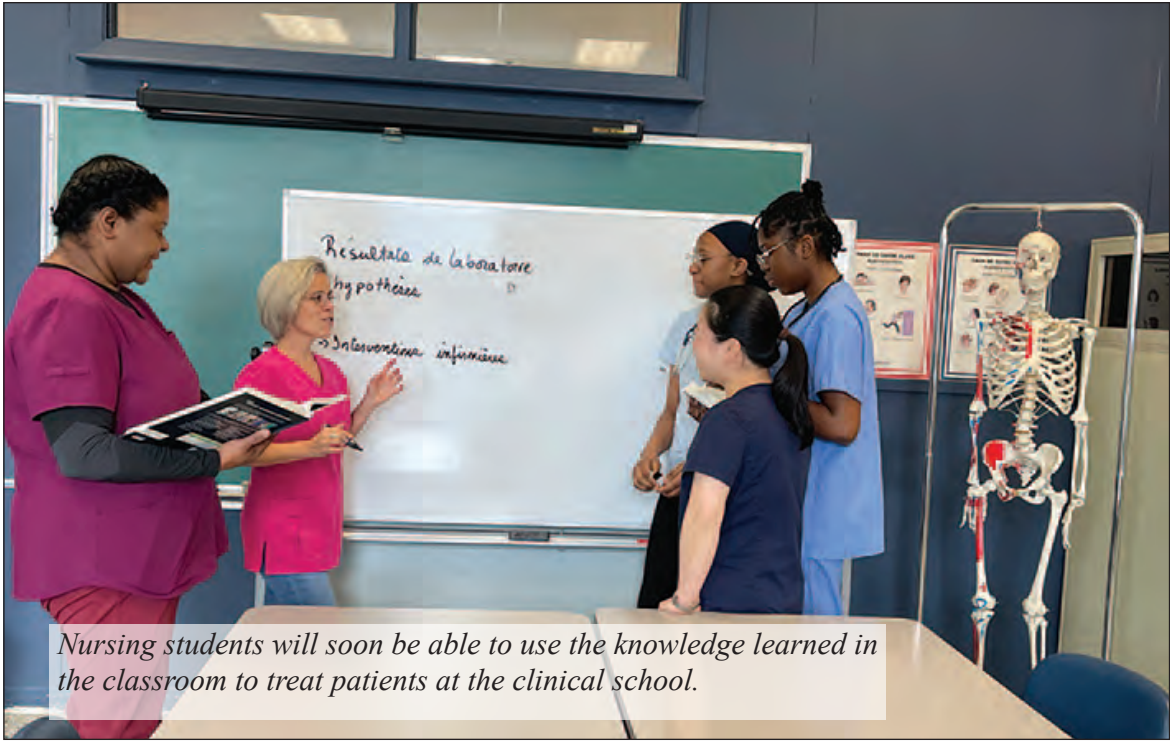
QUEBEC: Following a rather early start to the season in March, the month of April was slightly above average for the teams of the Society for the Protection of Forests Against Fire (SOPFEU).

Throughout April, SOPFEU recorded 52 vegetation fires, affecting 45.8 hectares (ha) of forest, while the average for the last ten years is 42.4 fires for an area of 27.2 ha burned. It is noteworthy to mention that all of the fires recorded so far this year were caused by human activity.

Despite rain and snow during the month of April, the precipitation was distributed irregularly during the month of April. This led to the drying out of the vegetation in different areas, which favoured the outbreak of several fires.

It should be noted that the fires during April occurred almost everywhere in the territory. Although in the spring the majority of fires generally occur further south in the province, regions further north such as Abitibi, Saguenay, Lac-Saint-Jean, North Shore, Lower Saint Lawrence and Gaspé Peninsula were not completely spared during the month of April. This is explained by the early disappearance of the snow cover across the entire territory.

Burning waste more dangerous than it seems: This year again, the burning of plant debris carried out during spring landscaping is responsible for several fires. Of the 52 fires recorded in April, 23 are associated with this type of burning, or 44%. SOPFEU notes that many citizens underestimate the risk associated with burning waste. The protection organization instead recommends safe and ecological alternatives, such as composting green waste and depositing residual materials at an ecocentre.



Nursing students will soon be able to use the knowledge learned in the classroom to treat patients at the clinical school.

Photo: Courtesy Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles

Clinical school will be launched this fall at the Gaspé CEGEP

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé campus of the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles will be opening a clinical school, allowing student nurses to use their knowledge in a real setting with actual patients.

The educational concept, which already exists in some Quebec colleges, has been in development in Gaspé for 18 months.

“There is also a significant educational component where we review case stories seen during the day. It helps develop clinical skills,” says nurse, teacher and project manager, Mireille Caron.

The clinical school will be implemented in three parts. First, a room at the CEGEP will be used for practical sessions in various internship courses. A second component is being developed with the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre to provide vaccination, screening and outpatient care services. The third component involves discussions with the Gaspé Family Medicine Group, where students could assist specialized nurse practitioners during their patient consultations.

“This is part of our wishes in the development of the clinic-school,” indicates the project manager.

Examples of activities that could be undertaken include blood tests, fetal heart monitoring of pregnant women and the changing of dressings.

“It might look like this (the examples). At CEGEP, we have our laboratories with mannequins where students can practice, but it's nothing like practicing with people who volunteer. We are hopeful,” says Ms. Caron.

Despite tight deadlines, Ms. Caron remains confident of being able to launch the clinic at the start of the 2024-2025 school year.

To organize these clinics, a fundraising campaign is underway; however, a specific fundraising goal has yet to be set since not all the agreements have been finalized.

The financial arrangement could be done in several stages. “We have the initial starting costs, but as there are still agreements to be concluded with the CISSS de la Gaspésie, we cannot say whether we will have a start-up cost of \$100,000 or \$200,000. We still want to

launch the fundraising campaign and approach members of the community to find sponsors,” explains Ms. Caron.

“Eventually, we will come up with something concrete for the targeted amounts,” she adds.

A survey conducted in the spring showed that 80% of nursing students are willing to participate in the project.

“A survey was carried out among the population and it showed that the population was in favour of the project,” adds Ms. Caron.

The survey was developed and conducted by students in the Accounting and Management Techniques program.



School buses will no longer run at lunchtime on the Côte-de-Gaspé.

Photo: N. Sergerie

CSS des Chic-Chocs will no longer provide noon bus service

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - At the start of the 2024-2025 school year, the Centre de services scolaire des Chic-Chocs (CSSCC) will abolish its noon bus service.

The decision was following an analysis of the service and comes only a year after abandoning this service in the Haute-Gaspésie area. “It was becoming more and more expensive to ensure operations without compromising direct service to students,” explains interim director general of CSSCC, Steven Richard.

The rising cost of fuel, the reduced number of users in several vehicles, and the increase in the cost for parents were determining elements in the decision-making of whether the service was viable. “For example, if the school service centre decided to maintain lunchtime transportation, the price would have been nearly \$1,200 per user, which is considerable,” added Mr. Richard.

An extension of one year was granted to the Saint-Rosaire school in Gaspé to allow the reorganization of the daycare service which was already experiencing a high attendance. The delay will make it possible to increase that service’s capacity and hire the necessary staff.

Noon bus service is not subsidized by the government of Quebec and must be self-financed. The costs for parents are increasing each year.

“As this service is not obligatory and therefore must be self-financed, the CSSCC had to assume the difference in costs in order to limit the price increase (to parents). It then became difficult to continue offering the service,” indicates the interim deputy director. Daycare services will be accessible and improved in certain cases, while lunchtime supervision will also be available at certain schools.





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Alexis Deschênes becomes president of the Bar for Eastern Quebec

NELSON SERGERIE

NEW RICHMOND - On May 3, Alexis Deschênes of the New Richmond Legal Aid Office was unanimously elected for a two-year term as the President of the Quebec Bar for the Lower Saint Lawrence and the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands region.

“We must accept this with great humility. There was no

election. There was no other candidate. It’s a great mark of confidence,” explains Mr. Deschênes.

The role of the President is to represent the region before the Quebec Bar, as well as to focus on protecting the public and promoting access to justice.

“In the Gaspésie, Bas-Saint-Laurent and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, there is a shortage of lawyers despite

an increase in recent years. The fact remains that there are not enough of us to meet the needs. This is a concern,” explains Mr. Deschênes.

An action plan is being developed to attract new lawyers to the region.

A promotional campaign will take place encouraging new lawyers to establish themselves in the Gaspé Peninsula.

“We can have a diversi-

fied practice. There are business opportunities and there is an exceptional quality of life in the region,” mentions Mr. Deschênes, who emphasizes that an attorney can earn a very good living.

“It’s a myth that if we practice in the region, we won’t have interesting files. Legal questions arise everywhere in the territory, no matter where you are,” he says.

For example, a Crown prosecutor from Matane pleaded twice before the Supreme Court of Canada.

Serving as President of the Bar is a voluntary role that involves various responsibilities, including swearing in new members, addressing inquiries from citizens unable to find legal representation, and transmitting the opinions of prosecutors on issues of the Quebec Bar.

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CHANDLER MUNICIPAL UPDATE: Bruno-Pierre Godbout can receive his councillor pay

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER - Despite agreeing to withdraw from the municipal council following an agreement with the Municipal Commission, Councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout of Chandler will still be able to receive his salary.

This is what the mayor Gilles Daraïche indicated after the town checked with the Quebec Municipal Commission and its attorneys. “We have to pay for it. It is the law on Cities and Towns because he is temporarily withdrawn,” indicates the mayor.

However, if the councillor is found guilty, Mr. Godbout would not only have to reimburse his salary since the decision rendered on April 8, 2024 but also legal costs.

“If he wins, we can’t claim but if he loses, we can claim until the date he was declared ineligible,” adds Mr. Daraïche.

Mr. Godbout faces three charges relating to expense accounts presented in 2021.

The Permanent Anti-Corruption Unit indicated in January that its investigation

tended to demonstrate that between February 1 and July 31, 2021, the person who acted as pro mayor during the suspension by the Quebec Municipal Commission of former mayor Louise Langlois, allegedly produced and used false expense reimbursement requests.

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

He must answer for counts of fraud, forgery and use, possession or trafficking of a document.

Mr. Godbout will remain removed from the council either until a stay of proceedings, acquittal or the end of his mandate.

His case will return to court on June 25.

The Town of Chandler has received invoices of \$4,000 so far in this matter.

Chandler wharf

Discussions continue between Transport Canada and the Town of Chandler for the handover of the wharf.

The town still wishes to give the infrastructure a recreational and tourism vocation.

The mayor notes that infrastructure is essential for protecting the coastline.

“It is still capable of protecting Avenue Ernest-Whitton, the marina. The waves would hit directly on the bank. It’s more than a dock. It’s a breakwater to protect this sector,” maintains Mr. Daraïche.

The town wishes to develop the area between the wharf and the marina. “Even if there is a bike path that is not yet ready, a lot of people will walk in this area. We will install interpretation panels. There were two boats stranded. It’s this story that we’re going to put on the panels,” says the elected official.

The area will also be lit-up, with the research involved carried out by councillor Raymond Leblanc.

However, the water games project on the former Gaspésia mill property is more complex due to contamination of the site.

Services in the districts

This is what the mayor is talking about following the announced loss of the Desjardins ATM in May and the



Photo: N. Sergerie

Bruno-Pierre Godbout

fire that destroyed the pharmacy in the Newport neighbourhood.

“Our population is aging. If we centralize services, the Newport district is the second largest district after Chandler. There are needs in this sector and every time we withdraw a service, it hurts the neighbourhood,” he says.

According to the elected official, the owners of the pharmacy have taken steps to rebuild the business.

Regarding the Desjardins

bank file, the town is supporting the MRC of Bellechasse, on the south shore of Quebec, which is also fighting the closure of Desjardins service points.

On the closures in Newport and Gascons, the mayor hopes for a reprieve.

“Things are still moving in this matter. We would like to delay the closure until at least 2026. That would allow us to organize ourselves better and do things better,” says Mr. Daraïche.

ATVs no longer have access in downtown Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Trans-Québec 30 all-terrain vehicle (ATV) trail which provides access to downtown Gaspé is closed following the loss of a right of way in the Wakeham sector.

The trail runs between Wakeham and Sunny Bank, crossing the York River.

“It’s the loss of a right of way that forced us to close the trail. We closed it and we won’t be maintaining it. Three plots were strategically located. This prevents transiting from South to North on the TQ-30 which surrounds the Gaspésie,” explains the president of the Club Motoquad du Grand Gaspé, Éloi Thibault.

Since last fall, every effort has been made to reach a

compromise with the landowner. “We carried out negotiations in September and October. We contacted the Federation of Quad Clubs of Quebec,” says Mr. Thibault. He adds that those appointed to assist in the negotiations met with the owner three weeks ago, but the attempt to reach an agreement was unsuccessful.

Faced with this situation, the club administrators have decided to close the trails until May 31, 2025.

The club has explored various solutions to address the issue including moving the trail.

“We are trying to find all possible solutions. There would be a possibility of creating a footbridge over the York River but we are talking about a project worth \$1

million or more and it is unthinkable to achieve that for a club like ours,” complains the president.

The closure will have a significant economic impact on the Gaspé region, according to the club.

With the closure of the trail, there will be no trail maintenance for the 2024 season, the club will not renew its affiliation contract with the federation, and its trails will be removed from the federation’s interactive map.

“Quad riders will no longer be insured via the club’s insurance. It will be your own civil liability insurance, but it is at your own risk to travel on the trails,” warns Mr. Thibault.

All access rights holders have been notified of the trail closures.



Photo: Facebook

The TQ-30 trail is closed in Wakeham.

THEGASPESPEC.COM

Passenger train resumption: A false announcement

NELSON SERGERIE

NEW RICHMOND - A false publication circulating on social networks, announcing the possibility of once again being able to use the passenger train service between Quebec and Gaspé, has been denounced by the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie.

It appears that the social media post in question has been removed.

“Forget that, we in the sector are very aware that the train is not moving,” notes the president, Éric Dubé.

The return of the passenger rail service is up to VIA Rail.

“We didn’t think it made sense. We always find it unfortunate when people are scammed by fraudsters,” he says.

“Even fraudsters are inter-

ested in the return of the passenger train to the Gaspésie,” jokes Mr. Dubé, who invites people to go to the official sites to obtain information.

Furthermore, discussions are continuing between the Quebec government and Via Rail for a possible return of the passenger train.

The president of Via Rail, Mario Pélouin, was due to come to the Gaspé Peninsula in March. “There are still discussions to arrange a meeting with Mr. Pélouin in the region, but we do not yet have a date,” indicates Mr. Dubé.

Éric Dubé does not want to comment a partial return of the passenger rail carrier this year. “We use every opportunity for discussion. We continue to work with the Ministry of Transport and we are focused on ensuring that the sites are

delivered as quickly as possible for our first objective which is to be able to pick up goods from Port-Daniel before the end of the year,” hopes the president, noting in passing the significant work underway in the Paspébiac-New Carlisle sector and New Richmond.

The schedule should be respected to reach Port-Daniel-Gascons by the end of the year, as announced by the Quebec government.

“It is not the company that is the project manager. We are following up with the (Transport) ministry and, to date, I have not heard anything that says they will need additional time,” he says.

Photo: The false announcement circulated on social media networks. Credit: Facebook.



Military Museum creating new permanent exhibit

CYNTHIA DOW

NEW RICHMOND: The Baie-des-Chaleurs Military Museum is being rejuvenated with the use of videos, interactive technology, multimedia links, as well as the usual photographs, displays and maps.

A considerable amount of material from the archives of the late Phil Doddridge is being integrated with the current collection. Mr. Doddridge, a Hong Kong Veteran, was a major inspiration for the museum’s new executive director, Tom Eden.

“It’s a work in progress, and we want to arrange it in such a way that people will keep having a reason to return,” Mr. Eden noted. The use of seven screens as part of the permanent exhibit will allow for regular updates and improvements to the displays.

The museum is located at 351A Perron Boulevard West in New Richmond, on the Duthie Point site, housed in the former United Church from Oak Bay.

Nancy Doddridge, daughter of the late Phil Doddridge, is now the president of a revamped board of directors that includes treasurer Louis Sexton, secretary Darlene Dimock, Gordon Dell, André Moreau, Walter Jerome Jr., Natalie Clark, and youth representative



Photo: C. Dow

Executive Director Tom Eden and President Nancy Doddridge poses by the temporary cross used to mark the grave of Arthur Prentice Campbell, killed on October 1, 1918, near Cambrai, France — a little more than one month before the end of the First World War.

Fred Crozier.

For years, Rachel Dell, a trained museologist, worked to catalogue the many items held by the museum. The organization has since partnered with the Musée de la Gaspésie to create an “active partnership” for guidance in creating the new exhibit and managing the collections.

“In this region, we are the

ones with the military expertise and my goal is to protect the collections,” Nancy Doddridge told SPEC. She noted items have been donated from all over, even from the United States.

The state of the building has been assessed, and the organization has moved forward with projects to reduce humidity and improve air circulation in-

side. This summer, the roof will be replaced with metal for long-term protection.

In the main hall, a circuit is being prepared on Gaspesian involvement in World War I, the rise of Fascism in Europe in the 1930s (including Nazi memorabilia donated by the late J A (Buddy) Campbell), Gaspesians’ efforts in World War II, an overview of the Battle of the Saint Lawrence, and details on more recent campaigns such as Korea, Vietnam, Bosnia and Afghanistan.

Visitors will be able to look for evidence of the involvement of their own relatives in Infantry divisions, the Air Force and the Navy, see medals won by many of the region’s veterans, and enjoy an assortment of uniforms, swords, helmets and guns. One unique item is a wedding dress made from the silk of a parachute.

Financial support has been gathered from a variety of sources, including Veterans’ Affairs Canada, the Town of New Richmond, and the MRC. “The Town has really been there for us, not only with financial support, but with advice, technical savvy, contacts, all kinds of things,” Ms. Doddridge explained.

There are plans for the exterior as well. Landscaping

outdoors has been carried out in front, and a flower bed will soon contain red poppies.

Behind the building, Mr. Eden would like to see a commemorative trail arranged with a pavilion for outdoor activities. Eight panels would be mounted to explain Gaspesians’ activities throughout World Wars I and II. The administrative board is now waiting to hear if a request for funds to move forward with that development is approved.

“Ultimately, we need to create an organization that will have the money to continue operating the museum,” Ms. Doddridge explained, “So we will start to put some energy into our foundation and fundraising.”

For his part, Mr. Eden would like to see people “...leave the exhibit inspired and thankful. We want this to be a celebration of the service and sacrifice of our young Gaspesians and, also, we want to showcase what they did for the community after the war: their volunteerism, the businesses they created — they built the society we grew up in.”

The museum will open for the season on June 24, from Monday to Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., with the help of a summer student.

Anglican priests feel “at home” on the Coast

CYNTHIA DOW

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: - It’s been almost a year since Melissa and Kevin Frankland came to serve in the Anglican Parish of Gaspé, but it didn’t take long for them to feel right at home.

Both were born and raised on the East Coast, Melissa in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, and Kevin on a small island off Grand Manan, New Brunswick. “It’s just in your blood when you are born on the coast and we find the culture rather similar as well,” Mother Melissa told SPEC.

Both Mother Melissa and Father Kevin are ordained Anglican priests, but Melissa is the one who was hired to serve the five churches of the parish: Gaspé, Wakeham, York, Sandy Beach and Peninsula.

Father Kevin has taken early retirement after a particularly daunting time at what Mother Melissa describes as a “toxic parish” in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Both East Coasters found the prairie city a challenge, particularly having to witness the drug scene on downtown streets daily. “So many young people just have no foundation in their lives anymore,” Mother Melissa explained.

While the priest has no delusions about the challenges



Photo: M. Frankland

Father Kevin and Mother Melissa Frankland live in the Wakeham rectory and are serving the five churches of the Parish of Gaspé.

facing the Gaspé Coast, she said that moving to Gaspé has been “...like coming home. People here are so friendly. We are making an effort to connect with the French community as well. We were very welcomed when we first arrived, not just by people in the parish but the general community. We have been made to feel part of the family.”

Both priests speak French, Mother Melissa having gone to French immersion school as a child and Father Kevin hav-

ing earned an undergraduate degree at the Université de Moncton.

Mother Melissa and Father Kevin met at the Atlantic School of Theology and soon ended up in two nearby parishes in Nova Scotia. It was very busy, with 11 churches to serve between them and having to live in separate rectories. Now Mother Melissa is also a part-time chaplain for the Fort Garry Horse Regiment of the Canadian Armed Forces.

“I had always dreamed about serving in the military,” she told SPEC. “We have a family history of being involved in the military, as well as police services and nursing. So I have always wanted to join something greater than I.” Mother Melissa noted that the Regiment she supports is the one tied to the story of Winnie the Pooh, and that those who served in the First World War left from Gaspé Harbour. “For many of those boys, it would have been the last place in

Canada they would ever see,” she explained, “So there is still a connection there.”

The work with the Armed Forces is done online, and Mother Melissa is a reservist so “...there is no danger of a deployment.” She also noted that she is going for three weeks of continuous education at an Armed Forces base in Ontario, but she will be back!

“It’s interesting working with the Regiment. The average age of the troops is 25. It’s sad how young people seem to have no coping skills but every generation has their thing. The worldview is so different when you are dealing with people who have been born, raised, lived their lives, had their children and died in the same community. Change can be very difficult.”

One thing is certain, Mother Melissa understands congregations’ ties to their church buildings. “I will never start a conversation to close a church,” she told SPEC. “Of course, the church leadership may come in and do it, and the church is the people, not the building but I can see why these buildings are so important. Their ancestors’ blood, sweat and tears went into those walls and pews. The other part of our circle at communion is those who have gone ahead.”



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Josh Prince launches pipe unclogging service

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – A 25-year-old entrepreneur from New Carlisle, Josh Prince, recently founded a new enterprise, Débouchage Josh Prince, to offer a service to people dealing with pipe blockages.

Despite his young age, Josh Prince already has several years of continuous work under his belt, having been an employee of the Town of New Carlisle for four years before becoming a forestry heavy machinery operator and maintenance mechanic for three years.

“I developed an interest for plumbing while working, including at the town (of New Carlisle). As a mechanic, you also work with pipes and hoses,” he says.

He started thinking about starting his current business after a friend, Luc-Hervé Blouin, founded his own plumbing company.

“Luc-Hervé told me that there is a need for a company that would deal with blockages,” adds Josh Prince.

Josh took his time before starting his business, which took off a few weeks ago.

“I was collecting information for a few months while still working full-time in forestry. I wanted to make sure to get the best equipment at a fair cost. I wanted to be smart with how I spent my money,” he explains.

Josh hasn’t revealed the cost of starting Débouchage Josh Prince, but does concede that he spent several tens of thousands of dollars on the venture.

“I already had a few tools, but there was no program to get a grant in my kind of business. I checked with the MRC, and it didn’t work,” says Josh Prince.

His equipment includes a wide set of pressure hoses and nozzles, as well as a range of attachments that provide him

with a lot of flexibility when the time comes to unclog pipes. He also owns a camera that can detect the type of blockage that prompted the intervention. Using LED lighting, the camera’s complement is a high-definition screen.

“A job that can take four hours or more to deal with can take me 30 minutes to do. Sometimes, I can deal with a blockage in 30 seconds. With the camera, I can see very well the cause of the blockage,” he explains.

Josh Prince, who has built his own house over the last two years in addition to working full-time, is satisfied with the way his business is progressing, just weeks after its start.

“I am very busy. I have had calls almost every day. There are a lot of potential clients and not much competition. So far, I have had calls from people living between Chandler and Maria,” he concludes.



Photo:G. Gagné

Josh Prince has acquired state-of-the-art equipment to identify blockage causes quickly. A camera equipped with LED lighting and connected to a high-definition screen is one of his tools.

My heart belongs to cats

My heart belongs to cats--stalking, chasing, tackling, batting, biting, playing cats.

Cats--growling, hissing, spitting, clawing, biting, fighting cats.

*Chats--stalking, tensing, springing, pouncing, catching, hunting cats.

Gatos--bending, twisting, stretching, licking, biting, grooming cats.

Gatti--rolling, yawning, dozing, twitching, dreaming, sleeping cats.

Die Katzen--rubbing, purring, padding, cuddling, snuggling, loving cats.

My heart belongs to cats--playing, fighting, hunting grooming, sleeping, loving cats.

* In the order that they appear above: French (fem. chattes), Spanish (fem. gatas), Italian (fem. Gatte) and German.

-Constance Brochet



NOW OPEN

SPEC hours

The Spec office at 208B Gérard D. Levesque is open to clientele **Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please use the front door.**

It is important to note that we are able to check voicemail but the direct line into the office still requires some repairs, so it is essential when calling to leave your name and number, along with a brief message.

We are able to accept payment by credit card but because of the phone lines we are not currently able to accept debit card payments.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation, we look forward to seeing you in person once again.

Announcements



In Memory

LANGLOIS: Leonard

In loving memory of a loving husband, father and grandfather. Who passed away on March 10, 1998.

*No matter how our lives may change,
We will never forget those precious times.
The ones spent with you we hold you,
In our hearts and there you shall remain.
To walk with us through out our lives.*

Love forever: Iona and all of your family.



RAMIER: George

May 13, 1949 - February 13, 2009

In memory of George Ramier.

*If someone asks for me,
Tell them heaven is where I'll be.
I've finished my life's chores,
So now I fish on heavens shores.
The view is grand and the fishing's great,
But I yearn for you as I sit and wait.*

*I've saved a spot on the river bend,
For my family and close friends.
But for now, as you sail out to sea,
Drop a line in memory.
For all the good times that you had,
Fishing with me, your loving Dad.
Miss you Daddy, love Joann, Mark and families.*

ROBERTS: Earl - April 6, 2000

ROBERTS: Beatrice - February 16, 2003

In loving memory of mum and dad, father and grandfather.

*You both did so many things for us,
Your hearts were kind and true.
And when we needed someone,
We could always count on you both.
Those special years will not return,
But with the love in our hearts.
You will both walk with us forever.*

Love, Iona and family.

STARNES:

In loving memory of mother Ruth (May 14, 2021) and brother Ivan (June 14, 2019).

*It broke our hearts to lose you,
But you did not go alone.
Part of us went with you,
The day God called you home.
Each time we see your picture,
You seem to smile and say,
Don't cry, I'm only sleeping.
We will meet again someday.*

Always remembered and sadly missed by Shena, Kenny, Jimmy (Bianca) Milly and Mya.

Obituary - 150 words - \$50
150-250 words - \$55
250+ words - quote will be provided

In memory: 150 words - \$35
150-250 words - \$45

Funeral, Celebration of Life, Card of Thanks,
Engagement, Birth, Prayer, Birthday - \$35
Wedding - \$55



Celebration of life



SYVRET: E. Joyce Hayes

Joyce passed away on January 29, 2024. The funeral Service and Burial will take place June 5, 2024 at St. Andrew's United Church located at 388 Route 132, Hope Town, Quebec.

The visitation will begin at 1 p.m., with the funeral service to commence at 2 p.m. with Rev. Pierre Momberg officiating the service. Burial to follow at the Bayview Cemetery.

All are welcome to an open house for light refreshments at Joyce's summer home "Mr. Bean's", 351 Route 132 Hope, Quebec

Arrangements by Salon Funéraire Réjean Bélanger inc., a subsidiary of the HG Division.

*Deadline to submit an
announcement is
Wednesday at 4 p.m*

COAST ROUND-UP

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

COAST ROUND-UP

GASPÉ:

FADOQ York River Seniors Club

May 25: The FADOQ York River Seniors Club will be holding their AGM at the Gaspé Royal Canadian Legion Branch 59 beginning at 4 p.m. Cocktails, buffet supper and live music will follow the AGM. Cost: \$25 with a \$15 discount for members who attend the AGM. Members are welcome to attend the meeting only, or may choose to attend the dance only (\$7 at the door). For more information or to purchase tickets contact Ron Mundle at 418-355-4732, Tony Patterson at 418-368-3276 or Debbie Sams at 418-368-2977. Deadline to purchase tickets for the supper is May 20.

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BARACHOIS:

Community

Garage/Moving Sale

May 18: Community garage sale and moving sale from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Mountain View Golden Age in Barachois, 857 Route 132 East. Inside and outside, to reserve a table (\$10) contact Janet Harvey 418-355-4899.

PORT DANIEL:

Three Star

Golden Age Club

Tuesdays: Pétanque from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. every Tuesday evening. Cost is \$3.

HOPE TOWN:

Sports Club

May 25: The Hope Town Sports Club is hosting a gift bingo starting at 7 p.m. at the Hope Town community centre. All proceeds will go towards UCW hall renovation.

tions. Anyone who wishes to make a donation please contact; Gwen McLellan Ross, Joanne Ross Flowers or Linda MacWhirter.

HOPE:

Hope Baptist Church

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

NEW CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

Legion memberships are available for \$45. Returning and new members welcome. Please be advised that there will be no monthly meetings for June, July and August.

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.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: 50+ Club

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

May 25: Annual spring bingo, starting at 1 p.m.

**UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, May 19
10 a.m. Service**

**UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN
Sunday, May 19
2 p.m. Service**

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, May 19

New Carlisle

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Hope Town
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
Shigawake
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, May 19

**St. John- St. Philip,
Sandy Beach**
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Every Wednesday

St. Paul's - Gaspé
10 a.m. Morning Prayer

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20
Aries, a friend of has made steady progress and exhibited significant personal growth. Continue to support this person's pursuits and act as a source of encouragement.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21
Your happiness can bring joy to many other people this week, Taurus. Spread all of your positivity among those people who can use it the most. You will reap rewards as well.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21
The people around you may be behaving in interesting and unexpected ways, Gemini. You don't know what to make of this just yet, so sit back and watch the show.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22
Cancer, it is challenging to keep up with all of the comings and goings of the people in your social circle. It may take a little while for you to reconnect.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23
Let others see a side of you that you don't often share, Leo. It is alright to be vulnerable at times, and this vulnerability actually may appeal to some new people in your life.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22
Virgo, you have a tremendous amount of power at your disposal this week. You should use all of it wisely and not waste a drop. Others will be affected by your presence.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23
Libra, expect to spot trouble on the horizon



before other people around you. This gives you a head-start to take action and prepare yourself and others for what's to come.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22
Pay careful attention to any and all financial transactions you make this week, Scorpio. You want to keep tabs on where your money is going and avoid as many mistakes as possible.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21
Sagittarius, a situation may arise this week in which you are expected to do more than you feel comfortable. Don't let others bully you into action. Explain your hesitation carefully and respectfully.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20
What is the point of power struggles if it alienates all of the people closest to you, Capricorn? Sometimes you must forego ego to maintain personal relationships and family harmony.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18
Aquarius, try to interact this week with

the people who may not necessarily agree with you or share your beliefs. It could be good to see things from different perspectives.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20
Positive energy is circling around you this week, Pisces. Those good vibes will put you in a mood to reach out to some people in your life who may have drifted away.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS


- MAY 12** Rami Malek, Actor (43)
- MAY 13** Robert Pattinson, Actor (38)
- MAY 14** Rob Gronkowski, Commentator (35)
- MAY 15** Stella Maxwell, Model (34)
- MAY 16** Janet Jackson, Singer (58)
- MAY 17** Derek Hough, Dancer (39)
- MAY 18** Tina Fey, Actress (54)





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Land- Based Activity at Wejgwapniag

ANNE TREPANIER
Student Ambassador Program

GESGAPEGIAG: - Students from grades 3 to 8 at Wejgwapniag School in Gesgapegiag had the wonderful opportunity to experience an overnight, outdoor land-based activity in March. Activities involved learning about trapping wildlife, setting traps, preparing pelts, animal conservation and crafting necklaces from animal teeth and claws. All students got to keep a piece of a pelt, and their own necklace. A few lucky students won a draw to keep a marten and otter skull as well as a moose jaw that they learned how to clean and preserve. Highlights of the activity were written by some of the students.

Melody: We all walked to set up a trap by the river. At night we sat by the fire and roasted marshmallows.

Milly: We had a fire and Jerry showed us how to use a life straw at the river. We got to try it.

Easton: We set a trap and left it overnight, but we did not get anything. I really enjoyed it; I would really like to go again next year.

Ava: Jerry showed us an otter skull and fur. We had to clean it with a toothbrush. We did a draw for the skull, and I won it!!!

Alexa: We ate really good moose jerky. Jerry showed us how to make the moose jerky in class with the moose that we hunted in October.

Ryder: We heard weird noises in the woods and saw tracks that were a lynx and a rabbit.

Shyiah: Jerry showed us how to set up snares and what to use for bait. He showed us a mink and we called it CaseOh. We had to skin it but we got attached to it so now we are getting it stuffed and brought to our school so we can remember our adventure.



Photos: Anne Trepanier



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