

The Gaspé Spec

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GESGAPEGIAG: Mawiomi draws large crowds

CYNTHIA DOW

GESGAPEGIAG: - The Gesgapegiag Mawiomi (formerly known as a pow-wow) was held the weekend of July 19 to 21 at the lovely, sun-dappled Mawiomi grounds on the western edge of the community. The event attracted huge crowds on Saturday and Sunday, as well as dancers and drummers from a large number of communities. Drum groups included host drum Cree Confederacy from Alberta; Eastern Eagle from Indian Brook, Nova Scotia; Moose Town from Obedjiwan in the Mauricie; and Wabanaki Confederacy from New Brunswick. Head Lady dancer was Sarah Loft Tayandgena and Head Male was Juni Jullian. More than a dozen booths where Indigenous arts and crafts could be purchased surrounded the dance grounds.



Uashtushkuen Gros-Louis, 18, and her 13-year-old brother Suheres came all the way from Wendake near Quebec City to dance. They have both been dancing since they were very young.



Amanda Larocque of Gesgapegiag is always on hand to participate in the Mawiomi, which she helps to organize every year.



Lashawnee Myo from Listuguj is a jingle dancer, while Madison Millie from Elsipogtog, New Brunswick, performed the fancy shawl dance.



Vernon Metallic of Listuguj was the lone participant in the Senior Traditional Dance.

Photos: C. Dow

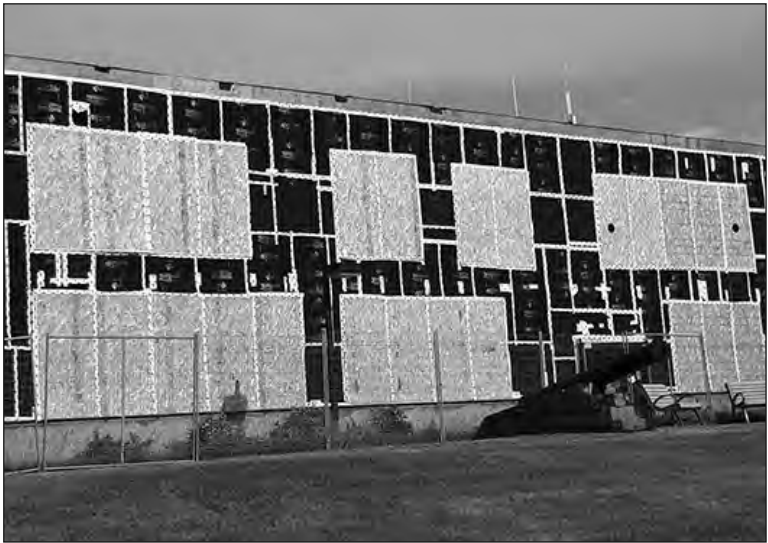


Photo: N. Sergerie

Work in progress on Gaspé Town Hall.

Design issues discovered during renovations of Gaspé Town Hall

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Town of Gaspé may file legal action against the architects and engineers who designed the plans for the ongoing renovations at the Town Hall.

According to Mayor Daniel Côté, the contractor in charge of the project discovered a problem between the design of the building's facade and what was agreed upon during the planning.

"In our opinion, this is a surprise that should have been noted by the engineers and architects when the renovation plans were designed. There are claims and perhaps legal action underway to be reimbursed for part of these costs. When you pay professionals, you expect them to be accountable and for the plans to be adapted to reality," says the mayor. The additional cost amounts to \$700,000.

The town had adopted a borrowing bylaw for \$4.3 million, which included plans and specifications, and the contract for the work was \$2.9 million, which represented a saving of \$1 million. This financial leeway allows for the unplanned work to be carried out.

New Carlisle school contract awarded

Nelson Sergerie

NEW CARLISLE: - The contract for the new New Carlisle school has been awarded to the lowest bidder: Habitat construction Matane, for \$22,157,000.

The Eastern Shores School Board is legally obliged to award the contract to the lowest of the four bidders, even though the price difference between the bids was only \$700,000.

With approval from the Quebec government, construction is scheduled to start in the third week of August, for completion in January 2026.

The \$32-million project is currently on budget.

The new facility will be known as Baie-des-Chaleurs Regional School.





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Improvement in waste collection in Rocher-Percé

NELSON SERGERIE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE - After experiencing issues earlier this month, waste collection is gradually returning to normal in the Rocher-Percé MRC.

During the first week of July, Chandler residents complained that their brown bins had not been emptied for three weeks in the middle of the summer heat, prompting a meeting of the council of mayors to discuss the issue.

"Matrec has deployed more trucks and drivers and, this week, we are seeing a clear improvement. Much less or practically no delays with more teams on the territory and it is paying off," says Nathalie Drapeau, General Manager of the Gaspésie Intermunicipal Residual Materials Treatment Board.

New drivers are in place in the Rocher-Percé MRC, and

the board is trying to ease their transition with training.

The board says that Matrec is looking for specialized technicians to repair electronic lifting equipment.

"We asked for a medium and long-term plan, and I think they are working on it, and we can at least have a short-term plan that will give us some breathing room for the next few weeks," says Ms. Drapeau.


Sanctions have been issued

"We are applying the conditions of the contract. There is a sequence: verbal notices, written notices, penalties and deductions. When necessary, we have applied them. The ideal is to return to a functional situation because a penalty does not put a truck on the road to collect bins," notes Ms. Drapeau. The needs are greater in the

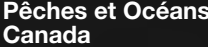
summer with tourists accounting for 32% of the waste generated.

The contract with Matrec will expire in September 2026. The administrators have begun the process of analyzing whether it would be more advantageous to handle collection internally rather than award contracts through calls for tender.

"This is an exercise that is independent of the current situation. The analysis of scenarios has already begun. Responsibly, we must analyze all potential scenarios since it is a very long process because it can involve interventions with significant delays. I will give you the example of buying a truck. The deadline is 18 months. We have no choice but to begin this exercise at least two years before the contract is renewed," explains the director. The analysis began last fall.



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada



Pêches et Océans
Canada

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) would like to remind the public of the importance of checking open areas before proceeding with shellfish harvesting.


Several tools are available to help you check before you harvest:


- Use the interactive SHELLI application, available at www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/CheckBeforeYouHarvest, or use the QR code below with your mobile device. You can even receive notices of area openings and closures directly to your inbox. Go to our SHELLI map and click on "I want to" to sign up!
- Call **1-800-463-4204** and a recorded message will inform you which areas are closed or open to shellfish harvesting in the Gaspé peninsula.
- Pay attention to signs posted where shellfish harvest is prohibited.

Remember that eating contaminated shellfish from prohibited areas is dangerous and can lead to paralysis or even death.

Visit the DFO Quebec Region website for the regulations on shellfish harvesting.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is closely monitoring shellfish harvesting and closed areas and asks the general public to report any poaching activity to 1-800-463-9057 or online on our website.





Alcohol and speed were major factors in accident that claimed the lives of three young people

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER - According to the coroner, speed and alcohol played a major role in the tragic accident that claimed the lives of three young adults on November 8 in the Newport neighbourhood of Chandler.

Coroner Jean-Pierre Chamberland submitted his reports on July 9, which were made public on July 19.

According to the Coroner's investigation, the BMW driven by 18-year-old Meggie Lévesque of Port-Daniel-Gascons was travelling at a high-speed moments before the impact. By using the GPS points from the victim's cell phone, investigators were able to estimate the speed at approximately 201 kilometres per hour.

"In the moments before the collision, at 0:54:49 and 0:55:20, by placing the points obtained from the extraction of the cell phone data in Google Earth, it was determined that the last possible point would be at 0:55:10. Thus, the distance covered between 0:54:49 and 0:55:10 is approximately 1,176 metres. This gives an average speed of around 201 kilometres per hour," the coroner notes in his report.

The report states that the driver had gone to a bar prior to the accident, but the bartender emphasized that the victim "seemed okay when she left."

The four people left the bar a little after midnight. A friend of the victim was driven home to Port-Daniel-Gascons. It was on the way back to Chandler

that the fatal accident occurred.

Nothing in the police investigation indicates that other vehicles were involved in the road accident that occurred at 12:55 a.m. on November 8.

Furthermore, the coroner's investigation found that Ms. Lévesque was driving with a blood alcohol level of 0.118. The legal limit for drivers under 22 is zero. The coroner concluded that Ms. Lévesque died of neck trauma following the accident, as did the front seat passenger Anthony Comeau, 21, of Chandler.

The other passenger Joey Huard, 20, from Chandler, died of multiple traumas after being ejected from the vehicle. He was not wearing a seatbelt.

The condition of the road was not a contributing factor to the tragedy.

Police report

A driver may face legal consequences following a series of collisions that occurred on July 21 in Grande-Rivière.

According to the Sûreté du Québec, the driver, who is a minor, was driving erratically and was involved in multiple accidents before losing control and colliding with another vehicle on Grande-Allée.

The young woman was taken to the hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

The four occupants involved in the final crash sustained minor injuries and were also taken to the hospital as a precaution.

The young driver could be charged with hit and run and dangerous driving.

A woman was seriously injured following a collision on the evening of July 21 in the Cap-aux-Os sector of Gaspé.

According to the Sûreté du Québec, a driver making a left turn into a business entrance collided with a car travelling in the opposite direction at approximately 9 p.m. on Grande-Grève Boulevard.

While she sustained serious injuries, authorities do not believe her life is at risk.

The three occupants of the other vehicle suffered minor injuries.

Future of Grande-Vallée wildlife office at risk

NELSON SERGERIE

GRANDE-VALLÉE - According to the mayor of Grande-Vallée, Noël Richard, the town will soon lose its game warden office. The mayor says the Société immobilière du Québec will terminate the lease for the offices at 52 Saint François-Xavier East in November.

"This is unacceptable. It's on the north side of the Gaspé that we need game wardens. It's there where we don't have any," says Mr. Richard.

"We're closing yet another regional sub-office, and

Grande-Vallée is still getting the short end of the stick," continued the elected official, noting that the nearest offices are located in Sainte-Annes-des-Monts and Gaspé.

Since 2017, the mayor has felt that the office was at risk.

During the hunting season, game wardens from outside the region are called in as reinforcements.

"If we bring them in from outside, it's because we need them. If we need them, why don't we fill the positions in the region? That's the problem we're raising. Once again, we're going backwards. It

doesn't look good. The municipality won't accept it," says the mayor.

"Is there the political willingness to fill these positions? I'm asking the question. The answer is 'no'. We're letting it go, and what's happening is that we're going to announce the closure," continues the mayor.

A letter has been sent to Benoit Charette, the minister of the Environment, Fight Against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, asking him to reverse the decision; and the mayor intends to raise the issue with Regional Minister Maïté Blanchette Vézina.

The Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, has also been approached about the issue.

When questioned by SPEC, the Wildlife Ministry did not indicate the future of the Grande-Vallée office, but there is every reason to be-

lieve that it will disappear, as indicated by the mayor.

In an email, the ministry states that "Québec Wildlife Protection is committed to maintaining a quality wildlife protection service in all regions of Quebec."

"Coverage of the territory and the processing of reports received for the Grande-Vallée point of service for Wildlife Protection in the Haute-Gaspésie - Côte-de-Gaspé - Magdalen Islands is carried out in collaboration with all the wildlife officers of the Southeast District," the ministry mentions in the email.

"This collaboration, as well as the various organizational efforts and priority management, actively contributes to maintaining the service level in the region," the ministry continues.

Wildlife Protection anticipates an increase in agents over the next few years to ensure "optimal coverage of the Quebec territory" taking into account manpower challenges, wildlife issues and modern working methods.

The Southeast District currently has a little over 330 wardens and just over 130 wildlife protection assistants.



Mayor of Grande-Vallée, Noël Richard

Photo: Grande-Vallée website



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*Space is limited. Please RSVP by Monday August 5th to Madelyn Hayes at 418-752-5583.

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Emma Buckley

Guest Commentary

Say “yes” to the things you don’t like

It has been a dismal year for white goods at our place. First, the dishwasher started making a strange noise and giving off an alarming smell of burnt rubber. Then the dryer began beeping and flashing error messages just minutes into the drying cycle. Malfunctioning machines are bad enough but, for me, they spark another cause of panic: the need to call service repairmen.

Even though my spoken French is quite functional, any telephone exchange en français beyond a dinner reservation reduces me to a nervous-child state. (I blame “The Incident”: an early attempt to make a hair appointment by phone which started badly and went downhill from there. It has coloured all my French phone interactions ever since).

This time, however, I am determined it will be different. This time I am adapting the Abramovic method. For those new to the name, Marina Abramovic is a Serbian-born performance artist

known throughout the art world and beyond for her audacious and physically gruelling performance art pieces. Now in her late 70’s, Abramovic refers to herself as the grandmother of performance art.

I read an interview with the artist years back, and one of her comments piqued my interest. “From an early time, I understood that I only learned from things I don’t like,” she said, “It’s so easy to do things you like, but then, the thing is, when you’re afraid of something, face it, go for it. You become a better human being.”

Admittedly, the worst thing that could happen to me during a phone call en français is a fast-beating heart and feelings of foolishness. For Abramovic, facing her fears has existential repercussions. In “Rhythm 0”, one of her early pieces, she placed 72 items on a table in an art gallery and invited visitors to use them as they wished on her. Items included a rose and a feather – as well as a knife and a loaded gun. The collective energy of the audience turned dark, and the artist was physically mistreated. In hindsight, she said, she would impose limits.

Abramovic is probably best known for “The Artist is Present”, a feat of epic endurance and discipline held at the MOMA in New York in 2010. For three months she sat on a chair in the gallery, eight hours a day, every day. She didn’t speak or move. There were no toilets or food breaks. All day visitors lined up to sit on a single chair opposite her, and receive her gaze. Many participants cried, not

anticipating their emotional response to such a simple yet intimate act as locking eyes with a stranger. “The Artist is Present” required the artist to transcend the physical pain caused by sitting motionless. In doing so she helped participants face their own pain and suffering.

Abramovic’s advice - to say “yes” to what we don’t like - seems counterintuitive, given that we humans are seemingly hard-wired to run away from things we don’t like. Maybe there’s a thorny issue you need to discuss with a friend and you know it will expose raw feelings so it’s easier just to let the friendship slide or you think that you could do a really competent job on a new project at work but it involves public speaking and this scares you so you don’t put up your hand.

She wants us to put up our hand – and have that difficult conversation - in order to build courage and self-confidence, and gain insight. How does it feel when you take a deep breath and do the difficult, dreaded thing? You feel more sure of yourself. You feel brave.

In my work, I sometimes have to have difficult conversations which, for someone as averse to conflict as I am, can be the equivalent of tooth-pulling without anesthetic. But with time, I’ve come to trust that I can handle these situations when they arise and that I can find the right words in the moment as we all can but, as Marina Abramovic points out, it takes practice and will. That’s why I’m off to call a repairman for that dryer.

Thank You!

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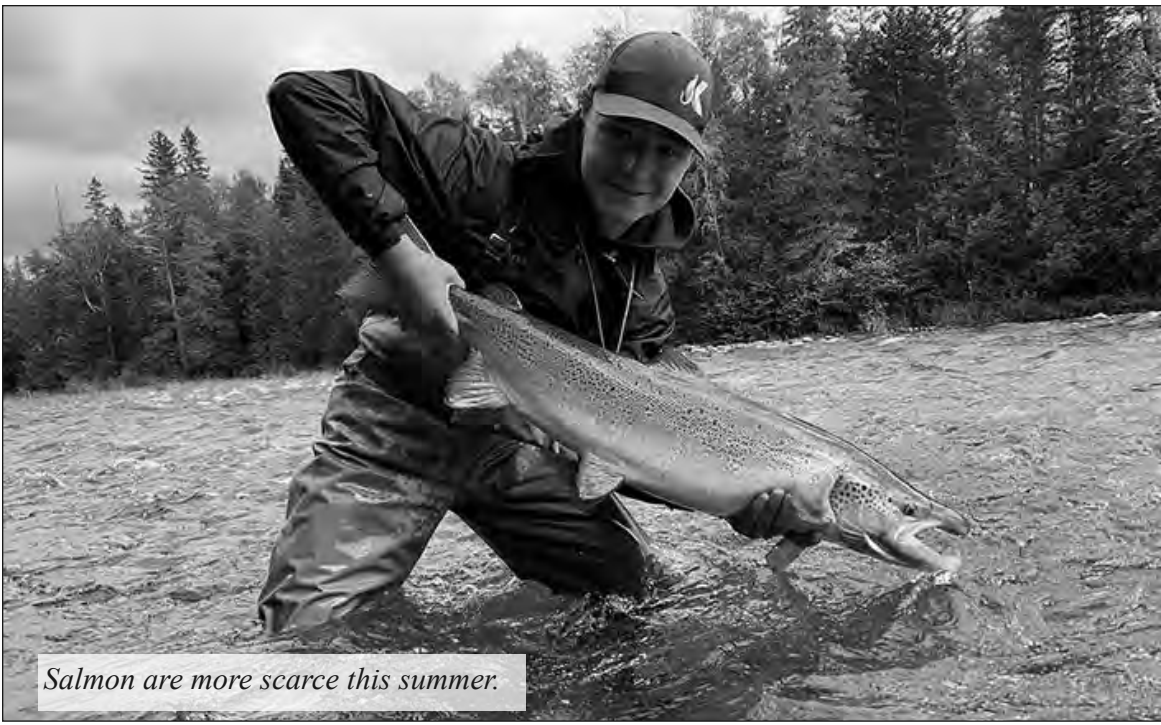


Photo: Courtesy Gaspé River Management Corporation



Photo: N. Sergerie

Modified rules for salmon fishing on Gaspesian rivers

NELSON SERGERIE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - Due to the low salmon run this year on Gaspesian rivers, the Ministry of Wildlife is reducing capture and possession limits.

According to the ministry, these measures are intended to promote the sustainability of the species.

The daily quota for catch and release has been reduced from three to two.

The quota for small salmon caught and retained is also being revised for several rivers, depending on the precariousness of the salmon population for that river. The quota is reduced from two to one for the Bonaventure, Cascapedia, Dartmouth, Grande-Rivière, Ristigouche, Saint-Jean and York Rivers. No salmon may be kept on the Petite Cascapédia, Grand Pabos Ouest, Nouvelle and Port-Daniel Rivers.

Releasing large salmon remains mandatory until the end of the season. The new regulations are effective July 25.

Table of new regulations by river

Rivers	Before July 25, 2024 daily quota of small salmon caught and retained	Current daily quota of small salmon caught and retained
Bonaventure	2	1
Hall	2	1
Cap-Chat	0 or 2	0 or 1
Cascapedia	2	1
Branche du Lac	2	1
Dartmouth	2	1
Grande Rivière	2	1
Madeleine	2	1
Ristigouche	0 or 2	0 or 1
Saint-Jean	2	1
Sainte-Anne	2	1
York	2	1
Petite Cascapedia	1	0
Petite Cascapedia Est/Ouest	1 or 2	0
Grand Pabos Ouest	0 or 1	0
Nouvelle	1	0
Port-Daniel	1	0

Osisko Metals President and CEO Robert Wares in October 2023 during a presentation in Murdochville.

Osisko Metals continues its analyses in Murdochville

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Osisko Metals is continuing its work to more accurately assess the amount of copper still available at the former Gaspé Mines facilities in Murdochville.

To date, 11 exploration drillings have been completed at Mont Needle, totalling approximately 2,600 metres.

Drill core samples have been sent to the laboratory for analysis of copper, silver and molybdenum.

The results will determine the potential for additional mineral resources around the former Mont Needle pit. Currently, the drill is located in the Copper Mountain pit for a 4,500-metre drilling program to better define the resource in the enriched core of the Copper Mountain deposit.

A detailed characterization of surface water at the mine site has been undertaken, including downstream water-courses and along the York River.

In June, approximately 70 stations were sampled to assess water quality.

This work will continue throughout the summer and fall to provide a complete picture of current water quality.

Additional water samples will also be collected from the Copper Mountain pit, from the surface to the bottom of the pit, which is 180 metres deep. Sampling of the sediment at the bottom of the pit is also planned.

This information will

allow the company to know the water quality based on the depth in the pit and will help plan the dewatering to minimize the impact on the York River and its salmon population.

Studies to ensure the safe dewatering of the copper pit are ongoing.

This fall, experimental fishing in the York River and its tributaries will assess the health of aquatic ecosystems.

Analyses of heavy metals in fish, benthos and algae biofilms, along with water analyses will provide a portrait of the distribution in the food chain.

“Since the beginning of the summer, significant work has been underway, marking significant progress in our efforts for the eventual reopening of the mine. Our 2024 drilling program is progressing well, as is the characterization of surface waters at the mine site and surrounding areas. These efforts will continue until the fall. Detailed sampling of the pit water is also planned, and experimental fishing activities are planned downstream of the mine site to better understand the health of fish populations and the potential impact of pit dewatering. The preliminary economic study is still scheduled to be published in early 2025,” said Robert Wares, President and CEO of Osisko Metals, in a press release.

An information and discussion evening will be held on September 10 at the Murdochville Community Centre.

Regional Minister familiarizes herself with the Osisko Metals project during recent visit

NELSON SERGERIE

MURDOCHVILLE – Maïté Blanchette Vézina, the Minister Responsible for the Gaspé Peninsula, visited the region on July 11 and 12, stopping in Murdochville to chat with the elected officials from Côte-de-Gaspé regarding various issues, including Osisko Metals' plan to resume copper mining.

While in Murdochville, Maïté Blanchette Vézina was accompanied by the Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

The resumption of mining development is a part of the draft law on mines and will be studied this coming fall in the parliamentary committee. "We need to improve social acceptability. We need our strategic minerals. Copper is one of them. The objective is to do this with the communities, through dialogue. In coming to Murdochville, I wanted to hear how the file was progressing with the mining company and to see if there were any adjustments to be made to the bill and how it is being received. The partners are happy with the proposed changes," says the Minister.

It is inspired by different practices adopted in Quebec. "Murdochville is one of

the positive examples. The idea is to open a dialogue with the communities," continues the elected official.

"It helps prevent people from being surprised by what is happening in their territory, avoids outcry and adjusts projects from the start," she explains.

Osisko held public consultation activities to find out citizens' opinions on the Mines Gaspé reactivation project.

Wildlife office closure

The closure of the Wildlife Agent Office in Grande-Vallée also came up during the minister's visit. "For me, it's important to maintain our services in the region. We made decentralization of positions to the regions in recent years. Despite this closure, we are looking for solutions," says Ms. Blanchette Vézina.

The elected official notes that there are still agents who come to the region, in a situation where there is a labour shortage.

The minister and her colleague from Gaspé are looking for solutions.

"The MNA and I are in contact with the Minister of Wildlife. Could the training be done in the region? When people are trained in a region,

they often have the desire to stay there. How can we integrate training like this into the region?" notes Ms. Blanchette Vézina.

This training could be linked with that of Police Techniques which will be implemented in Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles on the Gaspé campus.

The minister made this two-day tour to immerse herself in regional issues and build a bridge between the region and the government.

Caribou

The proposed protection limit for the caribou will be linked to the Murdochville mining project.

Quebec's objective remains the same. "We are in consultation. The objective is to protect the caribou but also to keep economic dynamism in the region. There are challenges and the consultations serve precisely to hear what people have to say," says Ms. Blanchette Vézina.

Guy Bernatchez, the prefect of the Haute-Gaspésie MRC, recently criticized the fact that a vast territory would be withdrawn from the development of recreational tourism.

"We hope that recreational tourism will continue to grow. The Minister of the



Photo: G. Gagné

Maïté Blanchette Vézina was in the Gaspé Peninsula on July 11 and 12.

Environment, Benoit Charette, says it often. We found solutions to continue yachting linked to the protection of the beluga whales and we are convinced as a government that we can find a balance with the caribou," she notes.

The minister wants to modernize the forestry regime, an important element in a forest region like the Gaspé Peninsula.

The protection of biodiversity must be combined with economic activity. "We have big challenges. We had the worst forest fires in his-

tory last year. It did not affect the Gaspésie, but the risk is present for the Gaspésie while the communities are close to the forest. It is important to adapt the forest over several years so that it continues to contribute to economic development," explains the elected official.

Climate change must be taken into account. "Many solutions will come from the report to rethink the development, make a more agile regime and that will help regions like the Gaspésie," maintains Ms. Blanchette Vézina.

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Agriculture: Less barriers needed for field workers

NELSON SERGERIE

SAINT-SIMÉON - The co-owner of Ferme Bourdages Tradition in Saint-Siméon suggests that authorities create tax breaks for certain categories of workers to generate labour for harvesting crops.

With the 2024 season starting early, the farm had to dispose of tons of strawberries because there were not enough workers to pick them.

The farm only received 32 foreign workers, out of the 50 they had anticipated and is counting on approximately 120 local workers for the harvests.

"We threw away about a ton of strawberries per day," says Pierre Bourdages.

"We started 10 days earlier," says Mr. Bourdages. There was a lot of pressure on the harvesting schedule, considering the foreign workers had not yet arrived, adds the farmer.

The pickers had to pick the less appealing ripe berries and throw them away to allow for better regeneration, which impacted the harvest for consumption.

The suggestions made by Pierre Bourdages could be con-



Photo: N. Sergerie

Pierre Bourdages, co-owner of Ferme Bourdages Tradition.

sidered somewhat controversial. He suggests, for example, allowing the elderly to come as reinforcements by granting them tax measures that would not penalize them.

"We can't pay under the table. How do you want to develop a business? Whether it's retirees or students, we have to find ways to not cut them off. Even students say that it cuts off their parents' income, loans

and scholarships. We would have the potential to find additional labour without cutting them off," suggests Mr. Bourdages.

The farmer also suggests employing prisoners. "People are in prisons and cost us a lot every year. Can we promote a system where instead of being in air conditioning, could they be in the heat, working on their hands and knees and helping

us? It could be a societal project to promote a safe system," he proposes.

He also suggests asking certain people on social assistance to contribute.

"Can we get 10% of this clientele with a doctor's note who are able to work. We're not talking about a single parent or a person who is unfit to work, but there are others who take advantage of the system," suggests the producer who is not afraid to get his hands dirty.

He reminds us that humans must eat three times a day and we need products to achieve that.

"We're going to eat our socks in a few years because if there are producers who will leave due to lack of profitability and the lack of people in the fields. With immigration problems that cause us a 35% loss in the fields due to the lack of workers and government management, we have to do things differently. The system is not working right now," says Mr. Bourdages.

The 2024 strawberry crop is of unprecedented quality.

"We have a natural way of doing things that makes a dif-

ference in terms of taste. The sun doesn't do everything. We will continue to encourage Gaspésians to eat Bourdages strawberries. Our eco-responsible system serves us well for the quality of our product," mentions the producer.

Everything that can be harvested will be sold as strawberries or processed products, despite the losses caused by the lack of workers.

"The government has to understand that we don't want to work against them. We want to work with them on food autonomy. Do we want to eat Quebec products in the coming years or eat from around the world? We need to rethink our way of thinking," suggests the producer, adding that society as a whole needs to reflect on the issue.

The early start to the season could lead to an early end to the season.

"Summer strawberries are almost over. We only have strawberries in supply for a few days and there are no more in the grocery stores. Fall strawberries will be ready in early August," analyzes the producer.

Favourable conditions yield top-quality hay

NELSON SERGERIE

CARLETON-SUR-MER - It was a good spring for hay producers in the Gaspé Peninsula, with a high quality, plentiful first cut.

For dairy farmer Normand Barriault of Carleton-sur-Mer, the first cut of 2024 will allow him to accumulate precious resources for the next 12 to 18 months, considering he still had about 600 bales of hay left from the 2023 harvest.

"At first, it was ordinary because there wasn't enough water, but then it caught up and now there's so much (hay) that we're going to have to cut it and leave it on the ground," says the farmer.

The second cut has started, but the lack of water in the soil will reduce both the quality and quantity.

"I often use the example of lawns. We started by taking out our mowers twice a week at the beginning of June, and now we only go out every week or week and a half to cut the weeds and strange plants. It's not grass that's growing. It's the same princi-

ple for the fields," explains Mr. Barriault.

"Even if we don't have a second cut, we won't complain," says Mr. Barriault. He adds that even if there are rain showers, the water runs off rather than penetrating the soil.

The years 2020, 2021 and 2022 were difficult with producers having to buy hay at high prices on the market.

"When you compare this year with other years, it's not comparable. We're two moons apart," replies the producer.

Corn production

Corn fields are growing fast because of the "tropical" weather we're experiencing. The heat and rain are the perfect conditions for this plant.

La Financière agricole du Québec has the same assessment as Normand Barriault regarding hay production so far.

As of July 2, the agency indicates that the expected yield for the first cut is close to normal, and the quality is within the normal range.



Photo: Gilles Gagné

Hay producers experience high quality and a plentiful first cut.

The crops were sown early in very good conditions, but the agency has noted a delay in emergence and a slowdown in crop growth due to the cool weather and lack of rainfall.

Maple syrup production

The season began early for maple syrup producers, with an above normal yield and quality within the normal range.

Local consumption

Consumption of local agricultural products is essential to maintaining farms in the region and throughout Quebec.

"There really is a widespread cancer. I don't know if people are aware of where their food comes from. It will be an existential question for our leaders," says Mr. Barriault.

According to him, if agriculture was doing well, there would be growth, but producers are more inclined to leave than to stay.

Food self-sufficiency remains a key concern. "Do you want Quebec to be self-sufficient in food, or do you want to depend on surpluses from other countries? Occasionally, there will be a shortage of certain foodstuffs, because they're going to satisfy their population before dumping their produce on other markets," he warns.

At the height of the harvest season, the producer is urging people to look at the origin of the fruit and vegetables on supermarket shelves and to focus on products from the Gaspé Peninsula, as well as elsewhere in Quebec.



More money to be invested in rail after 2026

MNAs pledge to stay committed

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) for the Gaspé Peninsula have given their assurance that the Quebec government will not abandon the Gaspé railway once the refurbishment is complete to Gaspé in 2026.

A project notice submitted to the Quebec Environment Ministry by Transports Québec indicates that work will be required between now and 2030 to secure six segments of the Gaspé rail line on Section 3 between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé.

These funds will be added to the vast \$872 million project aimed at restoring safe rail traffic by 2026 on the entire section between Matapédia and Gaspé.

Additional investments will be needed to ensure long-term sustainability for the next 75 years on Section 3, which is the most vulnerable to erosion and coastal flooding.

"It will be integrated into the maintenance of erosion assets, so budgets will certainly have to be in place but, at the moment, I have no concerns in that respect," explains Stéphane Sainte-Croix, the MNA for Gaspé.

"The Coastal Protection Project will aim to maintain the integrity of the railway infrastructure, so these envelopes will come a little later," added his colleague, Catherine Blouin, MNA for Bonaventure. The two MNAs did not want to go into detail about the additional investments.

Stakeholders familiar with the issue suggest that once all necessary work to secure the rail long-term is completed, the total envelope will approach \$1 billion.

A document consulted by SPEC in May noted that coastal protection work would be carried out over approximately 11 linear kilometres, spread over six separate, non-contiguous sites along the railway's right-of-way.

At these six sites, the cumulative intervention distance within the two-year flood limit is greater than 500 metres or approximately 3.2 linear kilometres and, because of the variants studied, it is estimated that a cumulative surface area equal to or greater than 5,000 m² may also be exceeded.

The targeted sites are: Pabos Mills West (225 metres), Pabos Mills (1,210 metres),

Chandler (1,190 metres), banc de Pabos (1,340 metres), Barachois (5,700 metres) and Douglstown (1,480 metres).

The document filed by the Ministry of Transport states, "The project includes work to protect against coastal hazards. It is planned that this work will be carried out following the rehabilitation of the Gaspésie railway between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé (editor's note: scheduled for the end of 2026). The goal is to alleviate the problems of coastal erosion and flooding at six separate, non-contiguous sites in the marine/coastal environment.

Several solutions are being analyzed to deal with the six problematic sites including relocating the railway outside the constraint zone associated with coastal hazards, local setback of the railway line, and raising the railway line.

The solutions and variants will be analyzed based on four main aspects: technical, transport and rail safety, environmental and socio-economic.

Considering that work is currently underway to refurbish the railway, and that work to protect the railway infrastructure against climate hazards will be carried out afterwards, work methods will be adapted to avoid compromising, as far as possible, the

maintenance of rail service.

Several steps are involved before deciding on a definitive solution, including hydraulic studies, ecological characterization, environmental studies, archaeological potential assessments, sediment transport analyses, geomorphology, bathymetry, and surveying and geotechnical studies.

Following this, the preliminary and final design of the project including plans and specifications, prior information sessions, impact studies and obtaining environmental and government authorizations will need to be completed.

Once these steps have been completed, the Ministry notes that, depending on the results of the preliminary and impact study, measures adapted to the different sites will be put forward to ensure the long-term viability of the railway, including raising and relocating the tracks, building new embankments, installing beach nourishment, building retaining walls and other applicable measures.

Other solutions and new combinations could be studied as part of the preliminary design.

In the preliminary analyses of the hydraulic studies carried out between 2019 and 2022, the Ministry indicates that

maintaining the sites in their current state would be insufficient to ensure the long-term survival of the railway.

According to a study by UQAR's Laboratoire de dynamique et de gestion intégrée des zones côtières (LDGIZC), carried out in 2021, the six sites targeted by this project are located in exposed areas or areas that will be exposed in the next ten years.

For this reason, these sites are exposed to erosion and flooding for two-year recurrence events, which can lead to several issues such as damaged tracks, damaged or destroyed berm, unfavourable coastal drift and insufficient space for vegetation to recover.

The document mentions that when Section 3 of the railway was in operation, the operational approach in the event of a storm was to close traffic on the section. Once the storm was over, an inspection of the closed section was carried out and maintenance work was carried out before allowing rail traffic to pass through again, demonstrating the importance of the problem of coastal flooding along this section and the high risk it represents for rail traffic.

It usually took two to three days to restore the railway after a major storm.

The ministry points out that although some of the variants under study propose moving the existing track, it will nevertheless be recommended as part of the project that the work be carried out within the existing right-of-way wherever possible.

This approach will reduce the potential impact on the neighbouring human and biophysical environments in the area.

One of the key principles that will be put forward as part of the design will be to minimize both permanent and temporary encroachment into sensitive environments, with priority given to coastal wetlands and water bodies.

According to the preliminary timetable submitted by the Ministère des Transports to the Ministère de l'Environnement, the environmental impact study and preliminary design will be submitted in December.

The Notice of acceptance is expected in March 2025, and a ministerial recommendation in September 2026.

In the meantime, the final preliminary design will be submitted in December 2025, with preliminary and final plans and specifications in December 2026 for construction between 2027 and 2030.

Three more bridges ready between New Richmond and Port Daniel

GILLES GAGNÉ

SHIGAWAKE – The upgrading of three additional railway bridges was recently completed between New Richmond and Port Daniel. The largest of the three bridges is the Shigawake trestle, a contract awarded to Sainte-Flavie's Groupe SEMA, Structures ferroviaires. The value of the contract was \$8,975,100. The Saint-Siméon River and the Hope Town River bridges were also completed recently. These three bridges are now ready for train circulation. Meanwhile, the main railroad construction site remains in New Carlisle and Paspebiac, where the line is being moved about 40 to 50 feet away from the cliff overlooking the Bay of Chaleur. This contract, carried out by Pomerleau, is worth nearly \$40 million. Another significant construction project is located in the Black Cape sector of New Richmond where LFG Construction is relocating the track northward by over 300 metres for \$8,466,173. In theory, with several contracts still to be completed between New Richmond and Port Daniel, before the line is reopened, line owner Transports Québec expects the resumption of line traffic by the end of the current year. (With information provided by Anthony Bernard Prince.)



Shigawake trestle.

Optimism reigns despite many challenges for print media

CYNTHIA DOW

MONTREAL: - When the Quebec Community Newspapers Association held their annual general meeting on Friday, June 28, the mood was undeniably upbeat and optimistic despite the fact that newspapers all over the country, from small community papers to large corporate-owned print media, are struggling with a host of challenges.

Advertising dollars lured away by online placements, Facebook pages blocked by Meta and, in some situations, declining demographics have left many newspaper owners and publishers in English Quebec wondering how much longer they can hang on.

However, QCNA President Brenda O'Farrell, Publisher of the 1019 Report, delivered inspiring speeches to those present about how these challenges are also opportunities. She noted that the organization, now on solid ground after some tumultuous years, "...is more ready than ever to help our members face the future and take advantage of every opportunity presented to them."

Ms. O'Farrell will be joined on the board this year by



Photo: Scott Stevenson

Hugh Maynard, Publisher of The Gleaner, with Cynthia Dow at the gala dinner. Mr. Maynard is well-known to Gaspésians through his longtime involvement with the Quebec Farmers' Association.

SPEC's former News Editor, Sharon McCully, Publisher of the Sherbrooke Record, who accepted to occupy a vacant seat.

The audited report for the 2023-24 fiscal year indicates a surplus of over \$41,000 for the organization, which is composed of 31 publications operating from Nunavut to the Ontario border. Over 300,000 Quebecers read the print and online editions of these newspapers. The Gaspé SPEC has

been a member since the Association's inception in 1980.

Ms. O'Farrell noted that funding programs largely supported by the federal government's official languages obligations means that many QCNA members are eligible for grants. An example: in 2023, 13 interns were hired under an internship program, representing an investment of \$411,000 that year.

A consortium has been established by official language

minority media across the country to advocate to the government about the vital role local newspapers and radio stations play in ensuring the health of our democratic institutions. Linda Lauzon, Coordinator of the consortium, told the AGM that "it takes a village" to maintain local media, through a shared vision and collaborative action.

She noted the consortium is currently working to ensure that a fair proportion of federal advertising dollars is spent on English media in Quebec and French media outside the province. She urged the QCNA to reactivate its advertising clearing house to be ready for increased advertising from the government.

Following the AGM, QCNA board members met to elect their officers. Brenda O'Farrell remains as President,

with Nikki Mantell (Low Down to Hull and Back News) as Vice-President, and Lily Ryan (West Quebec Post) as Treasurer. Other board members are Charles Dickson (The Equity), Cynthia Dow (The Gaspé SPEC), Sharon McCully (The Sherbrooke Record), and Michael Sochaczewski (The Suburban).

The annual awards gala was held that same Friday evening, celebrating the quality of the province's community newspapers. Best overall newspaper went to the Kahnawake paper, Iori-wase. SPEC won second place for Best Sports Page. Submissions are made every January, with judges from outside the province selecting the winners.

Full disclosure: Cynthia Dow has been SPEC's representative on the QCNA board since early 2023.

Family Ties AGM

Carolyn Taylor, Assistant to the Director, Family Ties

NEW| CARLISLE: - On June 12, Family Ties held its Annual General Meeting in its newly renovated building. President Chris Fraser gave a warm welcome to the 41 people who attended and paid tribute to Terry Maloney, a valued member of the Administrative Council for 28 years until his passing in January.

Johnny LeGrand presented the financial report. Following his report, director Heather MacWhirter introduced the staff who each provided updates on the various programs, accompanied by videos and slideshows illustrating the activities available at Family Ties, and demonstrated that there is something for everyone.

Ann Kelly presented the "Adapting to Challenges Together" project aimed at ensuring Family Ties is prepared to support the local community through future challenges following the Covid-19 crisis. A community consultation showed that, on the whole, Family Ties responded well during the crisis. This solid base has been built upon through additional team training and the development of an Emergency Response Plan. Ms. Kelly then presented the Family Ties Resilience Strategy, detailing actions and measures which will guide the organization as it evolves, ensuring that a strong framework is in place. She invited members of Family Ties to offer their input and explained that

she will be working on Phase Two of the project over the next three years in her new role as Community Wellbeing Coordinator.

Ms. MacWhirter highlighted community engagement at Family Ties, including volunteering, fundraising and the strategic planning day to discuss priorities for the next three-year Action Plan. Maria Chatterton presented the plan, which received approval from the members.

The director acknowledged the Administrative Council for their hard work before the elections took place. Betty Chedore was elected to replace Terry Maloney for the upcoming year. Ms. MacWhirter spoke briefly about the Building Renovation Project, which took longer than expected, and noted how happy she was to finally welcome everyone back. She thanked the staff for their amazing teamwork.

Another highlight of the meeting was the presentation of the adult and student volunteer awards. Shauna Tomas received the Adult Volunteer of the Year Award, while Tamika Gallan and Rebekah Lapointe were recognized as outstanding student volunteers for their welcoming presence and support to younger children in various youth groups.

Following the meeting's conclusion, light refreshments prepared by staff and volunteers were served.

Governments provide more support for the reconstruction of the Théâtre de la Vieille Forge in Petite-Vallée

Nelson Sergerie

PETITE-VALLÉE - The federal and provincial governments are providing additional funds to cover the higher-than-expected costs of rebuilding the Théâtre de la Vieille Forge in Petite-Vallée, which was destroyed by a violent fire on August 15, 2017.

The two levels of government are contributing a total of \$18 million to the \$19.6 million project. The Quebec government is increasing its contribution from \$9.8 million to \$13 million through the Capital Assistance Program. The federal government is increasing its share from \$3 million to \$5.5 million.

Quebec Minister of Culture and Communications, Mathieu Lacombe, travelled to Petite-Vallée on July 24 to make the announcement. "Like many projects across Quebec, costs have increased. There has been inflation in infrastructure projects, so today we are announcing an increase in the budget," says the minister, justifying this additional extension.

"When the project is well advanced, well managed and when it is for external reasons for the increase in costs, we usually always give our authorization," he said.

"It is not only an emblematic site, but beyond the symbol, it is a very lively site, which promotes Quebec and francophone culture. It is important to balance the budget," the minister explains.

Since the fire, the Festival en chanson de Petite-Vallée has been held under a temporary marquee.

The reconstruction will modernize the infrastructure to meet the needs of artists, spectators and the community. The new theatre is scheduled to open in the summer of 2025.



Gaspé MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix (1st from left), Minister Mathieu Lacombe (3rd), the general and artistic director of the Festival en chanson de Petite-Vallée, Alan Côté (4th), along with festival team members.

Photo: Courtesy of Delphine Mantha

Announcements



Obituaries

DOUGLASS: Joan

On July 19 at La Maison Marie-Élisabeth in Rimouski, Mrs. Joan Douglass passed away at the age of 73 years old and 8 months. She was the beloved wife of Jean-René St-Pierre, and the daughter of the late Melville Douglass and the late Elizabeth Flowers.

She is cherished by her husband Jean-René; son: Sylvain Slater; brother: Peter (Mona Doherty); sister: Nancy (Ford Fraser); aunt: Linda Flowers (Roy McBride); daughter-in-law: Andrée St-Pierre (Jean Barette); as well as their two daughters: Roxanne (Maxime Beaudoin) and Élyane (Philippe St-Onge); sisters-in-law and brothers-in-law of the St-Pierre family, as well as nieces, nephews, cousins and numerous beloved friends. Mrs. Joan was preceded in death by her sister Patricia, also known as Patsy.

A very special thank you to her sister Nancy for the fifteen months of love and dedication towards Joan. We are very grateful.

You may express your sympathy with a donation to the Maison Marie-Élisabeth foundation in Rimouski by visiting www.infomaisonmarieelisabeth.ca.

At a later date, two separate services will be held, one in Rimouski and the other in New Carlisle. In respect of Mrs. Joan's wishes, no other events will be held.



SKENE: William Sullivan

July 18, 1934 - July 17, 2024

William Sullivan Skene, affectionately known as Bill, passed away peacefully on July 17, 2024, in Beloeil, Quebec, just one day shy of his 90th birthday. Born on July 18, 1934, in Shigawake, Quebec, Bill's life was a testament to hard work, dedication, and love for family and community.

After growing up and working in Shigawake, Bill and his beloved wife Pat moved to Saint-Lambert, Quebec, in 1959. Bill called it home until 2021, when he moved to Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, to live with his niece Heather Tracy and her husband, Denis Gélinault.

Bill dedicated his later working life to the City of Saint-Lambert from 1959 until his offi-

cial retirement as the City's Superintendent of Public Works in 1995. His commitment to his work and the betterment of the community left an indelible mark on the city and its residents.

Outside of his professional life, Bill was a devoted family man who enjoyed caring for his loved ones. He found joy in camping, spending evenings playing cards or cribbage with friends or hosting a family BBQ in the backyard. A talented woodworker, Bill crafted everything from birdhouses and feeders to wishing wells and patio furniture, sharing his creations with those around him.

Bill was preceded in death by his treasured wife of 60 years, Patricia (nee Ramier), parents, Ella (Sullivan) and Claude Skene; and younger brothers, Jack and Fergus. He is survived by his brother Gerald (Margaret); sister Florence; sister-in-law Anne Skene; grandchildren; and great-grandchildren; cherished nieces; nephews; great-nieces; great-nephews; and a host of faithful friends.

The family extends their deepest gratitude to the caregivers of the Champlain-des-Pommetiers nursing home for providing Bill with a safe, caring environment filled with compassion and respect during his final journey.

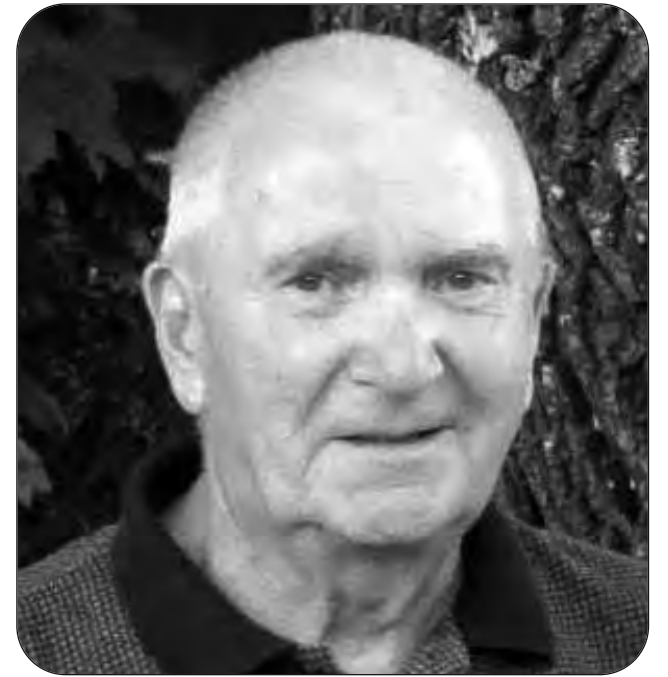
Family, friends, and others whose lives Bill touched are invited to join in his remembrance from 11 a.m. on Saturday, August 10, 2024, at the Saint-Hubert Urgel Bourgie Memorial Garden, 8145 Chemin de Chambly in St-Hubert Quebec. The funeral service will follow at 2 p.m. in the chapel. A remembrance reception will be held onsite immediately after the interment for those who wish to connect and reminisce about Bill.

In lieu of flowers and in keeping with Bill's charitable nature, the family welcomes donations to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada or to the Perpetual Cemetery Fund at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Shigawake, both causes greatly supported by Bill and his late wife Pat.

Bill's legacy of kindness and dedication to his family and community will be cherished forever. He will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.



In Memory



WILLETT: Archie

August 17, 1929 - July 31, 2020

We hold you close within our hearts,

And there you shall remain.

To walk with us throughout our lives,

Until we meet again.

Missing you always, your loving wife Elsie and family.




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Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond

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

BARACHOIS:
The Gaspé Cancer Foundation
November 2: A ticket draw and luncheon will be held at the Barachois Legion from 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m. Soup, hotdogs, sandwiches, desserts, tea and coffee will be available. 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 per series. Canteen service available.
August 9-10: Yard sale at the Three Star Golden Age on August 9, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m., and August 10, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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

NEW CARLISLE:
Bible Chapel Meetings
Sundays: 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

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 information, call 418-752-1334 or email heritagenc@globetrotter.net

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES
Cascapedia River Museum
Do you like the charm of old barns? The Cascapedia River Museum will be host-

ing an exhibition entitled "By Gone Days," featuring photographs by Barry Le Blanc. The exhibit will run from **August 8 to September 6** and will include more than a dozen photographs of barns from the surrounding area. Some owners will share their experiences during the official opening on August 8, from 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

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.

UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN
Sunday, August 4
2 p.m. Service
Sunday, August 11
10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, August 4
New Carlisle
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Hope Town
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
Port Daniel
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, August 11
New Carlisle
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Hope Town
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Shigawake
10 a.m. Morning Prayer

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, August 4 & 11
10 a.m. Service

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, August 4
St. Andrew's - York
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, August 11
St. Matthew's Peninsula
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

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

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ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Your feelings this week may not be entirely trustworthy, Aries. You could end up worrying for nothing, and being pulled into difficult situations for the wrong reasons.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, if you are feeling a little lost these days, it could be that you need a change in perspective and location to help you get inspired. Plan a short trip to recharge.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

You cannot serve as mediator or help friends establish harmony if you are all over the emotional map, Gemini. Work your way through your emotions before offering to help.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, you may be so caught up in a specific vision for the future that you are not open to new ideas that are equally beneficial and possible. Be more receptive to what others offer.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, once you give a certain plan a little more thought you may determine it isn't worth your time right now. Perhaps you've been building this idea up in your head.



VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you are eager to share your ideas and vision with others, but right now the audience isn't as receptive as you would have hoped. Do not give up; people will come around.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, you have a way of doing things, and right now you're not ready to deviate from that routine. With time you may be able to branch out and try a new approach.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

People are receptive to your words and you often speak with assertiveness Scorpio. Do not let this go to your head, though. Aspire to be humble while exhibiting confidence.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, this is one of those weeks when you can get into trouble if you let your emotions be the driving force behind your actions. Make an effort to balance emotion and reason.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

This is your week to really shine, Capricorn. Let others know what you're made of, but be sure you do not do something at another person's expense just to get ahead.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, if you do not like the course you are on, you have the ability to change things whenever you want. Nothing is set in stone at this point, so start dreaming up new ideas.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, there are so many ways you can be creative and express yourself. This is a week of true inspiration and exploration. Nothing is off-limits if you desire it.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- JULY 28** Soulja Boy, Rapper (34)
- JULY 29** Dak Prescott, Athlete (31)
- JULY 30** Joey King, Actress (25)
- JULY 31** Mark Cuban, Entrepreneur (66)
- AUGUST 1** Jason Momoa, Actor (45)
- AUGUST 2** Charli XCX, Singer (32)
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