

Lower prices and smaller catches during 2024 lobster season

GILLES GAGNÉ

SAINT-GODEFROI – The lobster catching season ends with a drop in catches and prices in 2024 in the Gaspé Peninsula, but the fishermen will have to wait for statistics from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) before drawing a more detailed picture.

O'Neil Cloutier, a lobster fisherman and director of the Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen's Association, had little time to survey fishermen from all catch sub-sectors in order to have a more precise estimate of the 2024 results. However, he gathered that there will be a decrease in landings this year.

"Regarding the volumes landed, we have no idea because the DFO, as usual, is late in providing information. We must trust the fishermen. According to the conversations I had, the drop is more marked between Saint-Thérèse-de-Gaspé East and the Bay of Chaleur, up to subzone 21a (Bonaventure), and the catches have fallen the most in Paspébiac. In 21b (the lower Bay of Chaleur), only one fisherman reports to the ministry, the others being Indigenous. In l'Anse-à-Beaufils, personally, my result is -3%," says Mr. Cloutier.

"In Zone 19, on the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula, there is also a drop, but I could not say how much. We demand results. According to the DFO, there are always processing plant managers who are late in transmitting weekly catch data. It seems that the problem is getting worse over the years. We haven't even received a mid-season report," he adds.

O'Neil Cloutier refuses to believe that the asymmetry characterizing the beginnings and ends of the season in Zones 19 and 21 could justify such a delay in the transmission of catch data. So, on July 8, there were still a few days of fishing left in Zone 21 and al-



The 2024 lobster season will not be marked by record catches in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Photo: G. Gagné

most two weeks in sectors of Zone 19.

A falling price

O'Neil Cloutier only had prices for nine of the ten weeks of the season on July 8, for an average of \$6.96 per pound,

compared to \$7.65 in 2023. As has been the case for several years, the price rises towards the end of the season due to a series of holidays which provide opportunities for gatherings, thus stimulating demand.

"The price had started to rise in the ninth week at \$7.69.

In fact, it had been going up since the seventh week. It reached a low of \$6.16 during the 4th, 5th and 6th weeks. This is where the biggest price losses and the largest declines in catches are," specifies Mr. Cloutier.

He warns that the weighted

average price should be different when all catches and prices are known, taking into account the catch volumes for each fishing week.

SPEC learned on July 9 that the landing price of the last week reached \$8.01 per pound, which brings the "pre-weighted average price" to about \$7.07 per pound.

When asked what the 2024 price drop suggests, Mr. Cloutier mentions that "processing plant owners are telling us about inflation and the abundance of catches almost everywhere. It must be remembered that the winter catch in Nova Scotia was very low, but from April until May 31, what was not caught last winter was caught later. There was then the first congestion on the markets. Then the catches in Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton, Gulf sector in that, New Brunswick, and the Bay of Chaleur sector were also very

Cont'd on page 9

Shigawake's *Sweetheart*

Shaina Hayes played songs from her two recent albums to an enthusiastic crowd at Montreal's Jazz Festival on July 3. Fans could be seen singing along to their favourite of Shaina's songs and at least one of the kids who inspired Kindergarten Heart was in attendance. "There was a wonderful vibe to the show. I was delighted to finally see Shaina in concert after having heard interviews with her on CBC radio, and my only regret is that the show was too short!" - Helen Meredith.

Gas tax: A shortfall of \$100,000 for the RéGÎM

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands Inter-municipal Transportation Board (RéGÎM) must deal with a \$100,000 drop in gas tax revenue since the start of the year.

This has impacted the financial statements, as the public transit organization has recorded a deficit of \$30,000 to date.

"The tourist season hasn't quite started yet. Will we be able to make up for the shortfall during the summer? It's an excellent question to which I don't have the answer," says the president of RéGÎM, Daniel Côté.

This is why the board has been asking for several months for the regional tax



The president of RéGÎM and mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, wants an increase in the gas tax rather than taxing registrations.

Photo: N. Sergerie

on a litre of gasoline to increase from one to two cents.

"This would ensure that we could guarantee the sus-

tainability of the collective and adapted transportation system in the Gaspésie," mentions the president.

Operating costs are increasing, but revenues remain stable, which will be unsustainable in the long term.

"We do not want to excessively increase the price of the (bus) fare, hence the need to increase the gas tax," explains the president.

The Minister of Finance, Éric Girard, is not keen on the idea of increasing the gas tax to finance public transportation.

"All public transportation, particularly public transportation in the regions, is not the priority. We hear it. We understand it. It has been said," criticizes Mr. Côté, recalling that the region had innovated almost 15 years ago by asking for a gasoline tax.

The president also adds that the registration tax is not

the solution in the Gaspé Peninsula. "With the entry fees currently imposed by the SAAQ, it would probably be quite expensive for local citizens. This is why we prefer to spread the cost, over the entire bill, for all people who consume gasoline, both local citizens, visitors and transporters," notes Mr. Côté, who remains hopeful since the Gaspésie is the only one to have this power, just like Quebec and Montreal.

Last year, the organization concluded the 2023 fiscal year with a deficit of \$18,000 on a budget of \$5.2 million. More than 85,000 passengers used the services.

RéGÎM had a financial cushion of \$1.1 million at the end of the 2023 financial year.

GASPÉ TOWN UPDATE:

Mayor of Gaspé questions some of the projects selected by Quebec for Sports and recreation funding

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Certain elements of the Financial Assistance Program for Recreational, Sports, and Outdoor Infrastructure (PAFIRSPA) have raised eyebrows for Gaspé's mayor, who noted that many projects from several School Service Centres were funded by the program.

"It's always surprising to see the results. There were specific calls for funding for schools not long ago and for sports and recreation not long ago. The PAFIRSPA was supposed to be earmarked for major projects, but about \$60 million of the \$300 million went to school infrastructure," notes Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté.

Mr. Côté also notes that over \$150 million was spent on small projects, ranging from \$0 to \$500,000. "Many of these projects have had their own call for projects and can also receive financial assistance covering almost 100% via other more local bodies," adds the mayor.

"That's why the \$300 million has disappeared like snow in the sun. That's why only five or six major projects are being carried out in Quebec. That's probably why the Gaspé arena isn't one of the projects," explains the mayor.

For example, of the \$1.8



Will the old Gaspé arena hold up until a new one is built?

Photo: N. Sergerie

million announced for the Gaspé Peninsula, \$805,000 went to the Eastern Shores School Board for a multisport field at the new New Carlisle High School.

"This is money that should be paid for by Quebec or the Ministry of Education. When you build new infrastructure, you plan for what goes inside and you plan for your field," says the mayor.

The Town of Gaspé municipal council is not setting any financial limits for the time being to keep the downtown arena alive until a new arena near the C.-E. Pouliot

School is built.

"We have to keep the artificial respirator running, I wouldn't say at any cost, but what I'm hearing from the council is that we're not going to spend \$10 million on the old arena, but if it takes a few \$100,000 to keep it going, we might, but don't really want to," notes the mayor.

The mayor points out that the arena's foundation and slab are cracked and the refrigeration system is at the end of its useful life.

"If it ever cost between \$5 million and \$10 million to get

it up and running again, I don't think we'd be putting any of our own money into renovating an "old rag" that's finished," says the mayor.

"I'd like to think that residents won't come crying to us if we put the key in the door," says the mayor, passing the ball to the Quebec government if such a scenario were to occur.

The council must consider whether the ice will be made later in the autumn to spare the refrigeration system. "It has trouble starting up when it gets too hot. That's a question we're going to ask our users if there's an opening to try and save on the lifespan of the compressors. In a way, we're managing the risk," explains Mr. Côté.

The mayor mentions closing the arena if the compressors fail.

On another matter, Gaspé is supporting Jean Lapointe, who has launched a new bat-

tle in the fight against kidney disease in the Gaspé Peninsula. A few weeks ago, the activist launched a petition calling for a full-time nephrologist in the region.

The mayor noted Mr. Lapointe's achievements in the development of hemodialysis services in the region's four hospitals over the past decade.

Even though the specialist would travel from Rimouski to the Gaspé Peninsula, the council supports the initiative. "Residents of the Gaspé have to travel four or four and a half hours to Rimouski when they're not necessarily in good health. I understand this struggle and we support the initiative. We're hoping that the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS (Integrated Health and Social Services Centre) will listen to us and that funding will be forthcoming from the Ministry of Health," states the mayor.

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Police report

A July 6, Facebook post reporting sightings of two armed men near the Grand Cascapédia River area of La Cache prompted the Cascapédia Society, along with its camp and warden staff to take precautionary measures. Concerned about safety, a dozen fishermen also evacuated the upstream area of La Cache. Sûreté du Québec officers in New Richmond were unaware of the incident. Frédéric Deshaies, the communication officer of the Sûreté du Québec serving the Gaspé Peninsula, was on holiday; and his replacement, Marithé Bolduc, based in Montréal, couldn't provide additional information when SPEC inquired about the July 6 incident.

The Court of Appeal has rejected Mathieu Samuel's appeal to overturn the guilty verdict of sexual assault, issued in December 2022. On July 9, the defendant's lawyer asked the three judges to nullify the decision made by Quebec Court Judge Richard Côté and to either acquit his client or hold a new trial. The prosecutor argued that the notion of the victim's consent and Judge Côté's rejection of Mathieu Samuel's testimony without explanation was at the heart of the case. On July 10, the Court of Appeal's three judges accepted the criminal prosecutor's explanations, who argued that the victim's testimony was extremely credible, demonstrating the absence of consent. The court also required that Mr. Samuel contact his supervisory agent before Friday at noon. In May, five months after his decision, Judge Côté sentenced the Rivière-au-Renard businessman to 15 months served in the community. The events occurred in November 2020.

On July 5 at the Percé Courthouse, Steeve Vallée, 47, from Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, who was found guilty of sexual assault was sentenced to 20 months in prison. The incidents occurred in Chandler between 2011 and 2013 and involved a victim under the age of 16 at the time. In his decision, the Quebec Court Judge Richard Côté raised several contradictions in the version delivered by the accused with that of the complainant during the trial which was held last month. Judge Côté did not believe the accused when he declared that he had never found himself alone at any time with the victim. Steeve Vallée also did not deny certain facts in a discussion with a third person, when he admitted having kissed the victim. The identity of the victim, who confessed in court to having developed feelings and to have been in a secret relationship with the accused, is subject to a publication ban. Steeve Vallée also faces similar charges involving incidents with a teenager between 1995 and 2001. His next court appearance is scheduled for September.

adding infrastructure like in other communities. We're talking about replacing something that has been on life support for too long and is jeopardizing the health of the community. If we don't have an arena in Gaspé, families will go bye-bye," hypothesis Jean-François Monette.

Physical education teacher Pierre-Luc Synnott has launched a plea for public health and physical activity. "What's it going to take to get us there? Will we have to get down on our knees? What we're asking is that you put the money forward for the population, and the first link you have to make is with your population," says the physical educator, who is hoping for a positive response in the future call for proposals.

"We want something concrete. I'm prepared to give my time and mobilize people," adds Mr Synnott. "If

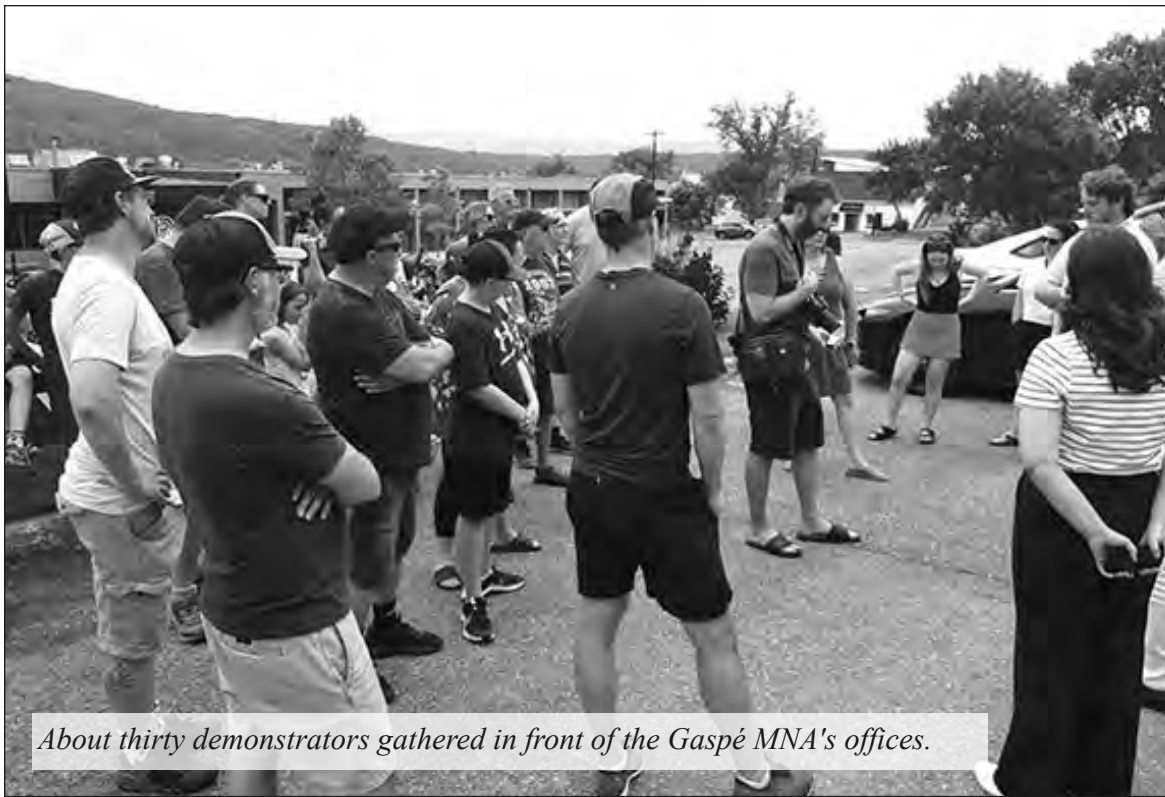
something breaks and the arena has to be closed, will the government be there to support us with the repairs while we wait for the real announcement?"

"Our objective is not to patch things up. Let's be clear. It's to build a new arena," replied the MNA.

The idea of delaying the opening of the infrastructure until later in the season to avoid the warmer autumn temperatures wasn't well received by the stakeholders. This idea was raised on July 8 by Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté as a solution to extending the life of the already aging compressors.

Protest organizer Myriam Lagacé was pleased with the turnout.

"We would have liked to have had more people. As we said, if nothing happens, we'll get involved another time. We're really disappointed with the response," stated Ms. Lagacé.



About thirty demonstrators gathered in front of the Gaspé MNA's offices.

Photo: N. Sergerie

GASPÉ ARENA: Protesters gather in front of the Gaspé MNA office

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - On July 9, approximately 30 people demonstrated outside the office of Gaspé Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Stéphane Sainte-Croix demanding that the Quebec government provide funding for a new arena.

The Quebec government rejected Phase 1 of the \$28 million multisports complex project submitted by the Town of Gaspé to replace the town's aging arena.

"You have to understand that there were \$43 million worth of projects in the riding that didn't receive a

favourable decision. We're continuing to push this," said Gaspé MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix, who came out of his office to speak with the demonstrators.

"I want you to understand that you have my full support. We're not giving up in the hope that we'll get our share of the cake," he added.

The MNA reminded people that he is trying to understand why the project was not selected and is requesting a meeting with Premier Francois Legault "to see what steps need to be taken next." The MNA does not want at this stage to make promises regarding the following in-

vestment program, referring to the next provincial budget, but stresses that he wants to seek all the necessary funding to carry out the known projects in the riding.

Mr. Saint-Croix was criticized by municipal councillor James Keays who took issue with the government's decision.

"We each have our way of working. We're not happy and we said it. We expressed our dissatisfaction and our questions about the program, the criteria and the objectives," replied the MNA.

The councillor suggested that he take the voters' message to Quebec City rather than receiving Quebec City's message in the riding. These words were met with applause by the demonstrators. "That's what we're doing. When I say that we're on the side of those who make the decisions, we don't have to demand anything. We're making sure we get the message across. Are we defending our citizens? That's what I do every day. Are we on the side of the people? I'm here with you. We're on the side of our people, given their disappointment," explains Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Former world short-track speed skating champion and coach of the Gaspé speed skating club, Jean-François Monette, reminded the MNA that infrastructure is essential.

"We're talking about an emergency situation here. We're not talking about



Photo: N. Sergerie

Former world short-track speed skating champion and coach of the Gaspé Speed Skating Club, Jean-François Monette.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Central banks must remain independent from politicians

Over the last few months, Canadians and Americans have heard controversial comments about the relevance of firing the chairs of their central banks, Governor Tiff Macklen in the case of the Bank of Canada and President Jerome Powell regarding the Federal Reserve Board, also known as the Fed in the United States.

The controversial comments were made by two equally controversial candidates who stand a decent chance at getting elected come the next election: Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre in Canada, and former Republican Party president Donald Trump in the United States.

In fact, the two statements were even more irresponsible than controversial.

Donald Trump's strategy largely rests on creating instability and taking advantage of the chaos he triggered to make a move.

Over recent months, criticizing the Federal Reserve in the United States has been easy due to the inflationary context. The Federal Reserve is trying to contain inflation and bring it back to a reasonable level of 2%, a strategy also applied in Canada.

Attempting to sway a majority of American citizens to vote for him in the upcoming November election, Donald Trump therefore wants to convince the citizens hit hard by inflation to support him.

It is relatively easy for a man like Trump to take shortcuts and blame the Federal Reserve for the time it takes to curtail inflation. The man is an artist at finding scapegoats, whether it is justified or not.

The Federal Reserve has a hard time curtailing inflation because it essentially stemmed from two elements that were not controlled by that central bank: the ruptures in goods supply chains deriving from the pandemic's economic slowdown, and the necessary stimulus measures adopted by the United States

government to counter the detrimental effects of COVID-19 and prevent tens of millions of people from losing everything they possessed.

So, Donald Trump recently said that he would fire Jerome Powell due to his alleged poor management of the inflation crisis.

In reality, considering the fact that the Federal Reserve dealt with decisions made by another party, the American government, and triggered by a worldwide pandemic, Jerome Powell and his team performed reasonably well.

While the American president has a say in the nomination of the Fed's chairperson, the move must make reasonable sense. Donald Trump chose Jerome Powell to run the Federal Reserve at the end of 2017. Mr. Powell started his term in February 2018, and his mandate was renewed by current president Joe Biden in 2021.

In February, and again in May, as well as on several other occasions, Donald Trump said that if he is re-elected, he would not reappoint Jerome Powell, accusing him of considering policy rate cuts to give Democrats an advantage in the 2024 elections. The former president suggested that Mr. Powell "looks to me like he's trying to lower interest rates for the sake of maybe getting people elected. I don't know," Trump said to Fox Business Network. He even added that he wanted to have a say in the level of interest rates, should he be reelected.

It sounded like another erratic statement by Donald Trump, but the uncertainty stemming from it has detrimental effects on the economy the former president allegedly wants to support.

It is interesting to note that Jerome Powell is known for his political allegiance to the Republican Party.

A different nomination process

In democracies, central banks, which are public organizations, are considered necessary to provide the population with some stability, a factor that is largely dependent on the independence of those central banks. They are usually asked to control to a certain degree three key objectives through monetary policies: maximizing employment, stabilizing prices and moderating long-term interest rates.

Compared to the American system, the nomination system is different at the Bank of Canada. The gover-

nor is appointed for seven years by the board of directors, not by the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance. The nomination is then officially approved by the Governor General.

Even if it were possible for a politician to select the Bank of Canada governor, it would set a very bad precedent.

Because governments operate on a deadline, politicians want to go to an election when the context is favourable. They rarely care for a period exceeding three or four years. During the year before an election, government spending tends to increase to leave a good impression on a maximum number of constituents. Those expenditures will generally put on pressure to lower interest rates and therefore alleviate the burden of taxpayers.

Depending on the favoured orientation, some governments may temporarily increase inflation rates through increased spending. For a time, such actions might reduce public debt or offset pre-election expenditures.

Such short-term political goals might be detrimental to a majority of people over the long term.

No interference is better

An International Monetary Fund study recently revealed that countries where central banks are independent from the governments fare better and have better control over their inflation than the countries whose central banks are dealing with political interference.

Some people prefer learning it the hard way. The president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, fired the chairman of the country's central bank at one point over the last term. President Erdogan wanted a better control over the interest rates.

Since then, the country's policy rate has skyrocketed to 50%, not 5%, fifty percent!

In Canada, we understandably complained a lot when our inflation rate climbed to 7.8% two years ago. In Turkey, the inflation rate stands at a whopping 72%, while little hope is in sight to regain control over it.

In general terms, Canada's economy is more stable and much more diversified than that of Turkey.

So, when Pierre Poilievre affirms that he will fire Tiff Macklem, he is either making a statement for his electoral base, reaffirming his ignorance about how economy works, or both.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Toxic spraying on the railway 2024

WARNING: The Société de conservation ZICO de la Baie-de-Gaspé (SCZBG) has obtained the toxic herbicide spray program on the railway that was ordered by the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG).

The herbicide spraying began on July 7. Three herbicides are used: glyphosate, imazapyr and dicamba/diflufenzopyr. The SCZBG has always informed the SCFG about the toxicity of the herbicides (and creosote) and suggested alternatives, urging them to stop spraying.

This continuation of toxic spraying on the tracks is totally unacceptable and threatens our health and our environment, especially for our children. This must stop!

It should be remembered that the Gaspésie railway crosses or runs along residential areas with drinking water wells, wetlands, many brooks, salmon rivers, the Baie des Chaleurs, Gaspé Bay, following streaming cliffs overhanging beaches and fishing harbours. The SCZBG has been fighting for years for the elimination of toxic herbicides and creosote on the Gaspé Peninsula railway. The SCZBG benefits from the support of the Nation Micmac de Gespeg, Environnement Vert Plus, Mères au front from the Bay of Chaleur and

the Pointe de la Gaspésie, and Mr. Jacques Pichat, a concerned citizen.

Here is a brief summary of the most recent years of this struggle:

From May to August 2022, the SCZBG sent the Transports Québec (MTQ) minister a 35-page letter accompanied by letters from supporters. Our letter explained the harmful effects of the herbicides used and of creosote and proposed alternatives. We asked for herbicides and creosote to be eliminated on the railway and for alternatives to be used. The SCZBG also sent information on the rate of childhood cancer.

In August 2022, the SCZBG won a victory, as we received a letter from the MTQ informing us that it was going to create an advisory committee on vegetation management in response to the demands of the SCZBG and its supporters since the MTQ took our concerns seriously and was attentive to what the people of the region had to say. We thanked the MTQ for this initiative.

In October 2022, the MTQ informed us that the advisory committee had been set up. The MTQ assured us that the SCZBG would be called upon later and that our participation would be very welcome.

In early February 2023, SCZBG submitted a 79-

page paper with even more research done, still on the toxicity of the herbicides and of creosote, and on alternatives, entitled *The Gaspésie Railway – A Dream*

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Waste collection issues persist in Rocher-Percé

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER: - Waste collection problems continue in the Rocher-Percé MRC with residents complaining that their brown bins (compost) have not been emptied for three weeks which is problematic considering summer temperatures.

"When we walk around, the town is smelly. The bins are starting to get maggots and it's so unpleasant," an anonymous Chandler resident confided to SPEC.

Gilles Daraïche, the mayor of Chandler, says the municipal council discussed at its July 3 meeting the recurring issues encountered with Matrec, the contractor responsible for the brown bin pick-up from Port-Daniel-Gascons to Percé.

"People pay a lot for the service and are entitled to an adequate service. The service is not good, really not good," says Mr. Daraïche bluntly.

According to the mayor, it can take up to a month for the bins to be collected.

The town has already imposed penalties on the contractor. "Is that enough to get the job done better? I don't



Photo: N. Sergerie

think so. We get a lot of calls (from citizens) and that's understandable. They have every right to complain and we understand," continues the mayor.

The problems are more concentrated in Chandler and Grande-Rivière.

"Matrec always comes up with the same reasons: a shortage of drivers or trainee drivers who don't know the route, or mechanical breakdowns. That's no longer enough to keep us quiet, because we have to talk about it," points

out Mr. Daraïche, adding that it's an essential service not being adequately provided.

Matrec admits having faced problems in recent weeks. "It's not a pleasant scenario," admits Richard Mimeau, vice-president of public affairs and sustainable development at Matrec.

Elected officials in the MRC have mentioned recurring issues with the company responsible for collection in the area from Port-Daniel-Gascons to Percé.

"In the waste collection in-

dustry, things have been a bit more difficult in recent years. We've said it repeatedly for some time now, but it's true: we have a labour shortage problem for truck drivers and mechanics," says Mr. Mimeau, who points out that his company is present in 16 of Quebec's 17 regions.

"We're trying to find solutions. In the last few days, work has been done to catch up on the backlog, which will continue this week. We've brought in drivers from other regions to give us a helping hand. We're looking for people to work as drivers and mechanics," adds Mr. Mimeau.

The company is turning to immigration to try and fill its needs.

"We do business with French-speaking Africa to find people to come and work in Quebec and Canada. We're doing everything we can to find employees to work in the regions," he says, although the company is also present elsewhere in Canada and the United States.

He hopes to resolve the situation in the long term. "We're not happy with the situation. Most of the time, we provide

the service. Can there be delays? Yes, but the service is provided. It's a major problem, not just in the Gaspé, not necessarily just in our company. I'd say it's a problem for all environmental companies," says Mr. Mimeau.

In the Gaspé Peninsula and Lower Saint Lawrence, Matrec employs approximately 200 people. "They work the maximum hours they can under the regulations (on heavy vehicles) and occupational health and safety," says Mr. Mimeau.

Matrec even sometimes helps out towns by lending out trucks.

The parts needed to repair the trucks are also hard to find, as there is a shortage in this sector.

"It's all part of the equation. We have to deal with all these issues," says Mr. Mimeau, adding that the cost of a truck has risen from \$160,000 to almost \$500,000 in the span of five years.

As of July 11, the mayor of Chandler stated brown bin pickups had resumed smoothly and that the issues were on their way to being resolved.

Commission believes the environmental impact of the MU2 wind farm could be reduced

GILLES GAGNÉ

ESCUMINAC - Based on its analysis of the project as well as the 10 observations it identified, the Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement's (BAPE) commission of inquiry on the Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 2 (MU2) wind farm believes that its environmental effects could be reduced. The project, however, is not being questioned.

The BAPE held two meetings in the region over the last seven months, one on December 19 and one on March 12, to offer the different stakeholders interested in the venture an occasion to voice their questions and concerns.

In a report issued on June 26, the commission of inquiry voices three opinions. The first one states that adverse effects on wildlife frequenting the Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 2 wind farm are possible. Consequently, the Ministry of the Environment, the Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks (MELCCFP) should exercise



Photo: Courtesy of Innergex

scientific monitoring of the effects of noise from wind farms on terrestrial fauna, including those of infrasound.

Secondly, given the precariousness of resident bat populations and the sensitivity of migratory bats to wind development, the MELCCFP should

require the application of its restriction measure to the MU2 wind farm.

Thirdly, the MELCCFP, in collaboration with Recyc-Québec and wind turbine manufacturers in Quebec, should establish requirements concerning the materials used in

the manufacturing of wind turbine blades to encourage, or even promote, a rigorous application of the 3RV-E hierarchy and favouring a model based on the circular economy when these blades reach the end of their useful life.

The 3RV-E principle consists of reducing the use of material at the source, re-using it, recycling it, valorizing it and eliminating it.

Chaired by Antoine Morissette, the commission of inquiry looked into the impacts of infrasound and low-frequency noise generated by the windmills on wildlife, the cumulative effects of the wind farm on wildlife habitats and its eventual dismantling during the March 12 hearings.

The limited partnership Mesgi'g Ugju's'n 2 wind farm (MU2), composed of the Mi'g-mawei Mawiommi Business Corporation (MMBC) and Innergex Renewable Energy Inc., proposes the creation of the MU2 wind farm, which would include up to 24 wind turbines for a total capacity of 102.24

megawatts.

The promoters of MU2 would install these wind turbines on the outskirts of an already existing wind farm, Mesgi'g Ugju's'n, on public lands of the unorganized territory of Rivière-Nouvelle, located in a forest environment and forming part of the Gespe'gewa'gi, the traditional Mi'gmaq territory.

The promoters want the wind farm to be put in service no later than December 2026 and intend to operate it for 30 years. The cost of carrying out the project is estimated at \$250 million. The three Mi'gmaq communities of Gespeg, Gesgapegiag and Listuguj will own 50% of the wind farm.

The first wind farm in the backcountry of Escuminac was built between 2014 and 2016 at a cost of \$330 million, and it has a capacity of 150 megawatts.

The Minister of the Environment, Benoit Charette, is expected to give its approval to the wind farm in the coming weeks.

Young cyclists discover the Gaspé Peninsula



Photo: G. Gagné

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Eight cyclists from Camp Trois-Saumons, a summer camp located in Saint-Aubert, near Montmagny, discovered the Gaspé Peninsula while pedalling over three weeks, starting from Cap-Chat, on the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula, and going around the coast.

On July 9, a particularly hot day, SPEC met with the cyclists, at the municipal limit of Maria and Carleton. “Yes, it is hot. We are going to Carleton’s campground today. It is our fourteenth day

on the road. Camp Trois-Saumons has a tradition of organizing such journeys, either cycling or hiking. We resumed cycling journeys in 2022, after the main pandemic stretch and it worked that year, but not last year, due to a lack of registration but we were able to resume our cycling trip this year,” explained the group leader Elizabeth (far right in the photo).

Camp Trois-Saumons was founded on June 29, 1947, by Father Raoul Cloutier, a former military chaplain and initiator of OTJ (Organisation

des terrains de jeux, or the Playground Organization) for Quebec City, which acquired the camp’s first pieces of land. While the first campers stayed in the summer of 1947, the first female campers were able to participate in the camp in 1951. To keep boys and girls separate, one side of the lake was dedicated to boys and the other side to girls. Initially installed in tents, the first cafeteria was built in 1949. Resourcefulness and rustic experiences were present during the first two summers of the camp.

ESSB selects name for new school

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – Close to three months after launching a contest to find a name for the new school that will replace New Carlisle High School, the Eastern Shores School Board announced on July 8 that the chosen name is Baie-des-Chaleurs Regional School.

Through a press release, the Eastern Shores School Board (ESSB) stated that the name was chosen “after extensive community engagement and thoughtful consideration...” and “following a robust survey process and careful review by the naming committee, which included representatives from both NCHS (New Carlisle High School) and SPDS (Shigawake-Port Daniel School).”

The press release also mentions that “the naming committee, composed of the principal, chairpersons from NCHS and SPDS, staff members, parents, and a student representative, meticulously reviewed 77 name suggestions received from community members. From these submissions, four names were selected and submitted to the Minister of Toponymy for final approval.”

ESSB’s director general Denise Simoneau, says, “We extend our heartfelt gratitude

to everyone who participated in this naming process by submitting suggestions and sharing their insights. The overwhelming response underscores the deep significance of this new school to our communities.”

The chosen name, Baie-des-Chaleurs Regional School, reflects ESSB’s “commitment to honouring the geographical heritage of our region. As we move forward with this exciting project, we invite the community to stay informed and engaged.”

The contest was launched on April 4 and ended on April 19. The contest period was short because the name had to be approved by the Commission de toponymie du Québec and because it was ideal to have a name for the building before the call for tenders process.

The call for tender process is over, with the lowest bid submitted by Matane’s contractor Habitat Construction Matane (1986) Inc., at \$22,157,534.00. However, the Ministry of Education has 45 days, starting at the end of June, to confirm the name of the contractor. The firm is expected to deliver the new school on time for January 2026. The capacity of the school will reach 150 students.

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The tourist train project is moving forward

NELSON SERGERIE

NEW RICHMOND - The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) is seeking \$5 million from the Quebec government to purchase 12 self-propelled passenger cars from a Vermont company.

"We are actively working on the project. We had hoped to apply to a Ministry of Tourism program, but the deadline was June 19. We haven't been able to put the whole project together. We're working on other options, and the next step will be to present it to government decision-makers," says SCFG president Éric Dubé.

The financial assistance for the project, estimated at between \$12 million and \$14 million, will be used for the acquisition and transformation of the cars.

The purchase price is set at \$8 million, with the remainder going towards modifications, including adding toilets and a dining service, as these cars are used for commuter train service in Texas.

The SCFG has had a purchase option since last autumn with AllEarth Rail at a cost of US\$12,000 per month. This option expires at the end of September.

"We don't want to lose the option. We know it's highly sought after. We have a good relationship with the promoter.

Will we consider an extension? Everything is on the table. We're not negotiating yet, because we have a bit of time," says Mr. Dubé.

Any amounts paid will be deducted from a future transaction if that transpires.

The Quebec government previously helped finance the Amiral tourist train project. The last time that train ran was in 2014 and it was immobilized due to the state of the railroad on the main operating section between Gaspé and Percé.

Parked at the Gaspé intermodal station for 10 years, it was brought back to the New Richmond yard this spring to assess its condition.



The fate of the Admiral tourist train is uncertain at a time when SCFG could buy self-propelled cars from Vermont.

Photo: Facebook

The train was acquired in 2013 for \$1.8 million.

Mr. Dubé remains confident that the Quebec government will subsidize a new tourist train concept. "We'll be hoping that our sales arguments are good. The big difference is that we (Quebec's Ministry of Transport) will

have invested nearly \$900 million to upgrade the rail system. The economic climate has changed a lot. We have a very different project from the old one. In terms of our opportunities, we'll be able to operate in several places at the same time, with a wider range of services," explains the pres-

ident.

The flexibility provided by the self-propelled rail cars will be the major selling point.

"Unlike the Amiral train, which is a monolithic unit, whether you have 50 or 300 passengers, you have to leave with the whole train but with the 70-passenger cars, one person leaves with a train, and if you have 100 passengers, you use two cars and it's still the same resource," says Mr. Dubé.

The 12 cars could be spread throughout the region, depending on needs.

"It's a versatility that we didn't have with the old train, which was just as expensive because the fixed costs were higher on a train like the Amiral," explains the president.

The SCFG aims to buy the 12 automotive cars but doesn't rule out selling some if needs are lower. The purchase includes an inventory of parts worth nearly \$2 million.

"Cars of this quality, which were upgraded in the late 1990s in Montreal, are very rare. They have been refurbished. When you have an appraisal done, the value is much higher than what you would pay," suggests Mr. Dubé.

The organization (SCFG) hasn't decided on the fate of the Admiral should it acquire these self-propelled cars.

"We're going to work on one piece at a time. We're working on this project, but the Admiral still has potential because, if the first plan doesn't work, we'll have a Plan B. We'll see what happens next with the company. We'll see what happens next with the Admiral," says the president.

If the self-propelled cars are purchased this autumn, they could be on the tracks as early as next year, between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Matapédia, once adapted to the needs by Rail GD of New Richmond.

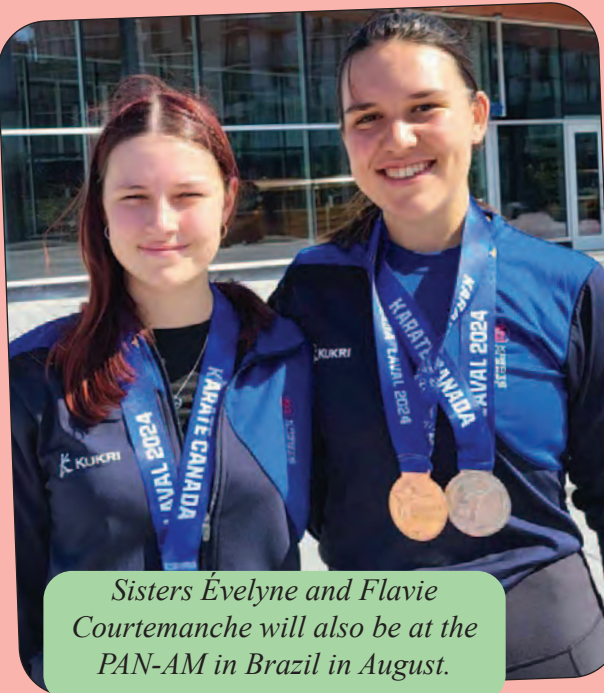
Three Gaspé karatekas at the PAN-AM in Brazil in August

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Three karatekas from Gaspé will compete in the Junior Pan American Championships in Sao Paulo, Brazil, from August 22 to 25, following their qualification at the Canadian Championships held from July 4 to 7 in Laval, Quebec.

Lycia Coulombe from Kumite Kan club in Gaspé won all four of her bouts over the weekend to become Canadian champion in the 12-13 age category.

Meanwhile, Évelyne Courtemanche, competing in the under 59 kg category, won the silver medal in the 16-17 age group, qualifying her for the Canadian junior team and securing her spot in Sao Paulo. The young woman who trains with the Gaspé BudoKan club lost



Sisters Évelyne and Flavie Courtemanche will also be at the PAN-AM in Brazil in August.

her gold medal bout 4-6 against British Columbia, but won her fifth bout to advance to Brazil.

Flavie Courtemanche, 20, also from Club BudoKan, competed in the over 68 kg U21 category and won a silver medal after four bouts.

Since she is still part of the Canadian junior team, she will also head to Brazil with her sister.

Additionally, competing in the 18+ senior category, Flavie Courtemanche, won bronze and remains on the Canadian senior team.



Lycia Coulombe won all her matches at the Canadian championship.

Budokan's Mia Brière-Fournier (16-17 - 66 kg) made her first appearance at the Canadian championships and finished in the top 7.

Maïka Grenier of Kumite Kan was eliminated in the second round in her category (16-17).



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False start for the DÉPART program, which replaces the FAIR in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE

CARLETON-SUR-MER - The Quebec government has not kept its promise to maintain the assets of the Regional Initiatives Fund (FAIR) in the new Développement économique pour l'aide à la redynamisation des territoires (DÉPART) program launched last autumn.

This is according to Mathieu Lapointe, president of the Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefects, after analyzing the projects approved for the last financial year.

The DÉPART program was launched with a budget of \$75 million from its start until March 2026.

The planned breakdown was \$15 million for the last financial year, \$30 million in year two and \$30 million in year three.

"We were told that the parameters of the FAIR were used to create this program, which applies to the whole of



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Mathieu Lapointe, president of the Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefects

Quebec, rather than a program dedicated to the Gaspésie. What we've seen in practice, after a few months of application, is that DÉPART is not the same thing as the FAIR," states Mathieu Lapointe.

"There are several organizations in the region that are simply not eligible because of the nature their activities. Sev-

eral sectors of activity, including forestry, fisheries, transportation, agriculture, retail, arts and entertainment, and recreation - in short, the heart of economic activity in the Gaspésie - are not eligible under the DÉPART program, but were under the FAIR," notes the President, who points out that these projects were rejected even before they were analyzed.

The FAIR, which had existed for a decade, had a budget of \$6 million per year and \$8 million in the last year before it was abolished.

The region is losing a lot of money.

"We know that about \$3.5 million worth of projects have been accepted, but we haven't quantified the value of ineligible projects," calculates Mr. Lapointe.

"We just consulted with our MRCs and have taken stock after a few months. The Table of Prefects adopted a resolution to review the criteria on

Wednesday (July 10). We're going to sit down with the Minister responsible for the region, Ms. (Maïté) Blanchette Vézina, to discuss what can be done to modify the parameters to meet our needs and ensure that they are in line with what was announced," says Mr. Lapointe.

The DÉPART program funds are accessible to the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands region, the MRCs in the bottom quintile of the Institut de la statistique du Québec's index of territorial economic vitality, the Appalaches and du Granit MRCs and the Aboriginal communities near the MRCs' territorial perimeter.

The Quebec government had never guaranteed that the funds allocated to the Gaspé Peninsula under FAIR would be reserved in DÉPART when it was launched last December in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

The Minister for the Economy, Christopher Skeete, had stated that the Quebec government could not do so for the

sake of fairness to other regions. However, he indicated that the government had created a form of "grandfather clause" for the Gaspé Peninsula.

The Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, also believed that the region would not lose out with the program configuration.

The financial assistance allocated to small and medium-sized businesses under DÉPART takes the form of a non-repayable contribution ranging from \$15,000 to \$150,000 per project.

The FAIR was created by the Marois government as part of the Gaspésie Recovery Plan. It had six components and was designed to diversify the economy of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands through the creation and expansion of businesses, carrying out developmental projects, creating jobs and retaining young people in the region.

FISHERIES:

Difficult dialogue between Ottawa and Quebec

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - A lack of cooperation between the provincial and federal governments continues to plague the fisheries sector.

Quebec Fisheries Minister André Lamontagne is criticizing this lack of cooperation, especially considering that the fishing industry is going through a crisis and its future needs to be defined.

The federal government does not seem to have a clear vision of the future. "It's very sad. I say this in all sincerity. What we're going through in Quebec doesn't happen every five years. It's a time when, more than ever, it is important to take moments to sit down and develop a vision and the tools we have to support the implementation of that vision," said Minister Lamontagne on the sidelines of a funding announcement in Gaspé on July 5.

"I will continue to express Quebec's needs. We can't get the industry back on track for the years to come without having the major partners sitting at the table, not being in a hurry to make a decision, but with a

willingness to define the foundations for continuing to develop this sector and use what they have to the benefit of this vision."

While there is no mention of a common front with the Atlantic provinces, discussions are taking place, and a meeting of provincial fisheries ministers will be held in August in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

Without personalizing the debate, the Quebec minister points out that in five and a half years he has seen four federal fisheries ministers come and go.

"One thing is certain: all the representations we've made, nothing has been heard. Nothing," says the Minister, referring to the new opportunity offered by the redfish fishery.

His federal counterpart, Diane Lebouthillier, responded by saying she continues to work closely with all stakeholders.

In an email statement, Diane Lebouthillier's office emphasized that she is continuing to work constructively with the industry as a whole, as well as with Aboriginal communi-



Photo: N. Sergerie

Quebec Fisheries Minister André Lamontagne.

ties and her provincial counterparts, to move together to overcome the climate challenges currently facing our coastal communities across the country.

Minister Lebouthillier pointed out to her provincial colleague that this was his only visit in almost a year, encouraging him to visit the region more often.

André Lamontagne made these comments while in Gaspé to announce an investment of more than \$7 million in 24 projects in the Gaspé Peninsula and Lower Saint Lawrence re-

gions. This funding will support the development of fishing and marine product processing businesses, as well as organizations which support the fishing industry.

"We have programs for fishermen, businesses and marketing. Today, these are programs that are specific to the ministry," states the minister.

The Quebec Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Department (MAPAQ) is allocating \$6,776,720 under the Financial Support Program for the Development of the Commercial Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector, the Territorial and Sectoral Development Program, and the Financial Support Program for Commercial Fishing Enterprises.

The Quebec Department of Economy, Innovation, and Energy (MEIE) is providing a total of \$233,868 through the Economic Development Program for Territorial Revitalization Assistance (DÉPART), which is managed by Investissement Québec.

In addition, the Quebec Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity (MESS) is providing \$11,381 for the skills

development of workers in this sector.

Among the main beneficiaries, three fishermen are receiving a loan guarantee of \$4.1 million for the acquisition of a business and equipment. Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan is obtaining \$508,125 to optimize the productivity of the lobster processing chain and \$293,204 for the acquisition of automatic lobster breakers and tray sealers.

E. Gagnon et Fils is receiving \$562,253 for its project to treat water and improve food productivity and safety, and \$293,204 for the acquisition of automatic lobster breaking and sealing machines.

An amount of \$1,253,744 was also allocated to 20 fishermen under the Financial Support Program for Commercial Fishing Enterprises.

The value of landings by fishermen in 2023 was \$353 million, while the value of shipments from fish and seafood processing plants in Quebec's maritime regions in 2022 was \$597 million.

The fisheries sector employs approximately 8,000 people.

Laliberté documentary up for two Canadian Screen Awards

Still Standing's New Richmond episode wins for Best Director

CYNTHIA DOW

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Gaspesian filmmaker Éli Laliberté has been nominated for a fifth time for a Prix Gémeaux (the French-language Canadian Screen Award) for the documentary Lucas: Une espèce humaine en voie de disparition.

The film, which first aired on Radio-Canada's program Dochumanité last November, explores life with his son Lucas Larocque-Laliberté, who was born with Down Syndrome (DS) 24 years ago.

The producers of the documentary for PVP Media Sonia Bérubé, Vincent Leroux, and François Trudel are also nominated in the Best Documentary category.

Earlier this spring, the film won the Prix Humaniste award at the Festival vu sur mer, a film event celebrating documentaries produced in the Gaspésie.

Mr. Laliberté's film raises questions about the value of the life of a person with DS, given the fact that the Quebec government is making testing for DS, also called "Trisomy 21," readily available to expectant parents. The syndrome is caused by an extra chromosome in the 21st pair of the 23 pairs of chromosomes found in every human

cell, and results in mild to severe intellectual disability.

Quebec does not keep statistics on the number of abortions linked to genetic testing. For the film, Mr. Laliberté and Lucas went to Denmark, where 90% of fetuses diagnosed with DS are aborted.

The subject of the documentary may sound grim, but it is littered with happy times as Lucas celebrates with his family, enjoys his high school graduation, makes new friends in Europe, participates in sports activities for DS people in Montreal, and performs rap and hip-hop in Montreal and Belgium.

"Lucas is teaching us how to navigate becoming who we are. So many people are tired of advocating for acceptance of who they are (e.g. with racial and gender issues). Lucas walks above all this: he sees the human being in others before any of us. He has the key that we are all looking for," Mr. Laliberté explained.

A longer (88-minute) English version of the film has been developed with British Columbia's public television network, Knowledge TV. As SPEC went to press, Mr. Laliberté did not yet have a date for its first screening.

"Best documentary, direc-



Photo: Eli Laliberté

Filmmaker Éli Laliberté and his son Lucas head off to Europe from the Quebec City airport.

tion and production, those are the two best nominations you can hope for," Mr. Laliberté told SPEC, "I am not sure Lucas understands yet. I will take him with me to the awards so he grasps what is happening." The Gémeaux awards weekend will be held in mid-September in Montreal.

Mr. Laliberté is not new to the Gémeaux awards. He has won two out of five nominations in the documentary and cinematography categories.

When asked if winning the awards makes it easier to sell future film ideas, Mr.

Laliberté is not sure. "People have no idea that this guy living back on Droken Road is doing OK!" He quipped, "But in this business, you need a lot of resilience. The future is always uncertain. It is easy to become yesterday's flavour. And there is so much new talent out there. Just look at all the Indigenous storytellers... And there is a limit to what can be produced."

Still standing also gets a nod

Meanwhile, the English version of the Canadian Screen Awards held earlier

this spring has recognized the New Richmond episode of CBC's reality series Still Standing for its factual content. Eva Thomas of Frantic Films won for Best Direction of the episode which was shot in the fall of 2022 and aired in March 2023.

New Richmond Town Councillor, Natalie Clarke, who was instrumental in bringing the television crew to her town, is very happy with the fact that the program has helped promote the area to tourists and former Gaspesians. "I am so proud of the year's work that I put into this project. I still have amazing contact with a lot of the people that I worked with for the episode. And Jonnie loves his T-shirt I got made for him also."

"I am a very proud Anglo-Gaspesian, who happened to be put to task as a newly elected New Richmond town councillor on an amazing, fun, tedious challenge to convince Still Standing productions they must visit our town." Ms. Clarke told SPEC. "I received many messages from ex-Gaspesians who loved the show." She added that some of the former Gaspesians are planning a return trip to the area because the episode made them homesick.

LOBSTER:

Cont'd from cover

good in the spring," he says.

"In the Gaspé Peninsula, prices fell according to the Magdalen Islands management plan, a plan followed for several years. This plan is based on the price of live lobster and the live lobster sort of collapsed," notes O'Neil Cloutier based on the discussions he had with Gaspé processors.

Lobster fishermen noticed that their colleagues in the Bay of Chaleur sector in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island had obtained a better price this year.

"The overall decline was less severe in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island in weeks four,

five and six. The price for lobster meat was excellent on the markets this year and they got more for their lobster. On the other hand, we are in a situation where the processors in the Gaspé Peninsula are large. We could have obtained a price similar to that of New Brunswick. We spoke with the Gaspé processors, and we were told that the price is negotiated based on the Magdalen Islands management plan. We would like to have the right price. We should have at least 15 cents more. The cost of transportation is cheaper in the Gaspé Peninsula in order to reach the main markets. We have young fishermen who paid a lot to have a license and who are not getting a fair price. We're going to talk to the processors. It's not because we are in the

Gaspé Peninsula that we should have less," says Mr. Cloutier.

It is difficult to decide whether a profitability threshold will be reached for Gaspé lobstermen in 2024.

"It's hard to say. Fishermen paid extremely high prices for their license and their boat. The price has generally increased over the past five to six years, but permits cost \$2 million. That creates a debt that did not exist before," he recalls.

Revenues have increased over the past decade for Gaspé Peninsula lobster fishermen, but O'Neil Cloutier also emphasizes that operating expenses have also followed an upward curve.

"Fishermen have bought expensive licenses, the salaries

of fishermen's helpers have increased significantly, as has the cost of bait. The bait cost \$53,000 for me this year. Not so long ago, it was \$30,000. There is one more person on each boat. The hiring period for fishermen's helpers went from 13-14 weeks per year to 17-18 because of employment insurance. These are additional costs. The break-even point was around a price of \$5.50 to \$5.75 per pound before 2020 and it is perhaps \$6.50 to \$6.75 nowadays. We should conduct a study on it," he emphasizes.

"We experienced a phase of increasing catches and prices for a few years but now we are experiencing a decrease. Some fishermen have experienced a 20% to 30% drop in catches between Sainte-Thérèse and

the Bay of Chaleur area, and a 10% decrease in the price. What will we see next year? We will have to discuss prices based on the processed lobster market and the arrival of new permits," concludes Mr. Cloutier.

That last point refers to Fisheries and Oceans Canada's June 6 announcement that a vast assessment of cod stocks, based on data collection, will soon start in order to determine the number of new licences that could be delivered in Zone 19, between Cape Gaspé and Tartigou River, west of Matane.

In 2023, the Gaspé Peninsula lobster fishermen delivered catches amounting to 5,616 metric tons, for a value of \$95 million. Both were records.

THE GASPESPEC.COM

Trip Poisoned by Herbicides and Creosote. The SCZBG also sent the document *Le contrôle de la végétation dans les installations ferroviaires* published by the Swiss Railways. The advisory committee replied first by thanking us and then by inviting us to a virtual meeting in late April.

During this meeting, the SCZBG repeated its demands for a non-toxic railway through use of alternatives, underlining the supreme importance of protecting the environment and health, especially for our children. The SCZBG then did a follow-up with the advisory committee.

In July 2023, we sent the advisory committee the update of our paper, now 83 pages. The advisory committee thanked us.

In September 2023, the office of the member of the National Assembly, Mr. Stéphane Sainte-Croix, set up

a meeting for us to discuss the issue. We were very satisfied with this meeting.

From September to November 2023, the SCZBG sent the advisory committee four letters with additional information on ballast, drainage, alternatives to creosoted wood ties and excerpts from a webinar *SUR: science calls for protection of children's health from long-term impacts of pesticides*.

In February 2024, the SCZBG sent a fifth information letter to the advisory committee, with excerpts from another webinar: «Is glyphosate safe for the environment and health?» The answer from the experts was a unanimous "NO".

From March to May, the SCZBG sent four more letters to the advisory committee, on the harmful effects of herbicides on climate change (excerpts from a webinar and a report: *Pesticides and climate change: a vicious cycle*); on biodiversity; and about Earth Day and Bee Day.

The advisory committee invited us to a second virtual meeting in June. Meanwhile, the SCZBG had obtained the 2024 herbicide spray program (see above), so we wrote to the advisory committee to inform them of our concerns, with a reminder about the toxicity of the herbicides, and to demand that the program be cancelled.

At this meeting, the advisory committee refused to cancel the program. After discussions, the committee showed some interest in preventive rehabilitation, which excludes herbicides, for the Port-Daniel-Gaspé section of the line. The SCZBG will follow up on this. Furthermore, we are continuing our research and our letters to the advisory committee.

The top priority is protecting our environment and our health, especially for our children, by having at last the non-toxic railway we deserve.

Margret Grenier, President,
Société de conservation ZICO de la Baie-de-Gaspé

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Secrets that have been troubling you may come to a head this week, Aries. Try not to let your emotions get the best of you right now; otherwise, relationships could be damaged.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, your mind is all shaken up right now, so it should come as no surprise that you are distracted. The days ahead should see things settle down and you'll be able to refocus.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

This week is likely to be fairly quiet for you, Gemini. You may have to drum up your own excitement. Start looking at event calendars or live music venues for a distraction.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, use this week to think about your professional future. Many ideas are coming together and you just have to pick the route you would like to travel at this point.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

There is little time for daydreaming right now, Leo. Things will come at you at a fast and furious pace and you might have to scramble to keep up. Keep your wits about you.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you may feel like you are being hit with many obstacles from all directions. You might need to give yourself more time to devote to all of the tasks you take on. Ask for help if you need it.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Do not expect people to follow you blindly, Libra. You will have to give them reason to follow you and come around to your way of thinking.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, with so much going on around you, and after juggling various projects, concentrating can be very challenging. However, you must get your head in the game or risk mistakes.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Life isn't a spectator sport, Sagittarius. To really feel you are experiencing all you can right now, you must get right in the middle of the action. Friends can lead the way.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

The path you are supposed to take is finally coming into focus, Capricorn. Your excitement will only increase as you start making plans for the future. Share your joy with others.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

You don't need to completely reinvent yourself to make a change, Aquarius. Even small modification can make a big impact in the long run. Start gradually and build up.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Even though there is a challenging prospect on the horizon, you have all of the information you need to start navigating this new stage in your life, Pisces.

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Announcements



Obituary



BRADBURY: John Robert

On the afternoon of June 29, 2024, Robert (Bob) Bradbury died peacefully at the Centre d'Accueil (CHSLD) in New Carlisle. He was a dedicated and

loving husband to Ethel Bradbury, caring stepfather to Brenda, proud stepgrandfather to Anna-Michelle and Marie Chan.

Bob is predeceased by his parents Shirley and John Robert Bradbury, brother Terrence Bradbury and beloved step grandson Christopher Chan.

Bob worked at Air Canada for 28 years. After receiving numerous performance and development awards, he retired and moved to the Gaspé Coast. He worked for the New Richmond Heritage Village before moving on to work for The Gaspé Spec for 15 years.

A celebration of life will take place at a later date at St. Paul's Anglican church in Shigawake.

I will miss you always, my husband, my friend, love Ethel.

Obituary - 150 words - \$50
 150-250 words - \$55
 250+ words - quote will be provided
In memory: 150 words - \$35
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Funeral, Celebration of Life, Card of Thanks, Engagement, Birth, Prayer, Birthday - \$35
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<p>YORK: York ACW July 20: The York ACW will be holding its Summer Sale and Afternoon Tea beginning at 2 p.m. at the York River Community Hall. There will be handicrafts, baked goods, mystery parcels and a white elephant table. Afternoon tea will be served for \$7.</p> <p>BARACHOIS: BADC July 27: The Barachois Public Market will be held from 9:30 a.m. to noon at the Barachois Rec Centre. Bakers, Crafters, Artisans and Garden produce. To reserve a table (\$10) contact Sandy Coombs at 581-887-1417.</p> <p>BARACHOIS: The Gaspé Cancer Foundation August 1: Gift Bingo beginning at 7 p.m. at the Barachois Legion. Ages 18 and over are welcome.</p>	<p>August 4: A luncheon social starting at 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. held at Barachois Legion will include soup, hotdogs, sandwiches, grilled cheese, desserts, tea and coffee. Donations at the door. November 2: A ticket draw and luncheon starting at 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. held at Barachois Legion will include soup, hotdogs, sandwiches, desserts, tea and coffee, donations at the door.</p> <p>PORT DANIEL: St. James Anglican Church August 5: Gift bingo with gift cards and money, starting at 7 p.m. at the Shigawake Community Centre. \$20 a series, canteen service available.</p> <p>SHIGAWAKE: Community Centre July 25: The Shigawake community centre will be holding a Strawberry social</p>	<p>tea with bake sale at the Shigawake Community Centre.</p> <p>HOPE TOWN: Sports Club July 20: Hope Town Sports club will be hosting a gift bingo at 7 p.m. at the Hope Town Community Centre.</p> <p>HOPE: Hope Baptist Church Sundays: Sunday School starting at 10 a.m. Worship service beginning at 11 a.m.</p> <p>NEW CARLISLE: Bible Chapel Meetings Sundays: Breaking of Bread for believers - 9:30 a.m., Gospel meeting and Sunday School - 2 p.m. Thursdays: Prayer Meeting</p>	<p>and Bible Study - 7 p.m. a.m. to 1 p.m. 13+ \$16, 7-12 \$8, and 0-6 free. Everyone welcome! For more information: 418-752-3372 or 418-752-6011</p> <p>NEW CARLISLE: Kempffer House The tea room is back! Open every Wednesday with sittings at 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. Cash only, children \$8, adults \$12, and \$15 for the alcove. Reservations required. For more info: 418-752-1334 or heritagenc@globetrotter.net</p> <p>CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: 50+ Club Tuesdays: Grocery bingo every Tuesday at 7 p.m. \$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each. August 17: BBQ from 11</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND Sunday, July 21 10 a.m. Service</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN Sunday, July 21 2 p.m. Service</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sunday, July 21 New Carlisle 10 a.m. Morning Prayer Hope Town 10 a.m. Morning Prayer Shigawake 10 a.m. Morning Prayer</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PARISH OF GASPÉ</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sunday, July 21 St. James - Wakeham 9 a.m. Holy Eucharist</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Every Wednesday St. Paul's - Gaspé 10 a.m. Morning Prayer</p>	

Notice to SPEC subscribers

The company that prints The Gaspé Spec, Hebdo Litho informed us they will be operating with a reduced staff from **July 15 to August 23**. As a result the SPEC will be printed one day later than usual.

Subscribers can expect a delay of one business day in receiving their SPEC. Thank you for your understanding.

The Gaspé Spec Management

FAMILY TIES: Keeping seniors active with fun activities

Joan Imhoff, Getting to Know You participant

NEW CARLISLE: On May 30, Dave Douesnard of Douesnard's Greenhouse gave an entertaining workshop on hanging flower baskets at the first "Getting to Know You" workshop organized by Family Ties.

During the event, Mr. Douesnard shared a bit of his personal history, including how he met his wife, Roma, moved from the Magdalen Islands many years ago, and eventually settled in New Carlisle, where he became the owner of a greenhouse business.

After planting their flower baskets, participants enjoyed tea, coffee and ice cream sundaes. Many of the participants commented on how knowledgeable Dave was and how they enjoyed his informative and humorous workshop. The seniors were happy



Melda Doucet gets some planting advice from Dave Douesnard during the workshop.



Ice cream sundaes are always a special treat for children and adults alike.

to see each other once again, with one participant noting, "Being social through Family Ties is great for the spirit!"

The "Getting to Know You" workshops, coordinated by Madelyn Hayes,

will be offered monthly and are funded by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program.

In addition, students from New Carlisle High School will be volunteering during

the workshops. While interacting and working alongside the seniors, assisting with set-up, cleaning, and taking pictures, the students will work to improve their organizational and communication

skills.

If you see the next monthly workshop announced and want to participate, register early as spaces are limited and tend to fill up quickly.

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