

Motor car operators happily tour part of the Gaspé railway line

GILLES GAGNÉ

ESCUMINAC – Fourteen motor car owners, accompanied by as many friends or relatives, toured part of the Gaspé Peninsula railway on June 22 and 23, to their great delight and that of passers-by who saw them travelling, whether these passers-by were on foot, on the road or on a boat.

Motor cars, also called railcars, are old vehicles used for railway maintenance. They were replaced from the mid-1970s and onward by more versatile pickup trucks running on rails, or hi-rails.

Seven motor cars came from Quebec, three from Ontario, three from the United States and one from New Brunswick. They had to travel between their hometown and New Richmond, the starting point of their two excursions,



On the way to Escuminac and back, the motor car drivers stopped between Carleton and Saint-Omer to enjoy the view of the Baie des Chaleurs, a highlight of the excursion.

Photo: G. Gagné

in road vehicles pulling a trailer on which there was a motor car.

For safety reasons, the

group was supervised by two pickup trucks for the total duration of the New Richmond-Escuminac route, a distance

of 45 miles, double that with the return. The hi-rails belong to the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG),

the municipal entity operating trains on the peninsula.

Who owns a motor car?

American resident David Sigafosse left New Jersey, a 16-hour drive from New Richmond, to join the group coordinated by Louis-François Garceau.

“When I was three, my father bought me an electric toy train set and I loved it straight away. It was a rather large network. This passion has followed me ever since. I saw my first motor car in 2000. I didn't know that we could use these machines like this. I bought my first motor car in 2001, my second in 2004 and my third in 2007, a bigger one. I made trips to Rivière-du-Loup, on the Quebec North Shore and Labrador Railway (between

Cont'd on page 8

Clifton Firlotte retires after 50 years in the railway sector

GILLES GAGNÉ

NOUVELLE - Clifton Firlotte, a worker with 50 years of experience on the railway, took the opportunity provided by the June 22 and 23 presence of a 14-motor car excursion group organized between New Richmond and Escuminac by Draisines Québec to call it a career.

Mr. Firlotte drove the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) hi-rail pickup truck behind the 14 motor cars on June 22, as the SPEC witnessed his next to last work day. His wife Brigitte Kenny, who recently retired after 37 years at the Provigo grocery store in Pointe-à-la-Croix, accompanied him in the pickup truck both days.

Another SCFG worker,



Photo: G. Gagné

Clifton Firlotte and Brigitte Kenny will now enjoy their retirement, the railway worker completed his last day of work with the June 22 and 23 motor car excursion between New Richmond and Escuminac.

Mathieu Lagacé, drove the other hi-rail, which preceded the 14 motor cars.

“I started in June 1974, at age 18, as a worker constructing sidings and loading

tracks for CN's customers. We were working all over the place. I have also been a machine operator, bridge inspector, train operator and so on. I worked for CN, for the Société des chemins de fer du Québec, for the SCFG, and for the Groupe SEMA which repairs bridges. I had only been working part-time for the SCFG recently. I liked it (working for railways) but it's enough now,” he explains.

“I worked everywhere along the Gaspé line. I lived in Grand River for six years when I was stationed there. I worked on the North Shore on the Port-Cartier railway when I was employed by Groupe SEMA. Of course, I also worked in the Gaspé Peninsula and in New Brunswick for CN,” he adds.

He was building sidings and loading spurs for CN 50 years ago, but he later saw a lot of lines abandoned and loading tracks dismantled, as trucks took over a lot of rail traffic from the end of the 1970s until recently.

“The wind is slowly changing now. The line will soon reopen between New Richmond and Port Daniel and rail traffic will pick up here. Unfortunately, we lost a lot of time, years, because of who? Robert Poëti (the former Quebec Minister of Transport, who put the line in a dormant state east of Caplan while the Port-Daniel cement plant was under construction,” he underlines.

He is also confident to see some traffic generated

Cont'd on page 2

Electoral Code causes friction in Gespeg

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - After being adopted with some controversy in 2021, the Electoral Code of the Micmac First Nation of Gespeg is once again causing discontent.

A proposed modification from the Council is at the root of the conflict.

The current Electoral Code stipulates that the council be made up of one chief and eight councillors and only the chief must reside in Gaspé.

The proposed amendment, which is up for a referendum, suggests that in addition to the chief, seven of the eight councillors should also reside in Gaspé.

Opponents argue this change would create a lack of representation of members living outside Gaspé.

"We don't want to take away the councillors who live in Gaspé. It's about being represented no matter where you live. Someone who lives in Carleton-sur-Mer could run for chief councillor under our current Electoral Code. He could represent the whole peninsula. We could have someone in Rimouski, Gatineau or Quebec City representing members," says Donna Adams, one of the



Photo: N. Sergerie

A new debate on the Gespeg Electoral Code resurfaces. Here, the Nation's administrative office.

spokespersons for the protesters.

"It's far too much for a single councillor to represent all the members outside the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC. It's inconceivable. That's why we went to the petition in the first place. It's unfair. It can't work," she adds.

The petition received 11.43% support, equivalent to 240 Gespeg members.

For a petition to be accepted, it must reach 10% of the approximately 2,100 members.

The request to cancel the referendum was sent to the council, which rejected the request last Thursday.

He and Brigitte intend to remain quite active during their retirement and take advantage of their Kempt Road property.

"We want to take care of our leisure activities. I have a wood lathe and I started making bowls, not to sell but to make gifts," he concludes, under the tender gaze of Brigitte.

There were two ways of opening up the Code: a resolution by the council or 10% of members being able to request a review of the Code.

"Our proposal was rejected out of hand. The council used section 105 of the Code," explains Ms. Adams.

The Council claims not to have received a copy of the petition.

"They haven't seen it and, in the first letter sent on behalf of all the signatories, we were asked to maintain confidentiality and not to divulge the names, which we did," explains Ms. Adams, and this had already been explained to the council.

"It's important to respect members in our request, and that's the only reason the council has not seen the petition," she points out.

In the Council's response, obtained by SPEC, it is written, "We understand that some misinformation regarding the current referendum process on the Electoral Code has created dissatisfaction among you and some members".

"We are of the opinion that this democratic exercise is fully legitimate and constitutes the most appropriate means of enabling all members, and not just certain groups, to express their views on this subject," the letter continues.

"We remind you that the only purpose of the proposed amendment is to clarify an interpretation of the Electoral Code with regard to the residence of elected councillors, with the exception of the representative of members from outside the community," adds the note signed by councillors Céline Cassivi and Emily Roberts, and council attorney Benoit Champoux.

"The only purpose of the proposed amendment is to specify the residence of these elected officials, once elected, in accordance with customs and practices and in keeping with the wishes of the members as expressed during the consultations held in 2018-2019."

"Contrary to your claims (...), the Council has followed the steps set out in the 2021 Electoral Code to propose the desired changes to the mem-

bers," it wrote.

For the referendum, three voting methods are possible: five days in person at four locations, by post and electronic voting.

More generally, the lack of transparency on the state of the nation was questioned.

"I've sent around twenty unanswered emails to the Council asking for dates of annual general meetings, financial statements and minutes. There is no transparency. We asked questions about the financial statements. There has been no response. The 2023-2024 financial statements have not been disclosed," explains Ms. Adams.

"We went from a \$6 million surplus to a \$1.4 million loss in four years," says Nathalie Basque, another spokesperson against the Electoral Code modification.

In 2019, Ms. Basque, who lives in the Quebec City region, deplored the lack of transparency surrounding the revision of the Electoral Code adopted in 2021.

Allegations of intimidation had been made against members, which the council in place at the time denied.

Asked for comment, the Council stated in an email: "The Nation is not comfortable discussing our internal affairs with the media, especially the governance of our community. In our culture, this is sacred."

FIRLOTTE:

Cont'd from cover

between Port Daniel and Gaspé once the line is repaired and reopened, which is scheduled for the end of 2026.

"I am also anxious to see the resumption of the passenger train service. Gaspésians deserve such a service," he stresses.

Fair Haven Bible Camp New Carlisle, Quebec

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Boys Camp	10 - 12 yrs	July 21-26
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Eastern Shores
SCHOOL BOARD

ADOPTION DES RÈGLEMENTS / ADOPTION OF BY-LAWS AVIS PUBLIC / PUBLIC NOTICE

AVIS PUBLIC est par les présentes donné que la Commission scolaire Eastern Shores a adopté les modifications suivantes au règlement 8 en vue de fixer l'heure, la date et le lieu des réunions du Conseil des commissaires et du Comité exécutif pour l'année scolaire 2024-2025.

Date	Exécutif	Conseil	Lieu
Le 19 août 2024		18h00	Hybride
Le 10 septembre 2024	8h00		
Le 16 septembre 2024		9h00	Fort Prével
Le 11 novembre 2024		18h00	New Carlisle
Le 3 décembre 2024	8h00		
Le 9 décembre 2024		9h00	New Carlisle
Le 28 janvier 2025	8h00		
Le 3 février 2025		18h00	Hybride
Le 11 mars 2025	8h00		
Le 17 mars 2025		9h00	Rimouski
Le 22 avril 2025	8h00		
Le 28 avril 2025		18h00	Hybride
Le 10 juin 2025	8h00		
Le 16 juin 2025		9h00	New Carlisle

Donné à New Carlisle, Québec ce 19e jour de juin 2024

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the Eastern Shores School Board adopted the following amendments to By-Law 8: to set the time, date and location of the Council of Commissioners and Executive Committee meetings for the 2024-2025 school year.

Dates	Executive	Council	Location
August 19, 2024		6:00 p.m.	Hybrid
September 10, 2024	8:00 a.m.		Hybrid
September 16, 2024		9:00 a.m.	Fort-Prével
November 11, 2024		6:00 p.m.	New Carlisle
December 3, 2024	8:00 a.m.		Hybrid
December 9, 2024		9:00 a.m.	New Carlisle
January 28, 2025	8:00 a.m.		Hybrid
February 3, 2025		6:00 p.m.	Hybrid
March 11, 2025	8:00 a.m.		Hybrid
March 17, 2025		9:00 a.m.	Rimouski
April 22, 2025	8:00 a.m.		Hybrid
April 28, 2025		6:00 p.m.	Hybrid
June 10, 2025	8:00 a.m.		Hybrid
June 16, 2025		9:00 a.m.	New Carlisle

Given at New Carlisle, Quebec this 19th day of June 2024

Denis Gauthier
Secrétaire général / Secretary General

Police report

Holly Stanley, 44, from Gaspé charged with forging the will of a deceased man, returned to the Percé Courthouse on June 25 to finalize an out-of-court agreement. Since negotiations were not concluded on time for that court appearance, her case was postponed until October 22, at which date an agreement should be reached, an outcome that would avoid Holly Stanley undergoing another trial.

She was previously charged with fraud and was sued by the Public Curator for fraud of \$286,000. She admitted to that fraud at the onset of her May 7 Superior Court trial 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 a 2017 accident. The court consequently 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 likely render her final decision in the coming weeks.

Sûreté du Québec police officers from the Côte-de-Gaspé station arrested a suspect on June 26 and carried out three searches in Gaspé following an investigation into dangerous driving. Nolan Fortin Laliberté, 18, from Gaspé, was arrested and appeared at the Percé Courthouse the same day. He is charged with dangerous driving and using equipment in a manner likely to make it appear that he was a peace officer. He was remanded in custody and was due back in court on June 27. Three vehicles were searched for analysis and seized as criminal property.

Information received from the public made it possible to carry out this operation. The Sûreté du Québec reminds us that in most collisions, human behaviour is involved. Speeding or reckless driving remains a leading cause of death on Quebec roads. Drivers can make a difference and help improve road safety by slowing down.

The June 19 forest fire between the York River and Route 198, between Gaspé and Murdochville, was considered under control on Friday, June 21, by the SOPFEU (Society for the Protection of Forests Against Fire). The blaze, ignited by lightning, ultimately devastated 2.1 hectares of forest. On June 19, two planes equipped with tanks were deployed to combat the blaze. On the following day, helicopters and teams on the ground brought the fire from controlled to contained, meaning it would no longer expand and cause further damage. This was the fifth fire to occur this year in the Gaspé Peninsula, with a total of 10.6 hectares ravaged, the largest having occurred on June 2 in Pointe-à-la-Croix, burning 7.4 hectares.

18 local events will support Festive and Safe movement

Gilles Gagné

The Festive and Safe movement, which aims to prevent sexual assaults and involuntary drug poisoning in a party environment, is back for a second year. Building on its success in 2023, the Table de concertation féministe of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands (TCF-GÎM) renewed the mandate, thanks to the support of the regional Sectoral Development Agreement in terms of equality between women and men. The agreement covers the 2024-2027 period.

Charlotte Agostini, development agent for TCF-GÎM, explains the importance of the project by stating that "it is essential to continue to put in place collective measures and non-victimizing to raise awareness among the population about sexual assault in festive spaces where, we know, consumption has the potential to increase assault cases."

She adds that "the number of festive circles interested in the project this year has exploded, which demonstrates a very present concern on the territory."

This year, 18 events in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands support the initiative: Shigawake Music Festival and Agricultural Fair, Bleubleu Festival, Fauve Mauve Festival, Gaspésie Ribfest, Festival Musique du bout du monde, Festival tout mélangé, Festival en chanson de Petite-Vallée Song Festival, Cap d'Espoir Beach Fest, Festival du cochon volant, Grande-Entrée's Lobster Festival, Magdalen Islands Sandcastle Competition, Rally Baie-des-Chaleurs, FullMoon Gaspésien 2024, Tribunion Boréal 2024 L'Imaginarium, Pub Pit Caribou, Pub Air Salin, Auberge Festive du Sea Shack as well as La Pointe Sec.

The expertise of key collaborators such as CALACS La Bôme Gaspésie, CALACS L'Espoir des Îles, the Mi-Chemin organization and the Public Health Directorate GÎM made it possible for the TCF-GÎM to equip itself with tools and means to be able to work with festive spaces and festivals in the region to ensure a presence during events. The TCF-GÎM has also joined forces with other local partners such as local street workers in the Gaspé Peninsula and an organization called Aire ouverte. Festive and Safe offers different types of support according to the needs of festivals and festive spaces, like the creation of a safe space for people who feel the need, presence of local workers and qualified speakers to inform, raise awareness and intervene, display on the festival website as well as upstream on social networks in addition to training dedicated to volunteers and festival teams. All these measures aim to present a clear message: here there is zero tolerance for attacks.

The Festive and Safe is possible thanks to the financial assistance and support of partners from the Sectoral Development Agreement on equality between women and men in the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region from 2024 to 2027, namely the Ministry responsible for the Status of Women, the Ministry of Municipal authorities, the Ministry of Employment, the Regional Public Health Directorate of the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, the Maritime Community of the Magdalen Islands, the MRC du Rocher-Percé, the MRC de la Côte-de-Gaspé, the MRC de la Haute-Gaspésie, the MRC of Bonaventure, the MRC Avignon, the Network of partners in social development of the Magdalen Islands, the Table of prefects of Gaspé Peninsula MRC and the region's Feminist Concertation Table.

Further growth in regional population

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The population of the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region continues to grow, reaching 92,104 on July 1, 2023.

In a report presented on May 22, the net growth was 295 people, representing a rate of 3.2 per thousand, according to provisional data from the Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ).

The population has increased for a fourth consecutive year, but at a slower rate than in 2021-2022 and 2020-2021. The pandemic contributed largely to growth during 2020-2021 when increase was 1,459 people.

Last year's growth also appears modest compared with other regions, but the maintenance of a positive rate is noteworthy, says the provincial body, since the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands has generally seen its population decline since 1986-1987, the earliest data available.

The population of the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands is significantly older than that of Quebec as a whole, with the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over in the province (30.4%) and the lowest proportion of young people under 20 (16.4%) of all the regions.

In 2023, the average age for the region was 48.8, the highest in Quebec.

In the statistics, it is observed that the male-female ratio is 50%-50%.

Life expectancy for men in the region is 78.3 years and 82.6 years for women.

For the last twenty years the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands region has recorded more deaths than births. In 2023, this results in a natural balance of negative 665 people.

This deficit has worsened for a second consecutive

year, essentially due to a marked increase in the number of deaths, with births remaining relatively stable.

The Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine is one of the few regions where births did not decrease in 2023.

As for fertility, it was among the highest in Quebec in 2023, with a total fertility rate of 1.61 children per woman.

The Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine is the winner in terms of migration exchanges with the other regions of Quebec for the seventh consecutive year with a net migration of 392 people.

Its gains have slowed after peaking at nearly 1,400 people in 2020-2021, but the balance for the last year remains one of the highest recorded by the region in the nearly 25 years that data has been compiled.

Gains are observed in all age groups except for 15-24 years old and 70 years and over. The highest gains were in the 25-34 and 55-64 age groups.

International and inter-provincial migration generated total gains of 504 people. This migration is the highest ever recorded in the region. Specifically, 462 people came from international migration, including 434 who were not permanent residents, which is a record for the latter category, according to the Institute.

The gains attributable to temporary immigration thus surpassed those linked to permanent immigration.

The balance of inter-provincial migration was small, accounting for just 42 people.

Although they reached a peak, the total external migration gains of the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine are among the lowest of all regions according to the ISQ.



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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

A devastating defeat

The Liberal Party of Canada's June 24 defeat in the riding of Toronto-St. Paul's was devastating to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, especially considering that the Liberals had won every election in that constituency between 1993 and now.

It hurts symbolically because Toronto-St. Paul's had been a liberal stronghold for 31 years. Even in 2011, when Liberal Party leader Michael Ignatieff displayed his poor political instinct and led the party to its worst defeat in 144 years, he was able to keep that riding, along with 10 other Ontario constituencies.

It hurts logistically because the Liberal forces deployed significant efforts to save the riding. Eleven elected Members of Parliament went to Toronto-St. Paul's and supported candidate Leslie Church. She was attempting to replace Caroline Bennett who decided to quit politics after a long career. The strategy did not work, indicating that the party definitely needs some fine-tuning or more effort is needed to get voters to the booth.

It also hurts strategically. Where do Liberal Party officials go from here? How will they pick up the pieces, less than 15 months from the start of the next electoral campaign and, in fact, maybe less than a year from the election? The Liberal Party government will need some help from the New Democratic Party to get the 2025 budget approved next spring, and this outcome might not be realistic, as the NDP strategists and organizers will try to differentiate themselves from Justin Trudeau's team. Approving a Liberal budget is surely not the best way to single out the NDP. The same argument could be used for the Green Party.

Some polls carried out over the 48 hours that followed the June 24 vote indicate that the Conservative Party could add 55 Ontarian seats to its caucus if an election takes place now. Poll coordinators affirm that currently there is such a thing as a safe seat for the Liberals in Ontario.

The victory margin was only 590 votes in Toronto-St. Paul's but the Liberals were expecting to retain that seat. The Conservative Party strategists were not expecting to win it. In fact, they did not send a large contingent of Members of Parliament (MP) to support their candidate, Don Stewart, thinking that his chances were slim and that a defeat

would have meant that their efforts were in vain. They were as surprised to win as the Liberals were disappointed to lose.

Is Justin Trudeau still the right person to lead the country?

So far, despite poor showings in polls since the end of 2022, Justin Trudeau was publicly perceived by the Liberal Party caucus as the man of the situation. He expressed on June 25 his desire to stay, to stick to his previous statements to the effect that he would try to win a fourth consecutive election, and that there are still elements of his vision that deserve to be carried out.

Backroom talks about the relevance of his staying at the helm of the government have intensified since the June 24 defeat. Such talks have been ongoing for months.

Truth be told, the context for Toronto-St. Paul's voters to express their dissatisfaction at the way the country is led was perfect.

The Jewish vote is important in that riding and that cross-section of the electorate is disgruntled by the way Canada is handling the Israeli-Gaza strip conflict.

The participation rate in by-elections is usually low. The participation rate of 43.9% was nevertheless high for an urban riding experiencing a summer by-election. It means that people not tied to a political party needed to express an assessment of the government's performance, that of disappointment or anger. It also means that the Liberal forces are demobilized.

Another analysis suggests that the Liberal Party candidate, Leslie Church, was not as well-known as her predecessor Caroline Bennett, and that the capital gain tax, which came into force immediately after the by-election, also played a role in the Liberal defeat, considering that Toronto-St. Paul's is a rather wealthy riding.

Right now, the June 24 results are forcing many Liberal MPs to reconsider their candidacy, come the 2025 election, or to contest their allegiance to Justin Trudeau.

If some MPs and ministers still think that a victory in 2025 remains possible, we will soon hear open remarks about Justin Trudeau's necessary departure. He has shown flashes of stubbornness in the past, like his father Pierre Elliot, and he could decide to stay because he seems to need big challenges before getting on the move.

Some political observers wonder if a cabinet shuffle could be enough to revive the Liberal Party. Right now, it looks like a drop in the bucket of things to do to fix the party's situation.

Enough time for a leadership race?

If the NDP ceases to support the Liberal Party minority government at the beginning of 2025, a distinct possibility, that there is little time for a leadership race, should Justin Trudeau step down.

Such a race takes at least two months to organize and hold, and the summer would be perfect for that kind of activity. However, if Justin Trudeau only leaves at the end of August, there will be very little time for the new leader to get a grasp of the elements coming with her or his new responsibilities, which include making sure that the party is united before an electoral campaign. A leadership race almost always leaves scars to heal.

Liberal strategists also wonder if selecting a new leader would be a waste of a valuable person if they consider that the next election is unsalvageable and that the Conservative Party will win anyway in 2025.

However, a four-year period in the opposition, or less in a possible minority government situation, might also be a good way to learn the ropes for a young leader with limited experience. This is valid if that person possesses great potential and a strong backbone. This is not easy to find.

Another option could be to pit a man with little experience in politics, like Mark Carney, the former governor of the Bank of Canada, against a pitbull like Pierre Poilievre, who has shown very little substance since his Conservative Party leadership victory in September 2022.

Mark Carney will turn 60 in March though. This is not old by today's standards, but he might not be interested at this time in his life in spending four years facing a government led by Pierre Poilievre. Mr. Carney expressed an interest in politics a couple of years ago and he has been discrete since. He can surely find more interesting options, given his background. Besides, the Liberal Party situation has deteriorated considerably since 2022.

The relative discretion of Pierre Poilievre during the Toronto-St. Paul's campaign proved that his strategy based on emotions and insults works to a certain extent. After all, he was kicked out of the House of Commons after calling Justin Trudeau a 'wacko'.

A by-election is a way to send messages to a government and Toronto-St. Paul's voters certainly used that means.

However, as Canada gets closer to the general election, some voters will want to hear some substance from Pierre Poilievre. His 20% lead in polls might go down quite a bit when faced with finding and thoroughly explaining the elements of his platform.




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Baie-des-Chaleurs SADC has injected more than \$33 million into the local economy in last 40 years

GILLES GAGNÉ

BONAVENTURE - The SADC Baie-des-Chaleurs celebrated its 40th anniversary at its annual general meeting on June 5, held at the Micro-brasserie Bistro La belle aventure in Bonaventure. Since 1984, it has injected over \$33 million into local businesses and projects in the region, resulting in \$233 million in community spinoffs.

As part of the festivities surrounding the 40th anniversary, the president of the SADC Baie-des-Chaleurs, Charles Guérette, highlighted the implementation of a fruit tree planting project in collaboration with two community organizations in the region: the Source Alimentaire Bonavignon in Maria, and the Collectif Aliment-Terre in Paspébiac, two food banks.

Plans are also underway for a similar project in the Avignon West sector to carry out a similar project. This initiative will make it possible to plant different fruit trees in

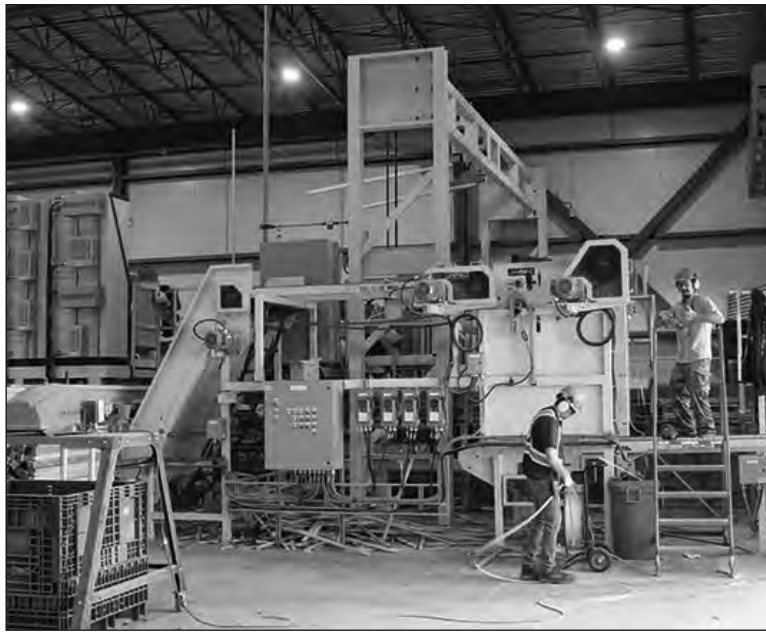


Photo: G. Gagné

In 40 years, the SADC has contributed to projects generating \$233 million in spinoffs.

the collective and community gardens of these organizations. When mature, these trees will provide a variety of fruit to their beneficiaries.

"As an SADC, our vision is to have a positive impact on the vitality of communities and the fruit tree planting project is our way of saying 'thank you' to the community and leaving a positive legacy for years to come. In addition,

we hope that this initiative will inspire others to join us and support the community," said Mr. Guérette.

2023-2024

During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, which ended on March 31, the organization injected over \$1.5 million into the community through its three main lines of business

of the SADC, which are financing, technical assistance to businesses and support for local economic development. Altogether 101 interventions were deployed and supported by the SADC team over the past year, generating economic spinoffs slightly exceeding \$11.9 million.

The year 2023-2024 concluded with the end of the five-year agreement with Canada Economic Development. In terms of funding, it is important to highlight the renewal of the agreement with the same funder for a new five-year period. This agreement will bring certain new features that will have a positive impact on the development of the territory's businesses in terms of sustainable development, succession and digital development.

While many communities in Quebec are struggling to find business successors, the Baie-des-Chaleurs region has experienced many successful successions.

"The dynamism of business successions in the Baie-

des-Chaleurs has allowed us to support the transition of several organizations. In fact, 44 projects have been completed in the last 5 years, compared to 23 projects for the previous five years, which represents almost double the number of projects," says executive director Lyne Lebrasseur.

Inflation has not hampered investments to a high extent, she adds, when asked to rate the current business context. "It (investment) has slowed down a little bit. Rising interest rates have convinced some investors to put projects on the back burner. However, interest rates have not handicapped enterprise acquisitions. So, successors are showing up. We have indeed talked about it for years. If I look at neighbouring territories, I see that it (succession) is also strong in the Magdalen Islands. It seems more difficult in Rocher-Percé, however, the succession is strong in commercial

Cont'd on page 10

A remarkable year for the Gaspé SADC

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The SADC (Société d'aide au développement des collectivités) of Gaspé has had another busy year, investing more than \$1.7 million in 68 projects and contributing to 49 businesses through the Regional Recovery Fund.

From 2019 to 2024, the loan portfolio has grown from \$900,000 to \$2.7 million during the five-year agreement with Ottawa.

This achievement was highlighted during the organization's annual general meeting held on June 11 in Gaspé. "It was one of our best years ever. It was the second biggest year in terms of investments in our history. We granted a total of \$1.7 million in financial assistance and \$1.2 million in loans to businesses. We're really proud," says Dave Lavoie, Director of Gaspé SADC.

The organization also provided half a million dollars in grants to small businesses. "The fact that we helped busi-

nesses during the pandemic with the Fonds d'aide à la relance régionale. Forty-nine of the 51 businesses were able to repay their loans before March 28, 2024, which gave these businesses about \$360,000 in grants. That's money that's staying in the businesses," says Mr. Lavoie.

Having two major companies like LM Wind Power and Chantier Naval Forillon also supports economic activity in the territory.

"Rue de la Reine is very lively. Our population is stable and even growing. We're seeing more young people, more families. In a way, there are more young families and that means the economy is doing well on the Gaspé side. New businesses are bringing in others," says Mr. Lavoie.

However, Rivière-au-Renard is going through a fishing crisis, as is Cloridorme, and two difficult winters in terms of weather have hurt tourism in Murdochville.

Ten businesses received support for sustainable development with shrimp before

the crisis hit.

"One of the things we're really proud of with financial assistance is business succession. There seems to be a shortage of entrepreneurs. We're proud to be there to support those who are ready to take over, and we've been able to help a number of businesses this year," adds Mr. Lavoie.

"One of the things we've been able to see is the First Business Fund, which helps businesses get off the ground. It's a fund that can give \$10,000 to new entrepreneurs and is supported by Desjardins and the Town of Gaspé. We've helped 13 businesses. The SADC and the MRC look after this fund," explains Mr. Lavoie.

What the public doesn't know is that the interest paid by businesses to the SADC stays with the organization. "That money adds to our regular funds and we can then lend it again. It's money that turns over," says the director, who leads a team of five people, handling a hundred files



Photo: N. Sergerie

annually

In the coming year, a basic accounting training course will be offered to entrepreneurs. "We often outsource this. Some entrepreneurs who haven't studied accounting will be given a better grasp of the basics. In the next few weeks, we'll be making some big announcements about new funding for SADCs in the areas of business succession, digital technology and sustainable development," says Mr. Lavoie.

The SADC often works

with other organizations to complete financial packages in order to provide the best support possible to entrepreneurs in need of financing.

The SADC also organized three successful events: the Regional Mentoring Conference (Colloque régional du mentorat), Concert'Action-31 on winter tourism, and the second New Year's Breakfast.

The SADC also collaborated with the MRC's Rendez-vous RH in immigration and the Rendez-vous de l'innovation de l'Est du Québec.

CISSS forecasts a deficit of \$35 million in 2024-2025

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ: - The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) is forecasting a budget deficit of \$35 million for the 2024-2025 financial year, which is a first since its creation in April 2015.

Unsurprisingly, the independent workforce will account for \$28 million of the \$35 million deficit out of an overall budget of \$540 million.

"The independent workforce was not funded to close out the financial year and we have no funding planned for next year," says CISSS President and CEO Martin Pelletier.

The CISSS had to submit a three-year plan to return to a balanced budget.

"In the coming year, we expect to withdraw \$3 million of the \$28 million (for the independent workforce). That's why we're presenting a three-year plan. We're being fairly conservative for the first year, hoping that in the second and third years, we'll be able to hire the people we need," says Mr. Pelletier.

Patients will not feel any impact from the cuts. "We're not touching services to the public. We are not cutting any positions in our organization. We had an administrative reserve in place that we won't release to avoid having to seek other measures," maintains Mr. Pelletier.

The CISSS will be looking to recover a total of \$5 million for 2024-2025. This will be a major undertaking, amounting to the equivalent of \$15 million a year for the next two years.

"It's major, and it's mainly based on our ability to replace the independent workforce. It's going to require a lot of hiring," notes Mr. Pelletier.

With a province-wide shortage of healthcare workers, the prospect of eliminating outside workers from the healthcare network will be an arduous task.

"In the Gaspésie, the number of graduates is not keeping pace with needs. We can't see any signs of improvement in the short term, even though

Santé-Québec and (recruitment) mobilizations will give our young people a better image for training in the care sectors. This is a provincial and North American issue. Immigration is unavoidable, and that's why we're putting a lot of effort into it," explains the CEO, who hopes to retain all the candidates received in the three cohorts that have arrived and that are being trained.

The other aspect will be to reduce the absenteeism rate, which stands at 10% compared with 8% for the network as a whole.

"We're putting in \$300,000. It's not so much the money as the benefit of getting our people back to work. At the moment, they're being replaced by independent workers. As soon as they come back to work, we'll achieve the dual objective of getting them back to work and reducing the number of self-employed workers. We can't work magic, but we do have an action plan," he says.

Of the 4,000 CISSS employees, approximately 400 are on sick leave, injury-on-duty leave or preventative leave.

"In comparison, we use some 200 independent workers in our organization. Yes, there are retirements but out of the 400, if many of them came back, we could thank the independent workforce," estimates the CEO.

2023-2024

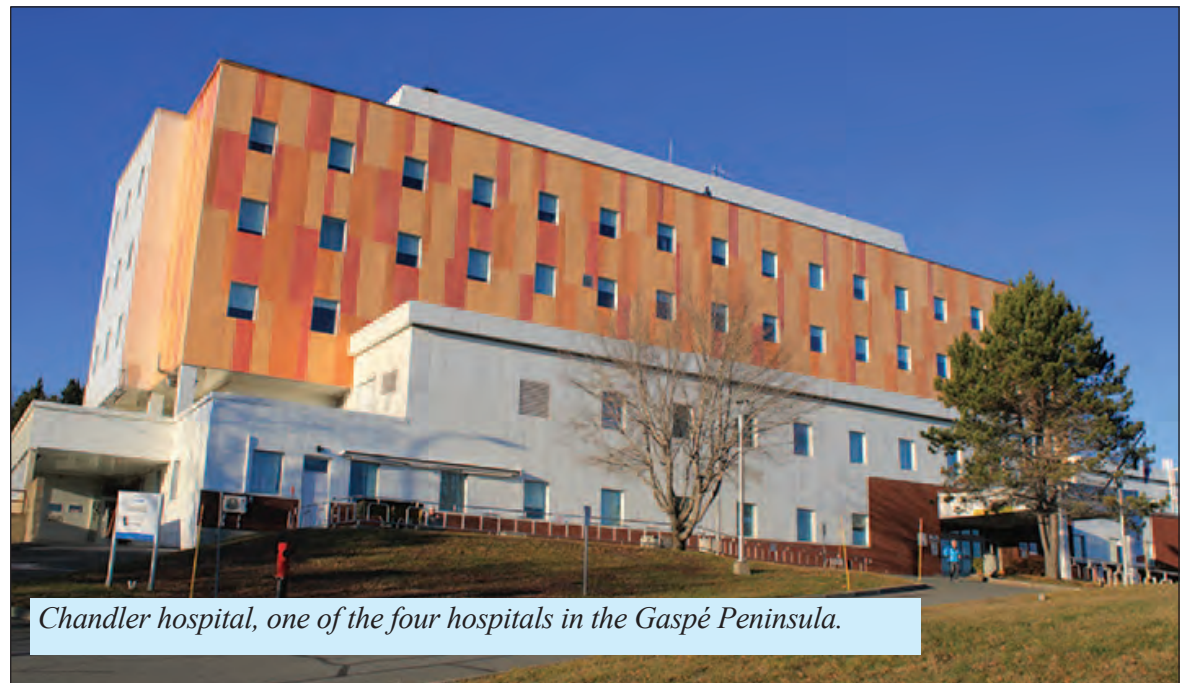
The 2023-2024 financial year also has a deficit, mainly due to the use of independent labour. For the network, this is also a first since its creation.

"We're going to be in deficit. We won't be mopped up as we have been in previous years," notes Mr. Pelletier.

In the last balance sheet presented in April, the CISSS forecasted a deficit of around \$30 million.

"The auditors are in the process of completing their work. We're not allowed to reveal any figures yet," explains the Director of Finance, Jean-Pierre Collette.

"We had some good news at



Chandler hospital, one of the four hospitals in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Photo: N. Sergerie

the end of the year, but not enough to make up the entire deficit," adds Mr. Collette.

An easier summer

While the summer of 2023 brought its share of difficulties, including two weekly disruptions to obstetric services at the Gaspé hospital due to a lack of human resources, the coming summer promises to be a little less difficult.

"We're optimistic, but realistic at the same time. I'm keeping an eye open because there's always a day when we can be told that someone is leaving for a few weeks and we've just had an overdraft. For the moment, the information is quite positive," says Martin Pelletier.

Auditor General's report

Halfway through the work required to correct the shortcomings mentioned by the Auditor General in her spring 2022 report, members of her staff provided CISSS management with a progress report on the 64 shortcomings to be corrected as mentioned in the document.

Two main areas were targeted: staff appreciation to improve the organizational climate and contract management.

"As far as the Human Resources Department is concerned, our director is working on a methodology for setting up a survey in each local serv-

ice network," says Mr. Pelletier.

"As for contract management, where we had a lot of steps to climb to get an image, we have climbed some of them and there are still several to climb. We're going to redouble our efforts in the coming year, because the consequence would be to see the VGQ (Quebec's Auditor General) extend its mandate with us," adds the CEO.

Upcoming work at the Maria emergency department

When the first steps were taken to expand and modernize the Maria hospital emergency and intensive care departments on June 6, the Eastern Quebec Union of Nurses, Practical Nurses and Respiratory Therapists raised concerns about the health and safety of the current facilities.

President Pier-Luc Bujold mentioned the health and safety inspections carried out in recent weeks, which concluded that "it was completely inappropriate for patients and workers. It was very dangerous to work there," he said, pointing out that there are cabinets containing emergency equipment and medication that are not locked and are accessible to patients.

"I was a bit surprised when I got out. I saw a list of work to be done until we have a new emergency department, and the

technical services department is working on it as a priority. We're having trouble getting materials, but I can guarantee you that we're not leaving things undone by putting people at risk," says Mr. Pelletier.

To give workers and customers a little more space, the CEO has ordered the opening of six care beds to help improve the situation.

"I had six short-term beds added to make sure we weren't overflowing in an emergency. We had stretchers in the emergency department and I expect them to be withdrawn once we've got the hang of operating the beds. I expect the number of stretchers in the emergency department to be reduced, which will give us a bit more oxygen and physical space to work better. It's all part of our plan to build a new emergency department," says Mr. Pelletier.

Gilles Cormier, chairman of the CISSS Board of Directors, welcomes the announcement concerning Maria Hospital.

At the June 11 meeting of the Board of Directors, Mr. Cormier spoke of the start of the preparatory stages for the expansion of the emergency and intensive care units.

He is confident that the project will be included in the QIP (Québec Infrastructure Plan) this spring.

The Board of Directors has been tenacious in recent months in demanding that Quebec make this regional priority a provincial priority.



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Promising salmon fishing season on the Matapedia River

GILLES GAGNÉ

MATAPEDIA – Salmon fishing is off to a good start on the Matapedia River as far as the number of fishing days is concerned. The anglers have been authorized to fish since May 15, an early start that has become the rule over the last few years, according to Michèle Lévesque, director general of Matapedia and Patapedia Rivers Management Corporation.

“The water flow is really limited, a consequence of the winter. When we don’t get much snow, the water level is low but we greet many fishermen at this early stage of the season. It is a fine start,” she explains.

Thaw was also spread over a very long period, which started in February, and this contributed to the low water level. The water temperature is also high for the time of the year.

The corporation started managing the rivers under its responsibilities 33 years ago. It employs 60 people during the peak period. The corporation administers salmon fishing on the Matapedia and Patapedia Rivers, as its name suggests, but also on tributaries, mainly the Humqui and



On the beautiful morning of June 17, two anglers and a guide were spending some quality time just a couple of kilometres upstream from the village of Matapedia.

Photo: G. Gagné

Causapschal Rivers, as well as the smaller Milnikek, Assemetquagan and Millstream Rivers.

“We sell about 3,000 fishing days for reserved sectors of the rivers, spots that have been sold since November. We usually sell between 7,000 and 8,000 fishing days for the public stretches of the rivers,” specifies Ms. Lévesque.

Salmon fishing starts early at the Matapedia and Patapedia Rivers Management Corporation because “there was

very little time between the black salmon fishing season, which starts on April 15, and the coming of younger specimens. Some young salmon were caught in early May. The conditions were good around the middle of May so we started opening earlier. At first, it was near the village of Matapedia but people from the upstream sectors, like Sector 3 in Sainte-Florence and Causapschal, also wanted an earlier season start and we agreed,” points out Ms.

Lévesque.

Catch and release for salmon longer than 63 centimetres is the rule on the rivers managed by the corporation. The exception until this year was the salmon caught on the Causapschal River but the regulation changed this spring.

“The catch and release rule applies to the Causapschal River as well, like to three other rivers of the North Shore region. Until last year, people could keep big salmon caught

on the Causapschal River, considering that the season ends on July 15 along that river. It still ends early but big spawners have to be released from mid-May to mid-July now. On the Matapedia River itself, the only period where sports fishermen can keep large salmon comes if we can show by August 1 that we reach the required threshold, which is 1,586 salmon in our case,” stresses Michèle Lévesque.

The evaluation of salmon runs is somewhat tricky on the Matapedia River and its tributaries because the only retention barrier is located at the head of the Causapschal River, in the Marais area.

“So, we use scuba divers. It is far from perfect as an evaluation means. For example, we sent two scuba divers yesterday as the water looked very clear and they couldn’t see each other when they were two metres apart,” says Ms. Lévesque.

The annual income of the Matapedia and Patapedia Rivers Management Corporation tied to salmon fishing reached \$2,021,000 in 2023. The amount doesn’t include the revenues generated by moose hunting on the Dunière freehold, also administered by the corporation.

Final phase of renovations to the Cathédrale du Christ-Roi will soon begin

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The final phase of a \$4 million project to renovate the Cathédrale du Christ-Roi in Gaspé, which began in 2014, will soon get underway, starting with the renovation of the church’s bell tower.

This final restoration phase will cost more than expected, with the accepted bid coming in \$100,000 over the estimated budget of \$575,000.

“This is the final phase of a restoration program that began in 2014. The exterior was restored, then the gable roof. What remained was the bell tower and the windows. Because of cost overruns, we’re going to limit ourselves



Photo: N. Sergerie

The bell tower of Gaspé Cathedral will be restored.

to restoring the bell tower,” says Yvan Landry, vice president of the Fabrique Saint-

Alban de Gaspé and the person in charge of the project.

The Fabrique can count on

80% assistance from the Quebec government.

The \$180,000 fundraising campaign will be relaunched now that just over a third of the target has been reached.

“Our campaign will intensify with a second, more intense step in the coming days. This has happened every time we’ve carried out renovations since 2014. When the work starts, it creates a buzz among subscribers,” notes Mr. Landry.

The renovation of the top windows, estimated at \$200,000, will have to wait.

That will be done in the next few years. For the moment, they’ve been sealed and they’re not causing any major problems but in the short term, the windows will have to be restored. It’s a 60-year-old build-

ing and, normally, some work needs to be done,” says Mr. Landry.

New varnish will have to be applied to the wood siding that was installed in 2014. “We’ve reached that stage by now. We said it was for 10 years. We haven’t had it assessed. We will,” says the works manager.

The Cathedral, which opened in 1969, is the only wooden cathedral in North America.

The building, clad in red cedar slats, is composed of an assembly of volumes with modern lines and was recognized as a historic monument by the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications du Québec in 2001.

ACW Book: "...and the meeting ended with the usual cup of tea"

Submitted by: Edith MacKenzie

SHIGAWAKE: - On July 12, 2022, St. Paul's ACW in Shigawake, Quebec, decided to disband as a group. It was not an easy decision, knowing that women had been meeting regularly and planning ways to support the work of the Church since it was built in the 1860s.

A summer visitor, Margaret Skene, was at that meeting. She suggested that we write a booklet outlining the history of St. Paul's Church with emphasis on the work accomplished by the women.

Our ACW had access to the minutes and financial records of the Ladies' Guild from 1933 to 1963. Minute books were found on property owned by a former member of the group. Margaret offered to type notes covering those years and worked diligently during the summers of 2022 and 2023.

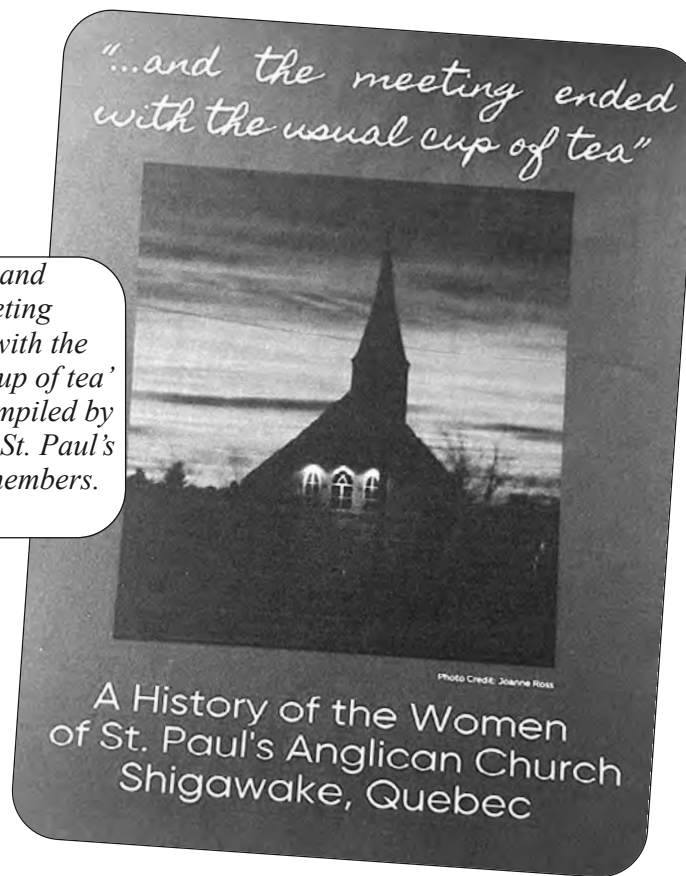
Many of those monthly meetings ended with the phrase "and the meeting ended with the usual cup of tea", which became the title of our book.

I offered to read and make

notes on the Ladies' Guild and ACW minutes from 1964 to 2022. The results of my work and the photos collected from everyone, plus Margaret's work, ended up on my computer! Originally, we intended the booklet to be small and of interest only to our disbanded group. However, realizing that most people are unaware of how large the Anglican Diocese of Quebec is, I decided to add some historical notes and, before long, what started out small began to grow substantially.

Not being computer savvy, I took a course being given at the ANCHOR (Adult Education Center, New Carlisle). Instructor Myriam Beebe was very helpful. I was worried about losing what I had written, so she printed a copy for me. That copy was shared with Rev. Joshua Paetkau and my ACW friends. Everyone encouraged me to continue. Also, a copy was sent to Bishop Bruce Myers, and he suggested that I contact the Diocesan Historian and Archivist to research the missing years from 1864 to 1933.

"... and the meeting ended with the usual cup of tea' was compiled by former St. Paul's ACW members.



Thankfully, both ladies returned my calls. The Archivist, Jody Robinson, sent attachments of Vestry minutes beginning in 1876. Reading them was more than delightful! My only regret is our failure to find any records of the 12 years from 1864 to 1876.

The completed work

touches on the founding of the Anglican Diocese of Quebec and the difficulties encountered by Bishops and Missionaries who were challenged to build churches in a vast wilderness. Also included is information about women's church groups, who started them, and how they worked to

help, not only their own communities, but missionary schools and soldiers. One section contains photos of gifts to the Church, listing when and by whom they were given and who they are in memory of. Everyone worked together to build St. Paul's Anglican Church, the church hall, and the parsonage. Men gave what they could. So did their wives!

It is an interesting reference book with a beautiful cover! It is presently at the publishers, and we are happy to extend our thanks to CASA (Committee Anglophone Social Action) for partially funding the printing costs with a donation of \$1,000.00. St. Paul's Church paid the balance of the cost, and all proceeds from selling the books at \$30 per copy will be given to the Church.

Persons not living in the area are invited to order copies but will be required to pay postal charges. Please contact: St. Paul's Anglican Church, 201 Rte 132, Shigawake, QC., GOC 3E0; by telephone: 418-752-6171; or by email: audrey.acteson@telus.net.

MOTOR CAR:

▶ Cont'd from cover

Sept-Îles and Schefferville), on the Ontario Northland. This is my second trip to the Gaspé Peninsula," said Mr. Sigafosse, who participated in the September 2006 excursion.

Louis-François Garceau, founding member of Draisines Québec, is a retired Canadian National railway worker, while his excursion companion, Pierre Lassonde, is a retired construction worker.

"I have been a crane operator almost everywhere. I have always loved trains. This is what attracted me to motor cars. I saw that an American association existed, NARCOA (North American Rail Car Operators Association) and that its members came to drive here. I told myself that we had to create our association. We did it in 2004," assures Mr. Lassonde, who owned five motor cars at one point.

Born in Carleton and now living in Drummondville, Jean-François Boudreau returned to his roots to participate in this trip. "I still have my electric train store in Drummondville. I still love trains and I came to see my



Photo: G. Gagné

David Sigafosse drove 16 hours one-way between New Jersey and the Gaspé Peninsula to make this excursion.

grandmother."

The family, made up of Anthony Lefebvre, 10 years old, and his parents Caroline Trudel and Claude Lefebvre, from Saint-Stanislas, in Haute-Mauricie, was on their first trip on a handcar.

"When I saw that, I said to myself that I had to buy one," summed up Mr. Lefebvre, a longtime train enthusiast.

Anthony finds it "interesting to see how it works. I love school outings. My parents always sign for me to go," he

says.

"Claude bought the railcar in the fall. He was thinking of upgrading it in the winter but he ended up taking two weeks recently to do so. I don't hate it (travelling on a motor car) but I enjoy it less than my boyfriend. I wouldn't go out every weekend," says Caroline Trudel.

The Lefebvre-Trudel handcar experienced some alternator problems. The battery was therefore not charging, which hampered starting. It was done

on compression, thanks to her energetic thrusts.

Denis and Pierre-Luc Dumas, highly competent railway mechanics, one retired from the CN (Canadian National Railway) and the other very active in this company, members of the third and fourth railway workers, saw here and there opportunities to give little advice and repair certain elements during the two excursions.

A necessary certification

"You need certification from NARCOA. It's not a question of knowing how to operate the three levers of a railcar. It's, above all, a question of knowing the safety rules," explains Louis-François Garceau, who has just sold his vehicle for \$5,000. At 77, he will make other excursions, on motor cars belonging to friends.

This could also be the case for Heather Kuhn and Brian Adams, from Alfred, Ontario. "Can you say in your report that our handcar is for sale?" she asked.

"This is my second trip to the Gaspé Peninsula. I came a dozen years ago," said Mr.

Adams, remembering a spring 2011 excursion.

Except when railcars travel at grade crossings protected by barriers or members of the railway team, they give way to road users.

The railway is only passable between Matapedia and the Black Cape sector of New Richmond, with major repair work taking place in many places on the Gaspé railway.

Annual maintenance work on June 22 and 23 also limited the group's journey, forcing them to turn back in Escuminac, while the operators were initially supposed to go to Matapedia, which would have added 50 miles to the journey, including the return trip. Contractors are taking advantage of the weekend, a quieter period for SCFG's freight operations, to move forward with their work.

Are rail riders passionate? They repeated the same route on June 23, with a small addition towards Black Cape, where work to move the railway has blocked the passage of all traffic towards Caplan since November 2023. Their second day was enhanced with a visit to the Rail GD railway equipment repair shop in New Richmond.

MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix gives session report

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Gaspé mentions six main issues in his report on the legislative session that ended on June 14 in Quebec City.

Stéphane Sainte-Croix highlights the suspension of electoral map reform, the ongoing work to rehabilitate the railway, wind power, the fisheries crisis, agriculture and housing.

He is proud to have put wind energy back on the government's agenda, marking a reversal of the Coalition avenir Québec's traditional stance.

Hydro-Québec plans to build 10,000 megawatts of wind power over 10 years at a time when the province is facing an electricity shortage.

"We're very well positioned. We'll have an exceptional business opportunity for our manufacturers. We intend to be there to help meet the energy production challenge and ensure that our communities benefit from the economic spin-offs," says Mr. Sainte-Croix, pointing out that a new transmission line needs to be built to serve the Gaspé Peninsula.

The best wind sites are in the eastern part of the province,



MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

Photo: N. Sergerie

but they cannot be exploited because of the transport line bottleneck at Rivière-du-Loup. Wind farms cannot be built in the eastern Lower Saint Lawrence and the Gaspé Peninsula regions due to this problem, but the MNA avoids setting a date.

"We don't have a precise date, but it's understood. The Minister of Energy has seen it for himself and has said it again and again in various speeches both here and at the government level. We discuss it regularly in the caucus. We are well aware of the issue and it is one of our priorities. We're confident that things will move forward," says the MNA.

The rehabilitation of the

railway has faced setbacks since the launch of four major calls for tenders for section three announced by the Premier last November.

Only one contract has been awarded, a second is still being analyzed after bids were received, a third has still not been opened after a third postponement until July 4, and a fourth was simply cancelled because only one bidder submitted an offer.

"We have two calls for tenders where there was only one bidder, and the Ministry is looking at ways of resolving this issue. We hope to move on to the next stage, given the progress of the work and the expectations for developing business with the arrival of the section," notes Mr. Sainte-Croix.

For the time being, the 2026 target for Gaspé still stands, despite the delays in the process.

"We have not yet had these discussions with the Minister or her team. There will be a deadline, but as far as the work is concerned, we still have room to maneuver and we're still on the same timetable for rail rehabilitation," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

On the subject of the electoral map, the MNA commented on the legal process

undertaken by municipal councillors in the Laurentians who are contesting the suspension of the revision.

"I'm surprised, but I can understand that there are demographic issues in this region. Once we've said that, we have a law in force that aims to interrupt the revision process until the next election. We're sticking to that reality and leaving it up to the people to decide what to do next," says Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

The proposed reform suggested removing a riding from Gaspésie and Montreal and creating new ones in Centre-du-Québec and Laurentides due to the high population growth in the latter region.

Quebec needs to support shrimp fishermen facing a resource crisis at the same time as the quotas announced for redfish are not attractive for going to sea.

"There is not necessarily any direct direction or support from the federal government for shrimp fishers, which poses particular challenges. One way or another, the federal government is going to have to find short- and medium-term solutions for the fishing industry, which is going through difficult times," says the MNA for Gaspé.

Discussions between Quebec and Ottawa are continuing. As long as Ottawa does not provide support for shrimp fishermen, Quebec must assume loan guarantees.

"We're making sure that payment defaults are covered by our loan guarantee. That's where part of our financial efforts go to ensure that the assets are maintained. We'll have to think about what to do next. We'd like to have long-term solutions for the future," he says.

So far, \$1,232,321 has been allocated to boat owners under the Quebec Department of Fisheries' Protec-pêche loan guarantee program.

The MNA points out that Quebec has granted \$3.8 million to help businesses and establish economic diversification opportunities for Rivière-au-Renard.

On the housing front, the Quebec Affordable Housing Program has provided nearly \$30 million for an 84-unit project in Gaspé and \$12.6 million for 36 units in Sainte-Annes-des-Monts.

In the coming months, the MNA will be looking at several issues, including air transport, where developments will be made in the coming months while continuing to work on health and education.

MNA Catherine Blouin's session update

NELSON SERGERIE

CARLETON-SUR-MER - The major developments that took place on June 6 in the Maria hospital file are the main components in Catherine Blouin's National Assembly session update.

The Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Bonaventure presented her report of the winter session to Parliament and, according to her, her greatest feat is the launch of the first studies for the expansion of the Maria hospital to accommodate the emergency and intensive care departments - even though the project is not included in the Quebec Infrastructure Plan (QIP).

"It's a great way to round off this very intense legislative session. It's a major step forward to be able to move ahead as quickly as possible with steps that normally take place only after a project has been registered in the Quebec Infrastructure Program. When there's an exceptional situation, we have to come up with an exceptional



MNA Catherine Blouin.

Photo: N. Sergerie

solution. I'm very pleased. There is not a day or a week where I do not work on the Maria hospital case," says Blouin.

After announcing the launch of preliminary studies on the state of the current infrastructure to accommodate the expansion, the pressure will be on the MNA and her government to carry out the project which, if the subsequent phases go smoothly, will be a reality by around 2030.

"I'm used to putting myself under pressure. I'm going to

carry on doing my job. It's a priority for me. We're working hard to move the emergency and intensive care project forward, and I can tell you that by moving forward now, we'll have all the winning conditions in place for inclusion in the next PQI," notes the MNA.

Elected representatives from the Laurentian region are contesting the freezing of the electoral map revision process, while a law provides for the process to be suspended pending future consultations.

MNA Blouin is proud to have succeeded in saving a threatened constituency in the Gaspésie after mobilizing the region to keep its political weight in Quebec City.

"We were heard with the freezing of the current electoral map and the bill that will be studied in the next parliamentary session. I'm proud that our provincial government unanimously agreed with the political parties to protect our regions," she says.

She is not afraid of seeing the gains made defeated in court. "I think it's audacious

that some municipal councillors are contesting all the mobilizations that have taken place. I think I've done my job. My only priority is to protect the Gaspé, and that's what I'm going to continue to do," retorts Ms. Blouin.

The Electoral Commission proposed to merge Gaspé and Bonaventure by combining the MRCs of Côte-de-Gaspé, Rocher-Percé, Bonaventure and Avignon.

Haute-Gaspésie would remain with Matane-Matapédia.

In addition to the Gaspésie, Montreal would lose a riding to two new ones in the Laurentians and Centre-du-Québec.

Meanwhile, the \$861 million invested over two years in regional transportation is satisfactory according to Ms. Blouin.

"We can't ignore the substantial sums allocated to fulfill our commitment to rehabilitate the railway as far as Gaspé by 2026. It's a priority for our government, and we're very pleased to see it moving forward. We're in third place across Quebec behind the

Montérégie and Montreal," says the MNA.

In addition to these major themes, Ms. Blouin also points to several other investments by her government, such as the \$75 million for the expansion of the Villa Pabos in Chandler and the \$87,000 in Bonaventure for the construction of a multi-sports ground for young people and the elderly.

Money was also invested in culture, the arts and community support, including \$25,000 for five food security organizations, and in municipal infrastructure.

The MNA says there will be plenty of good news in the coming weeks.

When asked about themes, her mobile phone appears on the screen.

"I can tell you that I've done my job and there are some good announcements to come," she says, without wishing to commit directly to obtaining a cell phone signal in Saint-Elzéar.

"That's all I can say for now, but I'm very confident," she laughs.

SADC:

▶ *Cont'd from page 5*

fisheries," analyzes Lyne Lebrasseur.

"Successors are 39 years-old or younger as far as we are concerned. Our Youth Strategy can provide \$25,000 per youth and we can also inject money with our regular investment fund," she adds.

For next year's action plan, the SADC plans plan

to further integrate environmental, social and governance issues even more fully into its policies and file analysis process. It intends to promote responsible investments while offering sustainable development support.

In addition, it will offer a 13th Human Resources Symposium which will take place on November 6. These activities will be offered in continuity with financing, support and local development actions.

The SADC Baie-des-Chaleurs has 211 members. Last year, it made 23 loans totalling \$919,549 and 78 grants totalling \$588,817, with 30% of interventions focused on acquisition projects. These efforts supported or created 136 jobs.

The SADC Baie-des-Chaleurs employs a team of six and has an annual operating budget of \$540,000. (SADC stands for Société d'aide au développement des collectivités.)

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

After some time, a difficult situation is beginning to settle down, Aries. Enjoy this well-earned peace and consider how a new perspective can help going forward.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, a new plan can be just what you need to make notable progress. Finding a mentor or someone who has forged a path already can be a useful step.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, you have a lot going on in your life right now to keep you busy. With so much going on, try not to worry about what is going on with others. Stay in your lane.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

It is a fine week to really think about your future, Cancer. If you have goals to start a business, start hashing out plans and give thought to seeking a partner.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, this week you start out with a lot of energy, but likely will burn through it early on. If you want to reach your goal, you are going to have to learn how to pace yourself.



VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

A lot of emotions are running through your mind, Virgo. They may be very confusing. It is alright to feel out of sorts. Perhaps talking to someone can offer you perspective.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, you may be feeling introspective and philosophical, so much so that people may catch you staring into space and lost in thought. Now is not the time to make heavy decisions.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, this might not be the week for parties or large social events. You are experiencing some introverted feelings right now and are best in situations that have only a few people.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Life isn't always fair, Sagittarius. Recognize that sometimes things won't go your way. Your resolve could be tested this week so be aware.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, it may be tempting to let someone else take over when the going gets tough. That likely will not be best for you, so continue to make decisions and let things play out.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, you are due for a big break after going through a lot of emotional ups and downs. Your positive attitude has paved the way for some brighter skies ahead.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

No one else is going to do a tough job for you, Pisces. You have to dig in your heels and make a plan. You are ready for this kind of assignment and the pressure that comes with it.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- JUNE 30** Mike Tyson, Boxer (58)
- JULY 1** Chloe Bailey, Singer (26)
- JULY 2** Margot Robbie, Actress (34)
- JULY 3** Tom Cruise, Actor (62)
- JULY 4** Post Malone, Rapper (29)
- JULY 5** Megan Rapinoe, Athlete (39)
- JULY 6** Sylvester Stallone, Actor (78)



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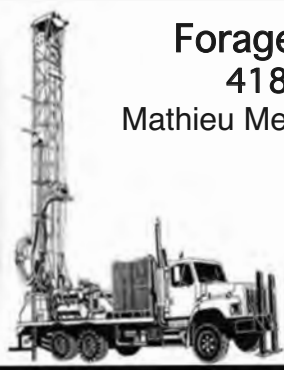


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Announcements



In Memory



MULLIN: Flora Fournier

In loving memory of Flora Mullin Fournier who passed away July 5, 2017.

*Right from the time we lost you,
Life hasn't been the same.*

*We wish we had another chance,
To see your smile again.*

*The sun still rises with each dawn,
Night still follows day.*

*But there's always something missing,
Ever since you went away.*

*The tide comes in, the tide goes out,
The sands of time pass by.*

But thought of you will never fade.

We hope you are peaceful wherever you are,

*Life has surely lost its sparkle the world often feels
Blue, but what gives us strength,*

And hope is the precious memory of you.

Missed and never forgotten by the family.



Celebration of Life



COFFIN: Marjorie Laura Boyle

April 30, 1940 - April 30, 2024

Family and friends are welcome for the burial at St. James cemetery in Wakeham on July 24 at 11:30 a.m.

Celebration of life will be held at 591 Wakeham Blvd. following the service.

Let's Celebrate



Joyce Steele

It's Mom's 95th Birthday

We invite family and friends to join us for tea or coffee and cake on Saturday July 6, from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at 141A Gérard D. Levesque, New Carlisle. Best wishes only.

Thank-You,

Darlene, Madelyn and Jean

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

All photos are an additional \$10



COAST ROUND-UP

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

YORK:

Gaspe County W.I.

September 7: Gaspé County W.I. will be hosting the annual W.I. fair, at York River Community Hall, 702 York Boulevard West. The hall will open at 3 p.m. for public viewing of all the exhibits and a delicious salad supper awaits you at 4:45 p.m. with takeouts also available. Cost: Adults: \$15; Children under 12: \$10.

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.

BARACHOIS:

The Gaspé Cancer Foundation

August 1: Gift Bingo beginning at 7 p.m. at the Barachois Legion. Ages 18 and

over are welcome.

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.

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.

PORT DANIEL:

Three Star Golden Age Club

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

SHIGAWAKE:

Community Centre

July 25: The Shigawake community centre will be holding a Strawberry social tea with bake sale at the Shigawake Community Centre, more details to follow.

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.

HOPE:

Hope Baptist Church

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

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

NEW CARLISLE:

Royal Canadian Legion Branch #64

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

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 and Bible Study - 7 p.m. 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.

August 17: BBQ from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. 13+ \$16, 7-12 \$8, and 0-6 free.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, July 7

New Carlisle

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Port Daniel

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, July 7

St. John & St. Philip Sandy Beach

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist with confirmation

Every Wednesday

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

**UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN
Sunday, July 7
2 p.m. Service**

**UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, July 7
10 a.m. Service**

Local musicians shine at Festival BleuBleu

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Anglo-Gaspesian musicians were well represented at Festival BleuBleu held in Carleton between June 21 and June 24 inclusively. Shaina Hayes, Nadine and Sammy, as well as Hank Gromelsky all performed in front of enthusiastic crowds.

Specializing in Cajun music, Nadine Landry and Sammy Lind, from Pointe-à-la-Croix, played on the main stage on June 21, just before Zachary Richard, a Cajun from Louisiana who is quite popular in Quebec. The wharf, which is

BleuBleu's main stage, greeted Nadine and Sammy with a sell-out crowd of 1,400 people.

Nadine and Sammy performed nationally, as well as in the United States, where Sammy was born and raised, before settling in Nadine's hometown of Pointe-à-la-Croix.

The same night, after the end of the big show on the wharf, Gaspé born singer Tammy Adams, who now lives in Nova Scotia, was a solid hit at Carleton's Marina, which was packed for the occasion.

Shigawake's Shaina Hayes

also played in front of a sellout crowd the following evening, with a full band, a positive addition given the groove of some of the songs from her latest album Kindergarten Heart. It was her third presence at BleuBleu.

Upon leaving the stage, as Elisapie was up next, Shaina Hayes thanked Anne-Julie Saint-Laurent and Myriam Sophie Deslauriers for giving her the chance to perform on the main stage.

The crowd cheered for an encore the festival's tight schedule leaves little room for such a thing, except for the artists who close the evening on the main stage.

"I have been listening to her album for a while. Her voice and talent are incredible. She will reach the top with these attributes," stated Carleton's Monique Frappier at the end of Shaina's performance.

Gesgapegiag's Hank Gromelsky played on June 23 at the Naufrageur microbrewery in front of a crowd that appreciated the way he mixes humour and songs. His comments are funny and his songs are dark.

"That's life, you know. Life can be hard but I can use some humour to put off some of the weight," he



Photos: G. Gagné

Gesgapegiag's Hank Gromelsky sang on the Naufrageur stage.

told SPEC after his set.

Fellow Gaspesians who also took part in the BleuBleu festival were Caplan's MLou, aka Mariloup Brière, who played at

the Marina on June 22, and Douglstown's Alex Poirier, a member of the Stompin' Trees, who performed at Naufrageur on June 23.



Shaina Hayes sang on the main stage, on the wharf, just before Elisapie.



Summer vacation

The June bugs are gone, and the July mosquitoes and black flies are on our menu. They, however, don't take away from the beauty of the Gaspé Peninsula, with its sightseeing locations, hiking trails, and camping opportunities.

Touring the Gaspé Peninsula, whether you're Gaspesian or a tourist, provides ample excitement and natural wonders. The rugged Chaleur Bay area, with its twists and turns, keeps your eyes open to see those gulls soaring into our blue waters for their next catch.

One can hear the crickets on any humid night, but the most important sensation is breathing in the fresh salt-water breeze. There's so much to offer that it might be overwhelming for someone's first vacation to the Coast but, fret not, there's always next year.

Ken Ross
New Carlisle, Quebec.



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