

A Quebec company wants to exploit pozzolan deposit near Dalhousie *Gaspésians ask to be informed about project*

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Ecorock Dalhousie Incorporated, a Montreal based firm, wants to exploit the pozzolan deposit located in Dalhousie, New Brunswick. The company wants to operate it differently than it currently is, in order to supply cement plants with this type of rock.

“Pozzolan can be mixed with cement powder to reduce the environmental impact of cement plants using large amounts of limestone,” says Francis Forlini, director general of Ecorock Dalhousie.

However, the project causes concern in the Miguasha and Nouvelle area, located right in front of Dalhousie. The quarry, currently operating on a reduced scale, would undergo significant expansion and is only two kilometres away from the western part of the Port of Dal-

housie, making it relatively close to Miguasha.

Francis Forlini notes that the project will need to undergo extensive feasibility and environmental approval processes before moving forward.

“The deposit contains 200 million tonnes of pozzolan. The economic plan talks about 3 million tonnes per year, but the feasibility studies and environmental study remain to be done. Considering that the degree of exploitation might vary between 1 million and 3 million tons annually, the deposit will be good for 80 to 100 years,” explains Mr. Forlini.

The firm, Ecorock Dalhousie Inc., was recently formed. The initial partners in Dalhousie’s pozzolan deposit were Cimbec Canada and Carboniq Inc.. Cimbec Canada was the first promoter of the Port-Daniel cement plant proj-

ect.

“Cimbec Canada and Carboniq are the two promoters of the project. They went looking for funding and it was found. Several investors are putting money in the project. (...) For now, the name of the partners is not in the public domain,” adds Francis Forlini.

An old quarry

“The quarry targeted by Ecorock Dalhousie for its pozzolan potential has been in exploitation since 1932,” says Francis Forlini. The current owner is a firm called LCL Excavation. The discovery of the pozzolan content in the deposit was a random occurrence, Mr. Forlini points out.

“In 2019, one of the developers of the quarry wanted to start a division of bagged stone. He had some analyses done,



Pascal Bergeron, of Environnement Vert-plus, doesn't see advantages for the residents of the Gaspé Peninsula side of the Bay of Chaleur.

Photo: G. Gagné

and he realized that there was pozzolan in the stone,” underlines Mr. Forlini.

From there, a brand new avenue emerged - the use of pozzolan in cement plants, which is common in Europe.

“Pozzolan has existed for thousands of years. Greeks and Romans were using it for structures. The current consumption reaches 75 million tons in the

Cont'd on page 2

35,000 attend the FMBM

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Approximately 35,000 people attended the 20th Festival musique du bout du monde (FMBM) in Gaspé, nearing the pre-pandemic numbers of 40,000, much to the delight of the organizers of the FMBM music festival. The goal for this year was 20,000 visitors.

“It’s a great success. We were spoiled by the temperature. The festival goers were there. It was a great edition,” comments the co-director, Charles-André Ouimette.

The twentieth-anniversary show, featuring singer Damien Robitaille as lead artist, was the highlight of the program.

“We had a very full tent. It was a thrill for the organization. It’s a great source of pride. Damien Robitaille had put on this special show just for our celebration. It was an incredible show. Seeing people come out of the big top with stars in their eyes, it was magical. We celebrated our 20th anniversary in style,” says Mr. Ouimette.

“The return to the downtown area created great enthusiasm. I think people were happy with that,” states Mr. Ouimette.

The festival operates on a budget of approximately \$1.2 million and is expected to end the year either balanced or with a slight deficit. “I don’t think there’s anything major in this regard,” says the co-director.

The organization is now preparing for the 21st edition which will take place from August 7 to 10, 2025. “I honestly have confidence that people will be there. We have had a great improvement in terms of sites and organization. People are already looking forward to it,” he concludes.



During Pamela Rooney's closing performances on August 11. She thanked Gaspésians for encouraging her during the first steps of her career. That support was instrumental in the evolution of her career.

Photo: Roger Saint-Laurent, FMBM

Mediterranean Sea area,” he specifies.

Potential role of pozzolan in cement production

Francis Forlini explains that since a lot of steel mills rely increasingly on natural gas to reach the temperature needed to produce the metal, whereas they were utilizing coal before, the abundance of fly ash and blast furnace slag from these industries is limited, compared to a few decades ago,

“There is a need for an alternative material, not heavily present in the United States. The answer is to crush the rock and grind it finely. They will make up for these residues that are not as abundant as a few decades ago,” points out Mr. Forlini.

The presence of pozzolan in the Dalhousie area is a direct consequence of the Sugarloaf Mountain, a former volcano that erupted in what is now Campbellton.

“The Sugarloaf volcano emitted ashes 400 million years ago in the Dalhousie re-

gion. It underwent the same phenomenon over that period as cement in a kiln,” affirms Mr. Forlini.

He assures that the use of pozzolan greatly reduces the ecological impact of cement production.

“What we have to do (in the cement industry) is to lower greenhouse gas emissions. What we have here (in Dalhousie) is good to use but not enough to satisfy demand. Cement production as it is done now produces 0.8 tons of CO₂ (carbon dioxide) for each ton of cement. The use of pozzolan means less limestone extraction and less limestone to pass through the kiln. We have to replace the clinker as much as possible. In Europe, some cement mix use as much as 50% of pozzolan. I am not sure we can reach that level in North America but the market exists,” specifies Francis Forlini.

While the demand for pozzolan is vigorous in North America even if it is less popular than in Europe, Ecorock Dalhousie already gets information requests from overseas, hence an upcoming study about possible dredging at the port of Dalhousie.

“The current water draft is 32 feet. We might have to go to 35 or 37 feet. We receive calls from Europe and they (potential customers) want ships at least 70,000 tons to make the crossing profitable,” says Mr. Forlini.

Opposition is mounting

On the Gaspé Peninsula side of the Bay of Chaleur, opposition to the project is mounting. Environnement Vert-plus spokesperson Pascal Bergeron, who lives in Nouvelle, thinks that some aspects of Ecorock Dalhousie projects are far from reassuring.

“They are starting to talk about it because we are starting to talk about it. They want a zoning change to include (rock) extraction and the Dalhousie town meeting supposed to deal with the matter was cancelled,” he first reacts.

“We have to start talking about what is problematic. They (the company management) are talking about doubling the size of ships that will

load in Dalhousie. Dredging will move contaminated sediments. It was an industrial zone, it will influence fauna and flora on the Gaspé side of the Bay of Chaleur,” adds Mr. Bergeron.

He is worried about the noise factor in Miguasha, especially if trucking is chosen to link the quarry to the port of Dalhousie, and considering the dynamite blasts that will be necessary to exploit the quarry.

“We are talking about a project of 3 million tonnes per year. There are a lot of trucks (...) Some promoters never exactly do what they tell us, in the end. That is normal, they want to make a profit,” points out Pascal Bergeron.

“In Miguasha, we are so close to Dalhousie that we hear everything that happens there. The promoters think that we will lose the noise in the bay, but water is a resonator, not a silencer. We also have to think of the blasts. It is not advantageous to have blasting on the Miguasha side,” he underlines.

Francis Forlini replies that the operating plan has not yet been finalized, so it is impossible at this stage to say how often the blasting will take place. “Depending on the size of the blasting carried out, there could be more than one per week,” he says.

Regarding dredging, he specifies that “we have not yet assessed anything in relation to the sediments and whether there will be dredging. It is very possible that dredging will be necessary since the west wharf has been inactive for more than ten years so we think that there has been sedimentation. This remains to be validated as well as the management (of sediments) if necessary.”

When asked about his background, Francis Forlini confirms that he is the former vice-president of the sales department in Canada for Votorantim Cimentos, the main owner of the Port Daniel cement plant, but he asserts that Votorantim is not involved in the Dalhousie project.

Couple criticizes Ecorock Dalhousie’s contradictions

● GILLES GAGNÉ

MIGUASHA – Miguasha land and cottage owners Lisa Mosher and Jean-Marc Beaulieu have followed the Ecorock Dalhousie project, formerly known as Pozzolan Dalhousie, for the past two years and are voicing concerns about what they see as inconsistencies in the company’s statements.

The disappearance of the mountain located on the pozzolan quarry site, the dredging of sediments, and the lack of consideration for the people across the Bay of Chaleur, namely on the Gaspé Peninsula side, are all points that have led Ms. Mosher and Mr. Beaulieu to voice doubts about the company’s stand.

“In a 2022 document, the company mentions that thirteen steps will be carved in the mountain, from the tip down. Blasts will start at 4 p.m. after school. The quarry is only 200 metres from the school. They say that they will blast every day and over the weekends, blasts that will take place between 6 a.m. and 9 p.m.,” points out Lisa Mosher, after reading the company’s 2022 document.

On August 13, Francis Forlini, the company’s



Photo: G. Gagné

Jean-Marc Beaulieu and Lisa Mosher fear for the quietness of their property.

spokesperson, told the SPEC that blasting would likely not occur every day.

“They are talking about dredging an additional 15 feet because of the size of the ships the company will load. They want ships of 70,000 tons in order to load 3 million tons a year,” stresses Jean-Marc Beaulieu, who is aware that the company now talks about dredging between 3 and 5 feet to add water depth along the port and the channel leading to it.

Mr. Beaulieu and Ms.

Mosher are worried about the impact on their property. “I have had this piece of land for 40 years. I want to build a house on it. However, I’ll wait to see if this project goes ahead before deciding to build or not. There is no longer any industry in Dalhousie and we still hear the traffic. Imagine when blasts will take place every day and ships will be loaded continuously. Sounds travel well over the water. It is just five kilometres away,” criticizes Lisa Mosher.

Quick facts about the Ecorock Dalhousie project

● GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON: The exact investment required to produce pozzolan in Dalhousie is not known, but it could be around \$300 million, according to Guy Rousseau, of Cimbec Canada. The number of jobs created if the project gets off the ground is also unknown at this stage.

The tentative time frame of the venture development is to ship pozzolan rocks as infrastructure aggregates to the east coast of the United States as soon as next year. This would generate revenue to support the main project, which is expected to undergo an environmental assessment by 2025. Ecorock Dalhousie would like to be in production before the end of 2026.

The firm Ecorock Dalhousie has bought a large piece of land within the town limits of Dalhousie, including a corridor leading to the west part of the port and the land adjacent to the port. The corridor, belonged to CN and used to be the Dalhousie subdivision, the track between the main line on the Newcastle subdivision and the ICI

chemical plant, the former NBIP/Avenor paper mill and the port. Both ICI and the mill closed in 2008.

Francis Forlini points out that the decision about the way pozzolan will be transported between the quarry and the port has not been made yet. The deposit is just 2 kilometres west of the port area. It could be by truck, by rail or with a conveyor, he says.

Ecorock Dalhousie doesn’t divulge the amount invested so far in the project. It is many millions of dollars, points out Francis Forlini. Formerly called Pozzolan Dalhousie, the venture received a \$1.2 million grant from the federal government two years ago to advance its development.

Francis Forlini affirms that the exploitation of the quarry will not have any visual impact on the Gaspé Peninsula side of the Bay of des Chaleur. “There will be a buffer zone of 200 metres between the quarry and a popular trail and the quarry’s exploitation will end at the bottom of a hill. No mountain will disappear.”



The Roy-Landry couple's dogs were found in unsanitary conditions during the inspection on April 12, 2023, and during the seizure 20 days later.

Photo: Facebook

Pointe-à-la-Croix couple ordered to reimburse \$147,600 to the MAPAQ for “puppy mill” costs

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – Mélanie Landry and Christian Roy, a couple from Pointe-à-la-Croix, have been ordered to pay a total of \$147,600 to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) over the next three months. This sum covers fines of \$93,625 for Ms. Landry and \$53,975 for Mr. Roy, following a seizure of dogs in May 2023.

The costs were incurred from the care of 55 dogs seized from two properties owned by Mélanie Landry on May 2, 37 dogs from one location and 18 from another. This seizure followed an inspection on April 12, 2023, by MAPAQ, which found 102 dogs in poor condition.

The inspection report noted in particular obvious deficiencies in the sanitation conditions of what can be called a “puppy mill” or dog mill, breeding mostly golden doodles. Some dogs needed to be examined as soon as possible, the inspector reported on April 12.

When the May 2023 seizure took place, there were approximately 83 dogs left on the two properties. Both Mélanie Landry and Christian Roy were authorized to keep only 14 dogs each, according to the verdict rendered on July 11, 2024, by Magistrate Justice of the Peace François Paré of the Quebec Court. The couple was suspected of selling dogs after the April 12 inspection, raising concerns among veterinarians and the Bay of

Chaleur Animal Protection Network.

The Animal Safety and Welfare Act prohibits owning 15 or more dogs without a licence. Neither Ms. Landry nor Mr. Roy had a licence in May 2023, despite the latter’s claim that he did. However, he never provided proof of this to the court.

On July 24, 2023, Mélanie Landry agreed to transfer the seized dogs but remained responsible for the costs incurred, by MAPAQ from May 2 and August 1, 2023, the date chosen by the Criminal and Penal Prosecutions Directorate for this transfer.

The costs claimed by the MAPAQ include housing the animals in the Mauricie region, where the dogs were moved, examinations carried out by veterinarians, X-rays, prescription fees and administration of medications, scaling of dogs’ teeth and so on. This kennel in Mauricie had set a housing cost of \$20 per dog per day, under an agreement with the MAPAQ, with basic veterinary exams costing \$150.

The verdict rendered by Judge Paré notably mentions that Christian Roy left the Petite-Rivière-du-Loup Road scene of the dog seizure on May 2, 2023, and fled to a property located on Shipyard Road in Pointe-à-la-Garde, where dogs were also kept in a stall. A Sûreté du Québec officer who was assisting the MAPAQ in the seizure’s initial operation location, followed Mr. Roy and prevented him from loading dogs in his vehicle. The officer ordered

him to put them back in the stall so that the MAPAQ could also intervene there.

Preliminary fines

In January 2024, Christian Roy, 57, and Mélanie Landry, 42, were sentenced to fines of \$7,000 and \$9,750, respectively, for violating the Animal Safety and Welfare Act, by keeping more than 14 dogs per property in unsanitary conditions. Both admitted to the offenses.

Micheline Beebe, 61, and Gilbert Landry, 64, were also involved in this case. They pleaded guilty of having more than 15 dogs and failing to ensure their well-being and safety. They were each ordered to pay \$15,000 in fines for six of the eight initial offences against them.

The cases were heard between January 22 and 24 at the New Carlisle Courthouse. The four individuals involved in the puppy mill cannot own more than three dogs for a period of ten years.

“The reimbursement of costs to MAPAQ has nothing to do with the fines imposed during the winter. These amounts are added together,” explains Sam Bernard, criminal and penal prosecutor at the New Carlisle Courthouse. He worked in conjunction with the lawyer assigned to the case by the Quebec government, Marc-Antoine Pate-naude.

The situation at the kennel was reported by residents of Pointe-à-la-Croix, leading to the MAPAQ investigation in the spring of 2023.

Police report

According to a report published on August 15 by Montreal’s daily paper La Presse, individuals who poach caribou often face little to no consequences. In Quebec, killing a caribou often results in charges being dropped, suspension of the judicial process, or acquittal for most suspects. Many cases of caribou poaching do not even lead to charges.

Since the ban on hunting woodland caribou in 2001, dozens of caribou have been killed by human beings, yet only about ten cases have reached the courts, with only two individuals found guilty, one of who is currently contesting the conviction, according to court records. Hunting the Gaspé Peninsula mountain caribou has been banned since 1949, while hunting migratory caribou has been prohibited since 2012 and 2018, depending on the herd.

These results exclude cases of subsistence hunting, still legally practiced by some Indigenous communities, including hunting migratory caribou, as well as possible situations where a person pleaded guilty after receiving a fine and paying the fine.

The Department of the Environment, Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks does not want to specify the number of caribou killed that has been documented or the outcomes of its investigations.

“Offences have indeed been committed against caribou,” Department of Environment spokesperson Ève Morin Desrosiers stated, referring La Presse to the court records and the Director of Penal and Criminal Prosecutions (DPCP).

The DPCP stated it could not provide a count of charges related specifically to caribou killings.

Lawyer Merlin Voghel, a consultant at the Quebec Centre for Environmental Law, attributes the lack of consequences to “insufficient resources to cover a territory as vast as that of Quebec.” Finding poachers who attack endangered species requires “lengthy” investigations. Search warrants must be obtained, discussions with justices of the peace must be held, witnesses must be questioned, and forensic and ballistic analyses must be conducted, illustrates Mr. Voghel.

The wildlife officers’ union deplors these flaws in the judicial system. In the Gaspé Peninsula, a female caribou released into the wild was killed in October 2023. Denis Paquette, 63, from Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, is accused in this case. Having pleaded not guilty he is awaiting a trial date. In Quebec, those found guilty of illegally killing a caribou face a maximum fine of \$60,000 and up to 18 months in prison.

Fewer people are working, according to Stats Canada

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Island region lost 2,800 jobs between July 2023 and July 2024, according to Statistics Canada.

In July, 39,600 people were employed in the region, compared to 42,400 in July 2023. Despite this decline, there was an increase of 2,000 jobs between June and July.

In July 2024, 32,700 people worked full-time and 6,900 part-time, compared to 36,800 and 5,600 in July 2023.

The number of unemployed people increased by 400 from one year to the next, going from 1,700 to 2,100. However, this is a decrease of 1,100 from June 2024.

The labour force dropped from 44,100 in July 2023 to 41,800 last month, meaning that 2,300 people exited the job market over the past year.

The unemployment rate was 5% in July 2024, down from 7.8% in June, but up from 3.9% in July 2023.

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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

In the meantime, in Canada...

The summer has been filled with numerous distractions, from the Olympic Games, to the ongoing American saga surrounding United States President Joe Biden's decision to run or not for another term, the murder attempt against Donald Trump, the deplorable attacks of the Israeli government on Palestinian people, and the early occurrence of tropical storms, such as Debby, whose remains triggered major floods in the west part of Quebec.

All these events have heavily diverted attention from Canadian affairs, and the fact that the federal government of Justin Trudeau remains in deep trouble, as an election is looming.

Technically, a federal election cannot be held later than October 2025. However, it could also occur earlier since the Liberal Party minority government, which has been able to count on the support of the New Democratic Party (NDP) since the October 2019 election, will likely lose that ally.

In order to keep being considered an autonomous party, NDP leader Jagmeet Singh will likely ask his Members of Parliament to refrain from supporting the next liberal budget, which could be tabled as early as March 2025.

Given the extremely low possibility that the budget will be supported by the Bloc Québécois, and considering that Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre can't want to start an electoral campaign, in order to take advantage as soon as possible of favourable polls, an election could be called as early as the first days of the spring. Canadians could be invited to vote in May, for example.

A few months ago...

During the first quarter of 2024, Liberal Party strategists had set the goal of nullifying the Conservative Party's lead in the polls before the 2025 election. They were betting on Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland's budget to regain support from younger voters who had gradually left Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's party.

The budget's slogan, "A fair chance for every generation" was intended to pull the party out of its impasse.

The staple measure in Chrystia Freeland's budget was an increase in the capital gains inclusion rate, which means a proportionate expansion of such gains subject to federal tax. The Finance Minister made it a matter of tax fairness, insisting that the measure would affect only 0.13 percent of taxpayers each year, the country's wealthiest citizens.

People might remember that just before the summer, Minister Freeland asked the ultra-rich class to reflect on the following question: "What kind of Canada do you want to live in?" She asked if it would be ideal "to see the wealthy live in luxury, but in gated communities, behind ever-higher fences, turning to private health care and jets because the public sector is in a bad way and the anger of the vast majority of the less fortunate is unleashed."

Those questions were heavily criticized at times with some analysts suspecting her of trying to stir up a class war for electoral purposes. Opposition to the capital gains inclusion rate increase from entrepreneurs, small and medium-sized business owners

and doctors heavily destabilized the Liberal Party strategists, who had not expected a backlash of that magnitude.

Instead of gaining ground, the Liberals lost the public relations battle, as influential business figures concluded that Justin Trudeau and Chrystia Freeland's measure discouraged them from investing in Canada.

Division within Liberal Party ranks

So, the Liberal Party budget failed to help Justin Trudeau's government climb back in the polls. It has also triggered dissension within the Liberal caucus.

A few years ago, in fact when Justin Trudeau's decision to call the 2021 election yielded about the same results as before, Chrystia Freeland was perceived as the eventual party leader. Since the last budget and, in fact a little before, she is seen by a rising number of liberals as a liability.

Leaks published by Toronto-based media reported dissatisfaction at the Prime Minister's Office with Chrystia Freeland. Justin Trudeau's closest advisers, including his chief of staff Katie Telford, allegedly expressed replacing the Finance Minister with former Bank of Canada governor Mark Carney.

The prime minister himself has given credibility to the rumour by publicly stating that he has repeatedly tried to convince Mr. Carney to join his government, without promising him any ministerial position.

Mark Carney, who also chaired the Bank of England between 2013 and 2020, has publicly expressed over recent years his ambition of becoming Canada's Prime Minister. He is a right-wing liberal in the sense that he advocates for relatively limited government intervention in the economy.

As Globe and Mail columnist Konrad Yakabuski recently pointed out, Mark Carney has not answered to Justin Trudeau's invitation to join his party's elected members so far but a little while after Ms Freeland tabled her budget. He criticized it, deploring the lack of measures to stimulate investment and reduce excessive spending.

Mr. Carney hesitates before joining a government that looks too left-wing, too interventionist, to his taste. He seems to prefer to wait for Mr. Trudeau to leave before launching his political career. He might be counting on the shock that will likely hit the average Canadian's values if Pierre Poilievre wins the next election, which looks more probable than ever.

Close to nine years after accessing power, Justin Trudeau's popularity is clearly eroding instead of resurging. The upcoming by-election scheduled for next month in the Montreal riding of LaSalle-Émard-Verdun will likely do very little to enhance the confidence of Liberal Party's members. The NDP candidate in LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, city councillor Craig Sauvé, has a strong chance of winning this riding left vacant by the departure of former Justice Minister David Lametti.

Moreover, the recent resignation of Labour Minister Seamus O'Regan, a Newfoundlander, from the Cabinet, the fact that he will not run again in the next election and the possible departure of Transport Minister Pablo Rodriguez, who is considering running for the leadership of the Quebec Liberal Party, are signs that the government is running out of fuel. Other members of the Cabinet are also allegedly preparing to tackle new challenges soon.

In attempting to blame Chrystia Freeland for the Liberals' troubles, Justin Trudeau and his team look like people denying evidence. By refusing to step down, the prime minister plays the part of a man feeding the party's demise.



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Caribou to remain in “temporary” captivity

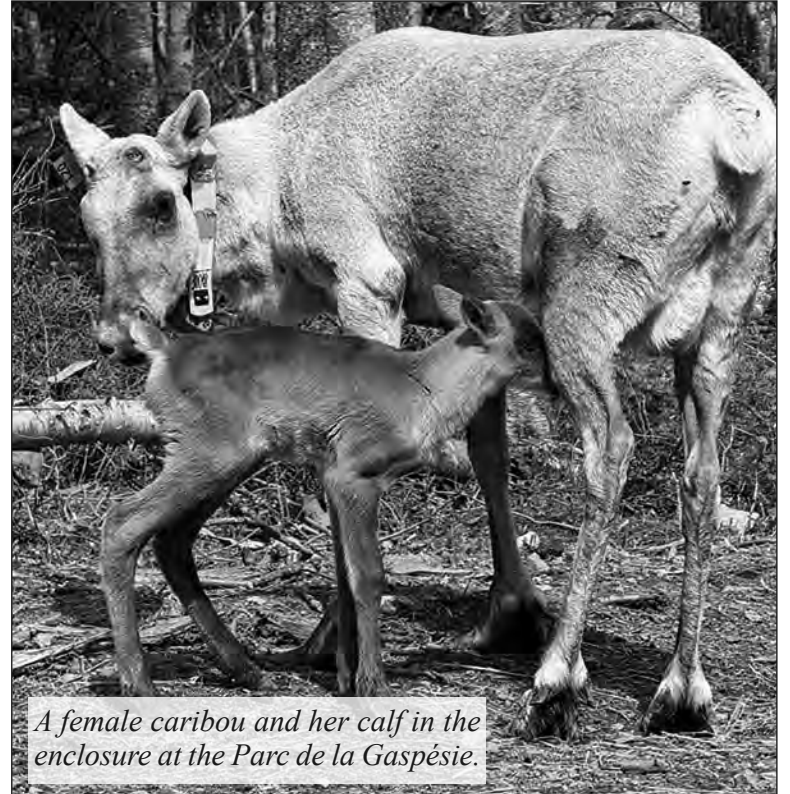
NELSON SERGERIE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - The ten female and three male caribou captured this winter, along with the six surviving calves, might remain in captivity at the Mount McGerrigle enclosure, in the Parc de la Gaspésie, longer than initially planned.

The Ministry of the Environment, the Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks indicates that "recent observations regarding the low productivity and recruitment rates observed in recent years have led the ministry to consider temporarily keeping a portion of the Gaspésie caribou population in captivity in 2024, rather than using maternity pens involving the annual capture of pregnant females and their release with their calves at the end of the summer, as deployed in 2023," states the response to an inquiry made by SPEC regarding the 19 caribou being held in captivity.

"Captivity is a final and temporary measure to protect isolated caribou populations in a very precarious situation," mentions the ministry. The Minister responsible for Wildlife, Benoît Charette, indicated this spring in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts that there were only 24 caribou left in the Gaspésie.

"The presence of three males in the enclosure will allow one or more reproductive cycles to be carried out in captivity and provide the information needed to optimize recruitment while documenting the low pregnancy rates observed in the wild," the ministry explains in its letter. Various factors such as survival rates, physical condi-



A female caribou and her calf in the enclosure at the Parc de la Gaspésie.

Photo: Dominic Grenier, Ministère de la Faune



The mild winter helped the deer population.

Photo: Archives

A good winter for the deer population

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The mild weather and low accumulation of snow during the winter of 2023-2024 provided favourable conditions for the region's deer herd.

The Ministry of Wildlife anticipates an increase in the harvest during the upcoming hunting season.

"It's been two winters in a row that we have had little snow accumulation and conditions that are not very compacted. The depth of sinking in the snow was not very much for deer and their survival has certainly been good and we expect an increase in populations," explains Marie-Claude Richer, a biologist at the Ministry of the Environment, Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks in the Gaspé office.

This type of winter is favourable because "It promotes survival, but the females's good physical condition also does, as they can give birth to healthy fawns. Fawns have a good chance of survival when they can count on fatty milk from their mothers," emphasizes Ms. Richer.

The Gaspé Peninsula region is at the northern limit of the deer's distribution. "When

there are two difficult winters in line with a lot of sinking in the snow, this can cause a collapse of the population. But it only takes one mild winter for the population to rebound fairly quickly because deer often have two young each year," specifies the biologist.

The ministry does not have a precise assessment of the size of the herd, the last aerial inventory dates back to 2019. "I can't tell you if we are above or below (previous numbers), but I seem to remember that the density was low. We are probably above that," emphasizes Ms. Richer.

The ministry has not received any requests from the Ministry of Transport demanding intervention to reduce the population.

"We don't expect to issue antlerless deer permits anytime soon," suggests the biologist.

The harvest grew significantly in 2023, rising from 533 animals in 2022 to 873 last year, including 677 in Zone 1 South, which mainly represents the Bay of Chaleur area. This is a 63% growth. The last time there was such successful hunting was in 2018 when 955 animals were harvested.

tion, sex ratio or productivity could lead to occasional releases of caribou, as a proportion of nine caribou remain in the wild, assuming those not captured last spring survived predation and the winter.

"The duration of the use of this management measure will be assessed through a multi-criteria analysis taking into consideration, among other things, the parameters mentioned and the deployment of other complementary management measures, such as predator control and habitat restoration," the ministry explains.

Temporary captivity aims to protect caribou from predators and increase their survival rates. "This reflection demonstrates the ministry's attention to deploying a dynamic and adaptive management approach that relies on monitoring the biological indicators of the Gaspésie caribou population," the ministry states in response to our inquiries.

Support for Haute-Gaspésie

The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC supports Haute-Gaspésie by asking the Quebec government to hold information sessions and public consultations in Haute-Gaspésie due to the impact of the proposed caribou protection measures.

The Quebec government announced a pilot project for the caribou population in April.

Haute-Gaspésie is concerned that recreational tourism development could be significantly restricted due to the proposed measures.

Côte-de-Gaspé is also calling for interim measures to be lifted and for the public service to be given clear directives so that sustainable development can continue.

The MRC is asking that the wind energy sector and access to territories be taken into account.

Call for tenders for recycling collection in Avignon and Bonaventure

Nelson Sergerie

NEW RICHMOND - The MRCs of Avignon and Bonaventure are issuing a call for tenders to find a contractor for the collection of recyclable materials.

Éric Dubé, the Prefect of Bonaventure, states that this action is necessary because the two MRCs are not ready to activate the Avignon-Bonaventure intermunicipal residual materials treatment board to manage residual materials.

The contract is set to begin on January 1 and will last for five years. The contractor must demonstrate the capacity to provide the necessary trucks for the job.

While the MRC will award the contract, Éco-entreprise Québec will decide where the material should be processed.

Decisions regarding the implementation of brown bin will follow. Garbage collection will be a little more complicated to centralize since each municipality has contracts of varying durations.

In the meantime, the management must launch a third posting to find a general manager.

COVID-19: Hospitalizations have increased

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The number of people hospitalized due to COVID-19 has remained high in the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands region since mid-July, with over ten patients.

According to the latest weekly update from the Institut de la statistique du Québec on August 14, 14 people were hospitalized due to COVID-19 on August 13.

The last time fewer than ten people were hospitalized was on July 15. During the week of August 4, nine people were admitted to the hospital for treatment against the virus. There was one reported death.

Rail: Sixth delay in call for tenders

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Yet another delay - the sixth - has occurred in the opening of bids for the last of the four major calls for tenders launched on March 21 for the rehabilitation of the railroad between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé.

The new date for opening the proposals is now set for August 22, although it was originally scheduled to be opened on April 22. The process has since been postponed five times.

The work involves repair-

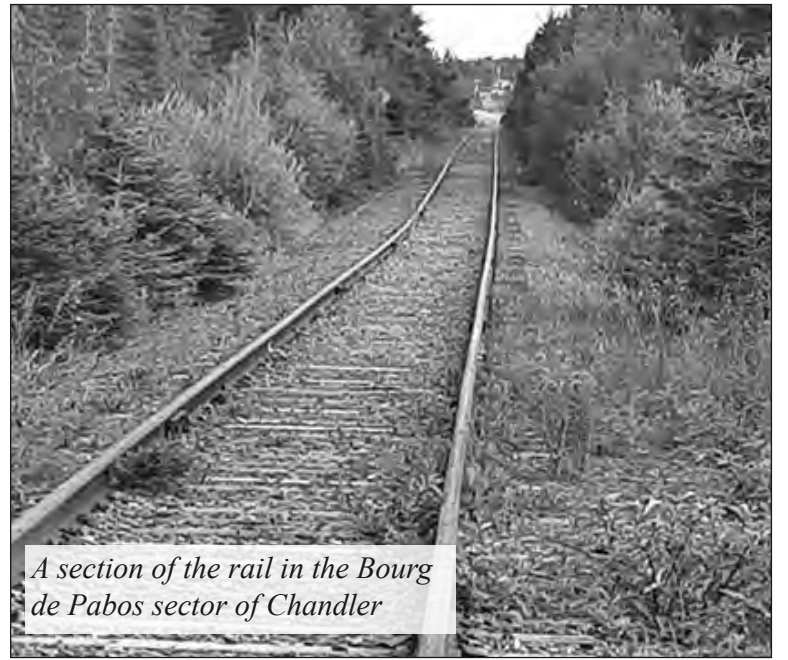
ing two bridges in Gascons, one between Gascons and Newport, another in Newport and one in Douglastown. The bridge between Grande-Rivière and Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé also needs to be replaced, along with a retaining wall in Pabos Mills.

On December 10, 2011, Via Rail suspended train service between New Carlisle and Gaspé due to the deterioration of the track and bridges. On August 13, 2013, the service was suspended between Matapédia and New Carlisle for the same reasons. A bus link was

offered until the end of September.

Since then, the Quebec government has announced \$872 million to rehabilitate the rail line between Matapédia and Gaspé.

The section between New Richmond and Port-Daniel-Gascons is expected to be back in service by the end of this year, and the section between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé by the end of 2026. Via Rail has consistently stated that it will return to the region once the rail line is fully repaired to Gaspé.



A section of the rail in the Bourg de Pabos sector of Chandler

Photo: N. Sergerie

Daniel Leboeuf prepares to run for mayor of Percé

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - The president of the Percé Geoparc, Daniel Leboeuf, is showing interest in running for mayor in the upcoming Percé election scheduled for October 27.

Daniel Leboeuf announced his intention on a Facebook page, "Daniel Leboeuf, aspiring candidate for the Town of Percé" on August 11.

"I aspire to become a candidate and I have already started the process. I have an electoral committee. I am starting at the beginning, that is to say, collecting signatures for application forms for candidacies," Mr. Leboeuf shared in an interview on August 14. He had already collected the minimum requirement of five signatures and hopes to collect 200 by the filing deadline, between September 13 and 27.

The challenge is enormous after the dismissal of former urban planning director Ghislain Pitre, a troubling report from the Municipal Commission on the public administration's functioning, and decisions regarding the tourist fee and Commercial Street.

"I didn't decide to take a relaxing job. I realize that. I was once a municipal councillor. There is a way to fix the situation, to bring some order to the meetings. According to the Municipal Commission, there are things to correct in the management processes. These are things that can be done," says Mr. Leboeuf.

"Each municipality must adhere to governance rules. It's written in the Cities and Towns Act. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs has guidelines. If



Daniel Leboeuf collects signatures for mayoral candidacy.

Photo: Facebook

there are any gaps or omissions, we will correct them," he adds.

The hardest part will be preparing the 2025 budget.

"I can't wait to start digging into it. There were problems last year. I hope that will be corrected. The new assessment role will be out soon. That will change the situation. We will correct the expenses accordingly," says Mr. Leboeuf, speaking as though he is already elected.

In 2024, tight finances led the town council to close the tourism office, which cost \$168,000 plus a management salary. However, the council reversed this decision in May when finances improved.

"I talk to people. Better than being an administrator, you have to listen to people and that's what I'll do," says the aspiring candidate who is not afraid to take on challenges, having previously improved the geoparc's finances.

Daniel Leboeuf is a phar-

macist by profession. He owned the Percé pharmacy from 2000 to 2012 before selling it.

In addition to being president of the geoparc, he also sits on the board of directors of Garde Manger, the new food bank serving the Rocher Percé MRC, and is a volunteer gardener at the Percé village community garden. He was a municipal councillor from 2009 to 2013 and ran as a candidate for Québec Solidaire in the Gaspé riding in 2014.

He was also president of the Société de développement économique de Percé from 2006 to 2012, where he contributed to the Percé l'Incontournable project, which led to the revitalization of various village infrastructures.

Mr. Leboeuf believes that his background in municipal politics and management motivates him to run for mayor.

The election was triggered by Cathy Poirier's resignation on July 2.



The investigation into Ghislain Pitre will cost Percé taxpayers \$131,250.

Photo: Archives

Percé: A hefty bill led to the dismissal of Ghislain Pitre

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - The cost of the administrative investigation into labour law, conducted following the suspension of the former Director of Urban Planning for the Town of Percé last October, will cost taxpayers \$131,250.

In August, the municipal council approved a series of four invoices totalling \$84,649.59, in addition to the \$46,000 incurred since the investigation began.

Following the filing of the 340-page report by the law firm Therrien, Couture and Joli-Cœur, Ghislain Pitre was dismissed that same evening, July 17. The council received a copy of the report only minutes before the special meeting to avoid the document being leaked.

Serious allegations against the director of urban

planning led to his suspension, including suspicions of fraud, theft of large sums of money from the municipality and documents falsification, which prompted administrative investigation.

Sources indicated that the alleged misconduct spanned a long period.

The Permanent Anti-Corruption Unit (UPAC) has shown interest in the case, and the conclusions of the investigation are pending.

In an email, UPAC neither confirms nor denies the investigations to avoid compromising the information gathering, protecting the integrity of the evidence, and ensuring the safety and reputation of those potentially involved.

To settle the balance, the Town of Percé had to withdraw \$77,825 from its unallocated surplus.

New lobster licences could be granted on the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON - The June 6 announcement by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, Diane Lebouthillier, regarding a vast assessment of the lobster stock on the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula and in the eastern Lower Saint Lawrence region has created high expectations. However, the fishing community is beginning to realize that lobster alone will not be a solution for everyone.

This announcement aims to “assess the growth potential of the commercial lobster fishery in certain sectors of Quebec that have been underexploited to date, and this always with the aim of supporting these local economies.”

However, the exercise still requires preparation. Ten weeks after the announcement, the ministry’s teams are still preparing a data acquisition plan for fishing Zone 19. This area covers not only the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula but the entire Bas-Saint-Laurent region. Theoretically, Zone 19 extends as far as Île d’Orléans near Quebec City!

The remarkable increase in lobster catch volumes in Quebec has raised hope among fishermen from different fleets, including shrimp, turbot, and some crab fishermen, as well as Indigenous fishermen.

Claudio Bernatchez, director of Association des capitaines-propriétaires de la Gaspésie, based in Rivière-au-Renard, confirms that shrimp fishermen have expectations regarding possible lobster permits.

“In fact, lobster keeps many fishermen from several fleets hopeful. There are shrimp fishermen, but there are crab fishermen from Zone 12a, who have very small quotas. Those from Zone 12b, under moratorium, are fishermen whose main source of income is turbot. The appeal of lobster has reached a ridiculous point where people retired from fishing want to get permits,” says Mr. Bernatchez.

Of the 42 shrimp permits in Quebec, six belong to First Nations, while the remaining 36 permits are held by 30 people. Claudio Bernatchez estimates that a third of these 30 permit holders have found an alternative solution that allows them to get by.

“The last third is in a potential bankruptcy situation. We have no information to the

effect that the next lobster permit issues in this zone (Zone 19 on the north side of the Gaspé) will have a positive effect for shrimp fishermen. We hope that the most precarious one will be able to obtain access to lobster,” he emphasizes.

The Anticosti Island option

Could some shrimp fishermen find a way out by obtaining possible lobster permits on Anticosti Island, where new release licences could be issued? This is especially relevant considering that the potential of its coasts exceeds the current permits granted there, which include one permit in Zone 17a and about fifteen others in 17b. Lobster fishing boats on Anticosti are recognized as being larger than those along the Gaspé coast, a point highlighted by Claudio Bernatchez.

“It takes a bigger boat on Anticosti, but it cannot be a big shrimp boat. It takes a lobster boat larger than those in the Bay of Chaleur, but it remains a lobster boat. It can also be a longliner, as we see on the island. New boats will be needed for shrimp fishermen who want to fish lobster in Anticosti,” he says.

“We must remember that Anticosti Island is managed by the North Shore (Fisheries and Oceans Canada) and is considered a somewhat neutral territory between the North Shore, the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. There are 250 kilometres of coastline on the south side of the island,” he also notes.

Lobster licences should be more affordable

Claudio Bernatchez is perfectly aware that it will not be easy for shrimp fishermen to obtain lobster permits in Zone 19.

“Nothing is in the bag. The new issues are causing a lot of concern among current license holders in Zone 19. We are advocating targeting fishermen in difficulty, regardless of the fleet, and instead of giving a full license to these fishermen, giving a number of traps to two fishermen, if they can make enough extra income. It doesn’t take 150,000 pounds of lobster per year to live well when it’s a supplementary fishery,” he analyzes.

The Association des capitaines propriétaires de la



The spokesperson for the fishermen’s associations of Northern Gaspé suggests that future permits granted for Zone 19 could be smaller than current commercial permits to support more people.

Photo: G. Gagné

Gaspésie has developed a clear stance on these future licenses. “We are proposing that any new issuance of licenses avoid being permanent to avoid crises arising from the price of these licenses. When fishermen retire, they must return the licenses to the Department (of Fisheries and Oceans) so that they return to another cohort of fishermen without the constraint of indebtedness linked to the debt of the license. Two lobster licences were recently purchased for between \$9 million and \$10 million. It will take good fishing to pay off this debt,” he concludes.

Claudio Bernatchez acknowledges that it will not be easy to convince lobster fishermen in Zone 19 to accept the principle of introducing new players who paid very little for their licences. However, he recalls another principle that fisheries resources must serve the public interest.

From the turbot fishermen’s side

Jean-René Boucher, director of the Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels du nord de la Gaspésie, an association that mainly brings together turbot fishermen, agrees with Claudio Bernatchez regarding the size of the potential lobster licences and the non-transferability of licences when their holders retire.

“Fishermen would like there to be more permits and fewer traps per permit to carry out a supplementary fishery, which would play the role of income compensation for the drastic drop in quotas and turbot catches. (...) We also see the high price of permits in Zone 19. We therefore hope that there will be no reassignment of a new permit to an-

other individual to avoid over-bidding,” notes Mr. Boucher.

His group has held good discussions on the subjects of indebtedness in relation to an almost free permit, and Jean-René Boucher ardently hopes that these discussions will extend in anticipation of the allocation of future lobster permits. Mr. Boucher points out that there are only eight licence holders in the part of Zone 19 that is exploited under commercial lobster licences, from Rivière-à-Claude to Cap-Gaspé, and four exploratory licences between Rivière-à-Claude and the Tartigou River, between Saint-Ulric and Baïdes-Sables.

“From Rivière-à-Claude to Cap Gaspé, there is room for more licences. Eight licences are not many for a large territory. There are many turbot fishermen historically in this sector, many fishermen who see this fishery as a lifeline. Few of them have crab and halibut, but someone who has a reasonable quantity of crab and halibut, and who does not succeed, could supplement with a certain quantity of lobster,” explains Mr. Boucher.

He hopes that his members will be consulted throughout the lobster assessment process in the northern Gaspé Peninsula.

“We understand that for data collection, the people at Fisheries and Oceans Canada find that if there are fewer boats, it will be easier. That’s not certain,” Mr. Boucher points out from the outset.

He also specifies that he has not decided on the desired number of members of his group who could eventually benefit from a lobster licence. However, he has an idea in mind of the form that a deployment of new licences

could take.

“We have a vague idea of how many licences we would like to see issued. We would like to participate in data collection with science. We hope for a listening mode (at the Fisheries and Oceans Canada office) in Gaspé,” concludes Jean-René Boucher.

What do lobster fishermen say?

At the Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen Group, which represents lobster fishermen on the Peninsula, caution is the name of the game based on the issuance of 25 new permits previously announced by Diane Lebouthillier on the Côte-Nord.

“For Zone 19a1, where there are no commercial permits, but exploratory permits (this is the zone between Tartigou and Rivière-à-Claude), what we are saying is that there are possibilities but we have to put some caveats. If we take, for example, the 25 permits issued on the North Shore in 2024, half of the holders of new permits will not have fished due to a lack of processors,” notes Mr. Cloutier.

“In addition, I hear that there are significant lobster losses due to a lack of reception structures in 19a1. There is no longer a plant in Matane, for example. We raised this point with Fisheries and Oceans Canada. We are still waiting for the minister to consult,” adds Mr. Cloutier, referring to Diane Lebouthillier’s commitment made during the June 6 announcement.

He offers another warning, based on the large volumes landed on Eastern Canadian markets in 2024.

“Let’s look at the impact that this could have. The surplus volume only helps lower the price. Does DFO want to issue permits for the simple principle of issuing permits or does it want to contribute to lower prices?” wonders Oneil Cloutier.

“I am in my 43rd year of lobster fishing. We started making a little money in 2016. So I fished for 36 years for crumbs. I had to have two jobs. Can we help a few fishermen with lobster? I don’t know, but we won’t save Rivière-au-Renard (the shrimp sector) with that. I don’t want to be used,” he says.

Back to School on a Budget

HOLLY SMITH

As the start of the new school year approaches, parents are faced with the annual challenge of back-to-school shopping. From clothes and backpacks to notebooks and gadgets, the 'to-buy' list may seem neverending. For many families, balancing these needs with a tight budget can be stressful but with a little clever planning and some shopping tricks, you can get everything your child needs.

Start by reviewing what you already have. Check last year's supplies, clothes, and shoes to see what can be reused or repurposed. Often, items such as rulers, backpacks, and even clothing (that still fits) may be good for another year. This not only saves money but also reduces waste. If you have gently used clothing that no

longer fits your children, there's likely a family in your community that would appreciate those hand-me-downs.

You should create a detailed shopping list and stick to it. Avoid the temptation of back-to-school, promotions and impulse purchases, which can quickly add up. Setting a budget for each category, such as clothing, supplies, and electronics, will help control spending. Focus on quality over quantity. A good quality backpack will likely stand up to the year's wear and tear. Buying a lower quality product may cost you more in the long run by needing repairs or replacement. "My advice to parents is to buy brand name pencils, sharpeners and erasers. The no-name ones may come in nicer colours, but they won't work as well and will frustrate students. So, instead spend a

few extra dollars on the essentials, and buy one less new outfit," says retired teacher Lynda MacWhirter.

Timing is also important, so, instead of buying everything at once, spread out your purchases over time. Some of the best deals on school supplies and clothing come after the school year has started, so consider buying only what is needed in the first few weeks and wait for sales on other items. Buying out-of-season, like winter coats in summer or school supplies in bulk, can also save money. Mrs. MacWhirter suggests parents pick out a few of their children's best summer outfits for September. "Classrooms are warm in September. Children will be more comfortable in their summer clothes and a sweater in their bookbag, rather than a new jogging suit,"

adds the former teacher.

If you're looking for an even better deal, consider exploring secondhand options. Flea markets, yard sales, and online marketplaces often have gently used clothing, shoes, and backpacks at a fraction of the cost of new ones. Refurbished electronics work just as well as new ones and can be a lot cheaper than a new device. Buying secondhand is better for your pocketbook and the environment.

It is also a good idea to take advantage of online tools to compare prices at different stores. Many websites and apps can help you find the best deals. Looking for coupons and discount codes can also help reduce expenses. For families with more than one child, buying in bulk can be a smart strategy. School supplies, such as pens, notebooks, and lunch-

box snacks, are cheaper when purchased in large quantities.

Involving your children in the budgeting process will be a great learning experience. It teaches them how to manage money and how to make wise spending choices, which will benefit them throughout their lives. Creating a list together will help them separate their wants from their needs. This will encourage them to take care of their items to make them last longer.

Back-to-school shopping doesn't have to be stressful or expensive. Planning ahead, being resourceful, and taking advantage of deals, you can get everything your child needs for the school year without spending a fortune. Focus on investing in your child's education and future, which doesn't always mean buying the newest or most expensive items.

BACK TO SCHOOL

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The more that you learn,
The more places you'll go," Dr. Seuss.

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Coping with the Transition to School

HOLLY SMITH

For families along the coast, beach days and barbecues are being replaced by the hustle and bustle of back-to-school season. Whether your little one is stepping into pre-kindergarten for the first time, your teenager is gearing up for high school, or your young adult is heading off to cegep or university, this time of year is a blend of excitement, a few nerves, and a lot of adjustments.

Starting School for the First Time

For little ones starting school for the very first time, this can be both exciting and overwhelming. It's a huge milestone as they move from

the comfort of home or daycare into the new more structured world of school classrooms.

Encouraging them to share their feelings about starting school, whether they're bursting with excitement or feeling a bit nervous. A little pep talk and a few words of reassurance will help them feel more confident as they start this new adventure.

The Leap to High School

The leap from elementary to high school is a big one, bringing a whole new set of challenges. Suddenly, your teen has to juggle more complex schoolwork, a social scene (that sometimes feels like a soap opera), and trying to figure out what to do with their newfound

independence.

As parents, open communication with your child is so important. Talking with your teen about upcoming changes, like new class schedules, more homework, and dealing with the inevitable drama of friendships, can help them feel more ready to start a new school year. Instructing them on organization and study skills will also help them manage the extra work and new responsibilities.

Heading Off to Cegep or University

For students starting cegep

or university, the transition can be a big one. It's often their first time living away from home. While the excitement of independence seems great, it sometimes comes with a bit of homesickness, money worries, and the pressure to succeed in school.

As parents, you can help by talking openly about things like budgeting (like how not to blow all their money on take-out), managing time and basic self care (like eating more than instant noodles.) Encourage them to use all the resources that are available, like academic advisors, counselling

services, and student groups, these resources will be able to support them through this new phase. While it's important to let them spread their wings and fly, a quick text or call now and then can remind them that their support system is just a phone call away.

While each school stage has its own set of challenges, a smooth transition from each stage comes down to preparation, communication, and support. After all, these transitions are opportunities for everyone to grow, sometimes just a little faster than you're comfortable with.

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Dear students and parents of the Eastern Shores School Board,

As the new school year begins, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a great return to school. I hope this upcoming year is filled with success and new adventures. May you experience new encounters, enriching discoveries and overcome challenges with determination and hard work.

Remember that every day spent at school is an opportunity to grow, learn, and flourish. May each of you find your path, develop your talents and achieve your goals.

At ESSB, we are proud to accompany you on this educational journey and we are confident that you have the potential to succeed. Rest assured that we will support and encourage you throughout the year.

Welcome back and have a great new school year!

Warm regards,
Denise Simoneau, DG

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How to Establish a Back-to-School Routine

HOLLY SMITH

As the summer break waves goodbye, families are once again thrust into the wild, untamed jungle of establishing a school routine. Getting kids ready for back-to-school can sometimes feel like trying to herd sheep, but the sheep are now teenagers with smartphones and attitudes and the only thing they're interested in is repeatedly hitting snooze.

Establishing that dreaded back-to-school routine is important. Having a routine will make your child feel in control and safe, since they will know what to expect and how to prepare for the day ahead. Learning how to develop and follow a routine is a life skill that will benefit your child far beyond their school days. In addition, research shows that children who have daily routines with their families have stronger language development, increased academic achievement, and improved social and emotional functioning.

Developing strategies at the start of the school year can help transform your morning. With a bit of planning and a

lot of coffee, you can create a routine that makes the return to school easy.

Gradually Adjust Bedtimes

Start shifting bedtimes earlier before school starts. It would be best to start a week or two in advance to avoid the shock of suddenly waking up and it's still dark out. Being consistent with bedtimes and wakeups is important, even on weekends. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, 1 in 4 Canadian children are not getting enough sleep. Getting adequate sleep can improve your child's overall health, emotional well-being and quality of life. The Agency recommends children 5 to 13 should get between 9 and 11 hours of sleep per night, while teenagers aged 14 to 17 require 8 to 10 hours of sleep per night.

Establish Morning Routines

Create a morning routine that includes brushing teeth, getting dressed, and having breakfast. Make it as fool-

proof as possible, creating visual schedules and checklists for smaller children will help them stay on track. Aim to make mornings as predictable as possible, but still be prepared to hear grumbling and at least one kid screaming, "I can't find my shoes."

Organize School Supplies

It's a great idea to create a designated spot for school items. This will save you from the "Where's my bookbag?" panic every morning. A shoe rack is a great way to keep shoes organized. By designating a hook or bench near the door for book bags and a spot on the counter for lunch kits and making sure those items are in place before bedtime will make your morning go much smoother.

Designate Study and Homework Time

Set aside specific times for homework and studying. Designating study times will help prevent homework from becoming a last-minute emergency. Their homework spot should be a quiet, well-lit area

where they can focus.

Plan Healthy Meals and Snacks

We all know that good nutrition equals good focus. Plan meals and snacks with fruits, veggies, and whole grains. Getting kids involved in lunch prep is also a fun way to sneak in some lessons about healthy eating.

Balance Extracurricular Activities

Support and encourage your children to pick extracurricular activities they enjoy, whether it's sports, music, or art. Many local organizations have amazing after-school activities. They'll get to explore their passions, hang out with friends and you get to enjoy a little bit of quiet time. Remember to avoid overextending yourself and your children. A dry erase calendar on the fridge or wall can help keep track of upcoming activities.

Communication is key

Designate a time to chat

with your children about school every day. This could be while they are having their after-school snack or during mealtime. Before the first day of school, discuss the upcoming school year, including any changes such as new teachers, schools or even new classmates. Encourage them to share their feelings and concerns. This will help with anxiety and first-day jitters. It also shows them you are there to support them, which is important if anything comes up throughout the school year.

Reinforce Positive Behaviour

Commend your kids for sticking to the new routine and adapting to the new school year. This will boost their confidence and make them more likely to keep up the good work throughout the year.

With these strategies, you can make back-to-school much more manageable. With a little preparation, the shift from summer vacation to school mode can feel smoother and less stressful for both kids and parents.

Back to school supplies for home

Jillian O'Connell

With a mixture of excitement and dread, and the end of summer vacation quickly approaching, it can only mean one thing, back to school.

As you are going over your school supply list and preparing your children for another school year, don't forget that homework is just around the corner. Having the proper supplies at home can make all the difference.

Setting up a dedicated basket or cabinet with the basics can help your children stay focused and organized. A well stocked study area means fewer distractions and less time spent searching for materials. Plus, it can make homework time smoother and less stressful.

Your homework basket should include essentials such as notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, highlighters, markers or crayons, rulers, glue, scissors and a calculator. Other practical suggestions are construction paper, ruled paper, a 3-hole punch, paperclips, Becherelle and dictionary. Younger children could benefit from an abacus, as well as number and alphabet lines for their homework space.

Back-to-School

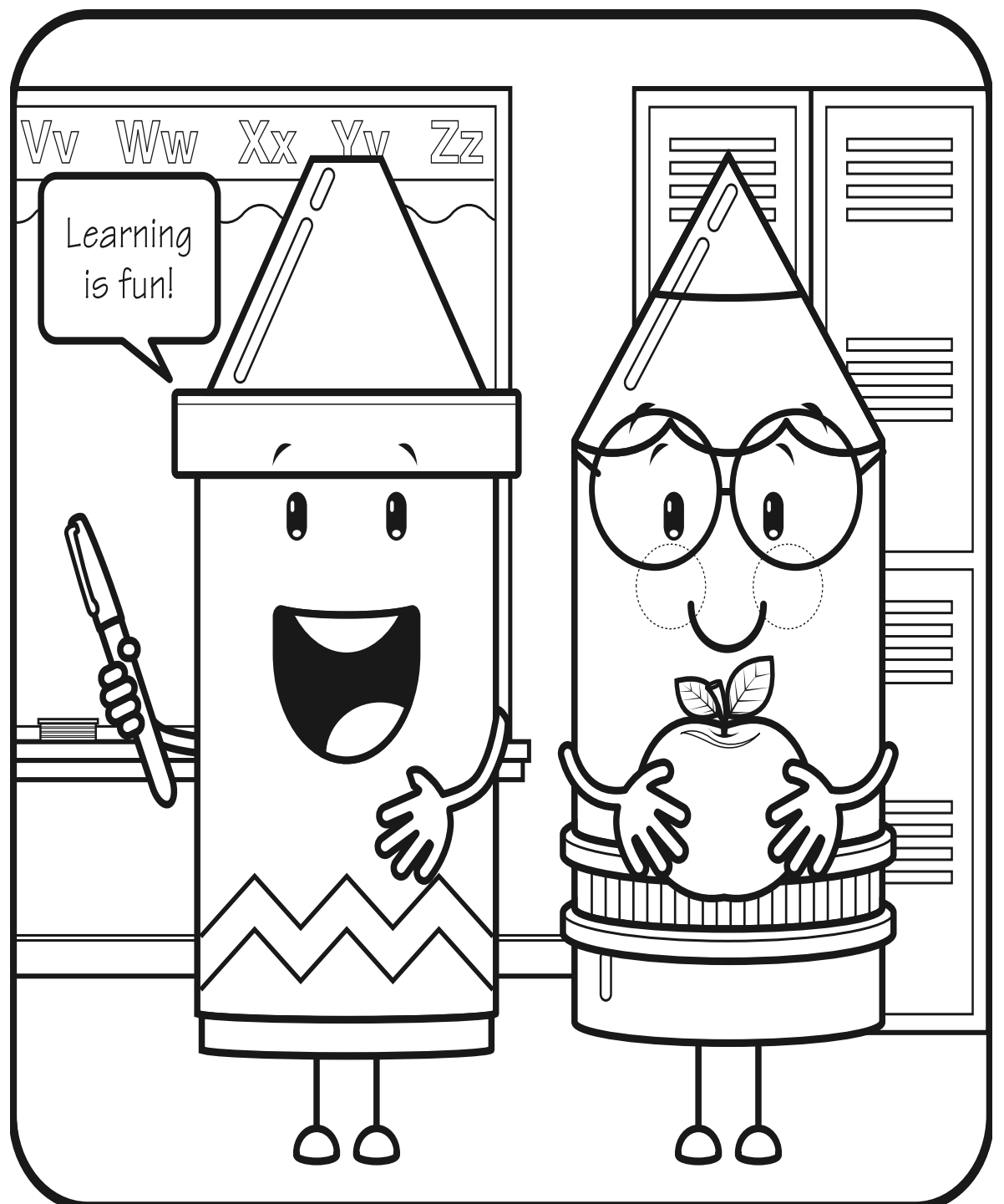
After an amazing and exciting summer for many families and students, a new school year is set to begin. Charming young Gaspeians will be given the opportunity to work towards new adventures and dreams.

Education is one of the most powerful weapons to be used in making the world a better place. Gaspeians possess a wealth of talent that, along with an ignited imagination and high expectations, can result in positive change.

Each student will face challenges but past accomplishments prove that no task is too big to undertake.

Always remember to seek knowledge as learning is something that no one can take away from you.

Ken Ross, *New Carlisle*



Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger steps down from his role as Regional Director of Public Health

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - As of September 3, Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger, the Regional Director of Public Health for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, will be stepping down from his position.

However, the preventive medicine specialist will remain on the team as a medical advisor.

"We had been thinking about this for some time. We had to ensure a succession. The succession is ready and I will step down because I am a 1950 model. At some point, we simply have to make way for the succession," says Dr. Bonnier Viger, who is 74 years old.

The physician will continue his work to support his successor in a smooth transition. Dr. Bonnier Viger has held this po-

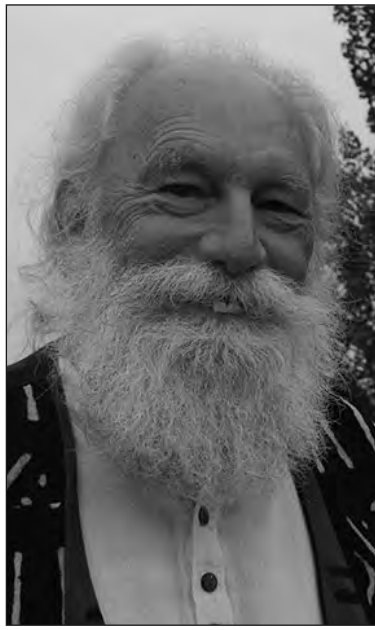


Photo: N. Sergerie

Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger will step down on September 3

sition twice: from 2001 to 2002 and since 2016.

His tenure as Director of Public Health was especially

defined by the pandemic. Dr. Bonnier Viger believes that his team is well-prepared to handle any future events. Lessons have been learned, and Public Health is now working on building a better response for what the future may hold.

"We are preparing plans and we will take the time to do simulations to be ready. We can be ready on paper, but if we have never tried it, that is when we can have surprises. The difference between theory and practice is considerable and we must take the time to properly practice what we have planned," says Dr. Bonnier Viger.

Dr. Bonnier Viger does not want to talk about legacy, because he has not finished his work. "With my role as director, having a participatory management approach, geared

towards always allowing others to do the best they can do, I think it's a winning formula," he says.

Dr. Bonnier Viger says that there may be a little more free time once he is no longer involved in management.

"My time was already very limited. I may have weeks that are a little more normal, but I won't have a lot of free time. There are a lot of files that we have to put a lot of time into. I'll have my work cut out for me to continue working 60 to 80 hours as I do," he says.

"I'm in great shape. When you get older, you're more likely to get sick. It's better to be in positions that don't affect too many people at the same time if something happens," he says.

After his first stint as Director of Public Health for the

Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands region in 2001-2002, he left to create the Public Health Department in Cree territory, a role he held until 2008.

He was then recruited by Laval University as a part-time coordinator of the Department of Social and Preventive Medicine, while also serving as a medical assistant to the Director of Public Health in Chaudière-Appalaches. In 2010, he became the department's director.

Dr. Bonnier Viger returned to the Gaspé Peninsula in 2016. In a 2020 interview, Dr. Bonnier Viger set himself the goal of getting public health back on track after the Barrette reform, with a younger management team and remaining a medical advisor, a role he will officially take on in September.

Miguasha Park greets paleontologists from 21 countries as part of an international symposium

GILLES GAGNÉ

MIGUASHA (NOUVELLE) - The Université du Québec à Rimouski and the Miguasha National Park recently hosted the 17th International Symposium on Early and Lower Vertebrates (ISELV).

This symposium specifically brought together paleontologists studying vertebrates from the Paleozoic era, spanning from 539 million to 252 million years ago, in other words, fish and their descendants, the first tetrapods or four-legged animals.

Over time, the International Symposia on Early and Lower Vertebrates has been held all over the world, particularly in Brazil, the United States, Spain, Sweden, China, Australia and Canada.

"In fact, the International Symposium already highlighted the Miguasha fossil site when, in 1991, the 7th Symposium took place here," mentioned the director of Miguasha Park, Rémi Plourde.

"This symposium allowed the Miguasha Park team to welcome some 80 paleontologists from across the world, in fact from 21 countries, a valuable opportunity that could lead to the development of research partnerships and the publication of new scien-



Australian paleontologists Alice Clement and John Long were pleased to observe the most complete Elpistostege fossil ever found. Elpistostege was an amphibian that played a major role in the passage from water to land.

Photo: G. Gagné

tific articles," added Mr. Plourde.

Alongside this event, an update of the permanent exhibition, "From Water to Earth", was finalized in the first weeks of June.

"This results from scientific research carried out over the last 20 years and the discovery of new exceptional specimens in the park," added Olivier Matton, scientific director of the Miguasha Park.

"An event of the magnitude of ISELV 2024 was an opportunity to raise awareness about the National Park

of Miguasha to the general public, while strengthening understanding by the scientific community of the exceptional character of this unique fossil site in the world," pointed out Rémi Plourde.

Australian paleontologist and researcher John Long didn't need to be convinced of the importance of the Miguasha fossils when he reached the park limits on June 21.

"It is my third visit to Miguasha. I came in 2014, 2016 and now. I cosigned an article about Elpistostege with

Richard Cloutier," he told SPEC shortly after he arrived at the park.

Richard Cloutier, who teaches paleontology at Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR), has carried out research on Miguasha fossils for close to 40 years.

At one point, John Long was accompanied in the Miguasha museum by Alice Clement, another Australian researcher who coauthored the article entitled, "Elpistostege and the Origin of the Vertebrate Hand", with Richard Cloutier, Mr. Long

and four other researchers. They are of the view that the Elpistostege found in Miguasha is the most complete such specimen in the world, at 1.57 metres in length. The way the extremities of its limbs are made suggests that the amphibian was endowed with a precursor of our hands.

"This is my first visit to Miguasha and I find it very impressive," said Ms. Clement, while observing with concentration at the fossil prepared by Gaspesian technician Jason Willett, who spent 2,700 hours clearing the unwanted materials from Elpistostege, which likely lived between 393 and 359 million years ago.

The participants of the symposium first attended a round of conferences at UQAR from June 17 to 20, sharing insights into their scientific work before taking the road to Miguasha on June 21. Conferences on the history and fundamental missions of the park and research on the fossils of Miguasha, the visit of exhibitions, collections and the research centre as well as a field trip to the cliff, were parts of the agenda.

Later in the summer, the "In the footsteps of the Symposium" activity was offered to the general public.

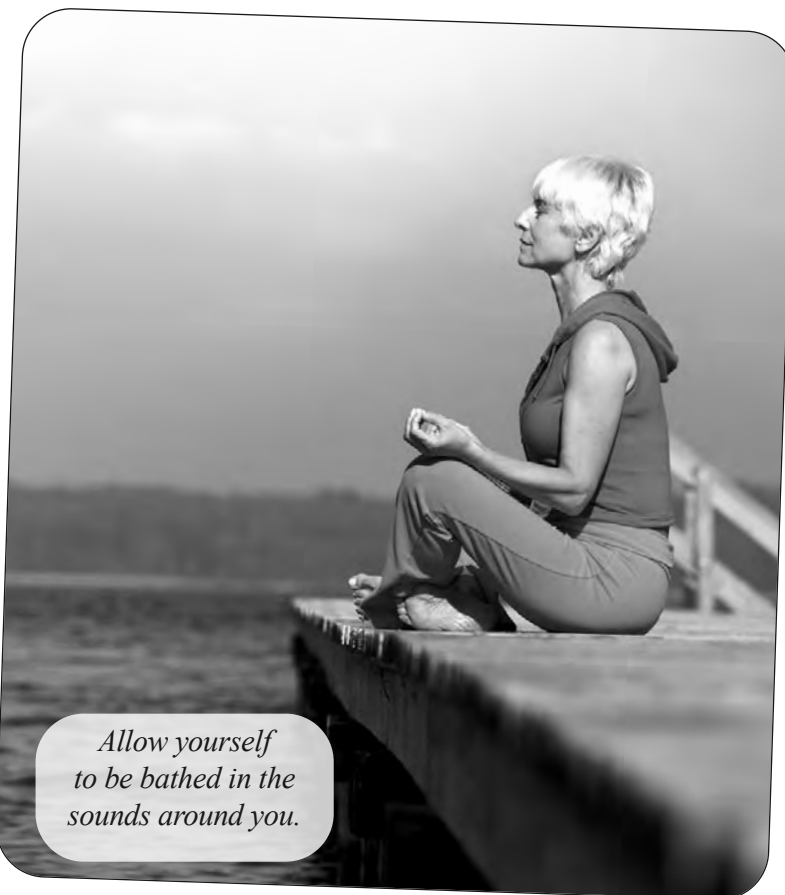
Stop and smell the roses, it's time to relax

JILLIAN O'CONNELL

Did you “stop and smell the roses” on August 15 to celebrate National Relaxation Day? If you missed the opportunity to relax, don't worry it's never too late to start taking time for yourself. Life can get stressful and finding time to relax can be tough with all the demands from work and family. It is important, however, to remember that taking time to relax is good for your health and well-being. Adding even one relaxing activity to your daily routine can help reduce stress and bring more joy into your life.

Luckily for Gaspésians, there is a wide range of activities to choose and the options for a relaxing day are endless. Here are five easy relaxation tips to try every day.

Read: Reading can relax your body by lowering your heart rate and relaxing your muscles. According to a 2009 study conducted by the University of Sussex, reading can reduce stress by up to 68%. So, find yourself a good book, a comfy spot in a hammock or



sitting on a beach, a drink from your favourite coffee shop or your favourite glass of wine and drift into a world far, far away.

Garden: According to the Mayo Clinic gardening is an excellent way to reduce stress. “It's been shown to lighten

moods and lower levels of stress and anxiety. In addition, “routines provide structure to our day and are linked to improved mental health. Gardening routines, like watering and weeding, can create a soothing rhythm to ease stress.” As you water and weed your plants,

think of these moments as more than just tasks. Take the time to enjoy watching your garden grow, and imagine all the delicious meals you'll prepare.

Outdoor activities: Embrace all the coast has to offer. Whether it's a small walk along the shore looking for treasures, hiking through the many local trails, swimming in the Bay of Chaleur, kayaking or bird-watching, each activity provides an opportunity to soak in the natural beauty that surrounds you. The American Heart Association says “Spending time in nature can help relieve stress and anxiety, improve your mood and boost feelings of happiness and well-being – humans evolve in the great outdoors and your brain may benefit from a journey back to nature.”

Paint: Grab your paint and brushes, set up your easel and just paint, let the coast inspire your creativity. If you have kids, pick up flat rocks on the beach and let them paint little photos for the next visitors. Tourists and locals love coming

across painted rocks on their beach walks. Studies have shown that cortisol levels can decrease up to 75% during 45 minutes of doing art. When you are stressed, increased cortisol is released into your bloodstream.

Meditate: Meditation can reduce stress, and increase calmness and clarity, along with overall happiness. While walking along a quiet path, focus on your feet and the steps you are taking. Synchronize your breathing to the rhythm of your feet and concentrate on the present. Another great way to meditate in nature is to sit or lay down and close your eyes. Allow yourself to be bathed in the sounds around you.

It's also important to remember that sometimes you need to simply take a step back from the hustle and bustle of your daily life and savour the natural beauty that living on the coast provides. Whether it's watching a sunset, feeling the sand between your toes, or listening to the sound of the waves, these moments of relaxation are valuable.

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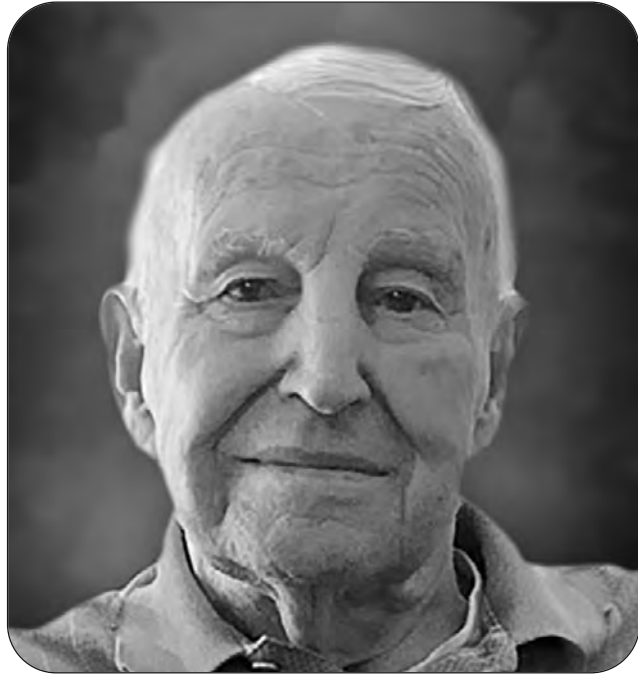
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Announcements



Obituary



GIRARD: Wilson

Wilson Girard was born in Barachois on December 26, 1924, and passed away peacefully at Bella Senior Care Residence on Tuesday, August 6, 2024, at the age of 99. Beloved husband of 73 years to Alfreda (née Cotton) and cherished father of Julia (Art) Rees, Sylvia (Bill) Chase. Loving grandfather of Andrew (Halya) Chase, Brandon (Caitlin) Chase, Robert Rees, Sherrie (Peter) Gonta, Lori (Sean) Taylor and great-grandfather of Colin, Owen, Henry and Alexander Chase, Julia and Carter Gonta, Tristan and Emma McDougall, Cynthia Rees. He will be fondly remembered by his siblings Ethel, Earl, Hazel (Robert LeMesurier) and in-laws Edward, Paul, Allan, Kenneth, Giselle, Theresa, Anita, May, Tina, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by siblings Abel, Dora, Rita, Anthony, Hilda, Norman, Bertha, Mary and in-laws Envern, Alyster, Harold, Alina, Lumina, Blanche and Albin.

Wilson was the best husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather that anyone could ever ask for. He was an extremely hard worker and was able to build and fix anything. He started his career as a deep-sea fisherman alongside his family, worked in construction and for TRW. He was an avid walker, he and his wife would walk miles every day. He loved to sing, whistle, tell stories and play with his grandchildren and the ultimate joy of his life was his family.

Friends were invited to join the family at the Patterson Funeral Home, 6062 Main St. Niagara Falls, visiting was Sunday, August 11, 2024, from 2 to 4 p.m. A Funeral Service in celebration of his life was held Monday, August 12, 2024, at 11 a.m. at the funeral home, with the Rite of Committal following at Fairview Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to Bella Senior Care Residence and would be appreciated by his family. Online condolences can be made at pattersonfuneralhome.com.

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



In Memory



SAWYER: Diane

September 5, 1931 - August 24, 2023

May the winds of Heaven blow softly,

And whisper in your ear.

How much we love and miss you,

And wish that you were here.

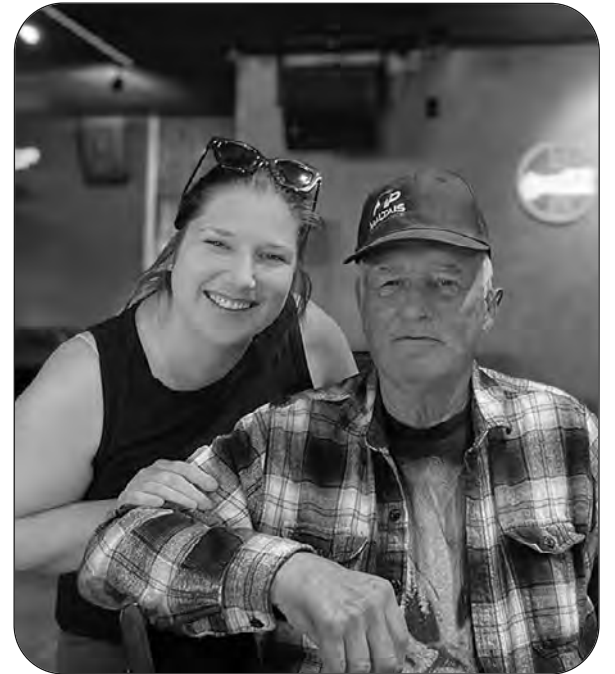
Forever in our hearts; Faye, Gary, Bryan, Karen and families.

Happy Anniversary



Happy 50th Wedding Anniversary
Janet and Jean-Guy Dion

Happy Birthday



Happy Birthday to this set of August 15 birthday twins. Clyde MacWhirter celebrated his 82nd birthday, and his granddaughter Emilie Woods turned 30.

*Wishing you both a very happy year!
May it be filled with love and laughter.*

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extends sympathy to the family of
Fern Assles



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In Memory: under 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

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.

BARACHOIS:
BADC
August 24: The Barachois public market will start at 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at 857 Route 132 East, Barachois. Baker, crafters, artisans and garden produce. To reserve a table \$10 contact Sandy Coombs at 581-887-1417.

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.

August 19 to 23: Vacation Bible School held at Fair Haven Bible Camp from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Singing, memory verses, story time, quizzes, messages, and prizes for ages: 6-12.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
50+ Club
Tuesdays: Grocery bingo every Tuesday at 7 p.m.

\$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
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.

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, August 25 and September 1
10 a.m. Service


UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN
Sunday, August 25
No Service
Sunday, September 1
10 a.m. Service

PARISH OF GASPÉ
Sunday, August 25
St. Philip and St. John - Sandy Beach
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Sunday, September 1
St. Andrew's -York
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Every Wednesday
No Morning Prayer for the Month of September

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
Sunday, August 25
New Carlisle
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Hope Town
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
Shigawake
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

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On the lighter side...

Bugs, bugs, bugs

Bugs, little and big,
brown and black;
bugs in the kitchen
having a snack!

Bugs, hairy and bald,
scary and cute;
bugs in the hall
one's playing my flute!

Bugs that hurry and scurry,
crawl and creep;
bugs in the bathroom
brushing their teeth!

Bugs flightless and winged,
a pair of pincers and legs numbered six;
bugs in the game room
playing Pick-up-sticks!

Bugs silent and rasping,
a pair of antennae as a nose;
bugs in the bedroom
trying on my clothes!

Bugs compound-eyed and simple-eyed,
some dull and some that glow;
bugs in the living room
watching a T.V. show!

Bugs herbaceous and predaceous,
stinky and sweet;
bugs in the dining room
my guests to greet!

Bugs in the corners,
bugs under the mat;
bugs in the closet,
bugs under my hat!

Bugs all over the house--
it's beyond belief!
Could I rid myself of them,
I'd feel such relief!

Bugs, one by one, I capture
and release into the yard.
Bugs come in so fast--
it's a job too hard!

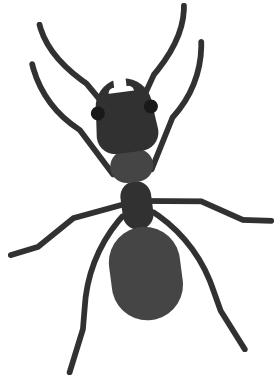
Bugs deserve a warning:
leave the room!
Do it now--
or I'll get the broom!

Bugs ignore me.
I wield the broom: whack whack!
What's this I see?
Bugs are starting to pack!

Bugs in the hallway
going out the door.
Oh joy, oh bliss--
bugs to be seen no more!

Bugs are finally gone,
I can relax at last.
The siege is over--
thank God, it's past!

But what's that I hear--
can't be bugs in the house!
A rustling, skittering, scraping sound--
Oh, no, it's a mouse!



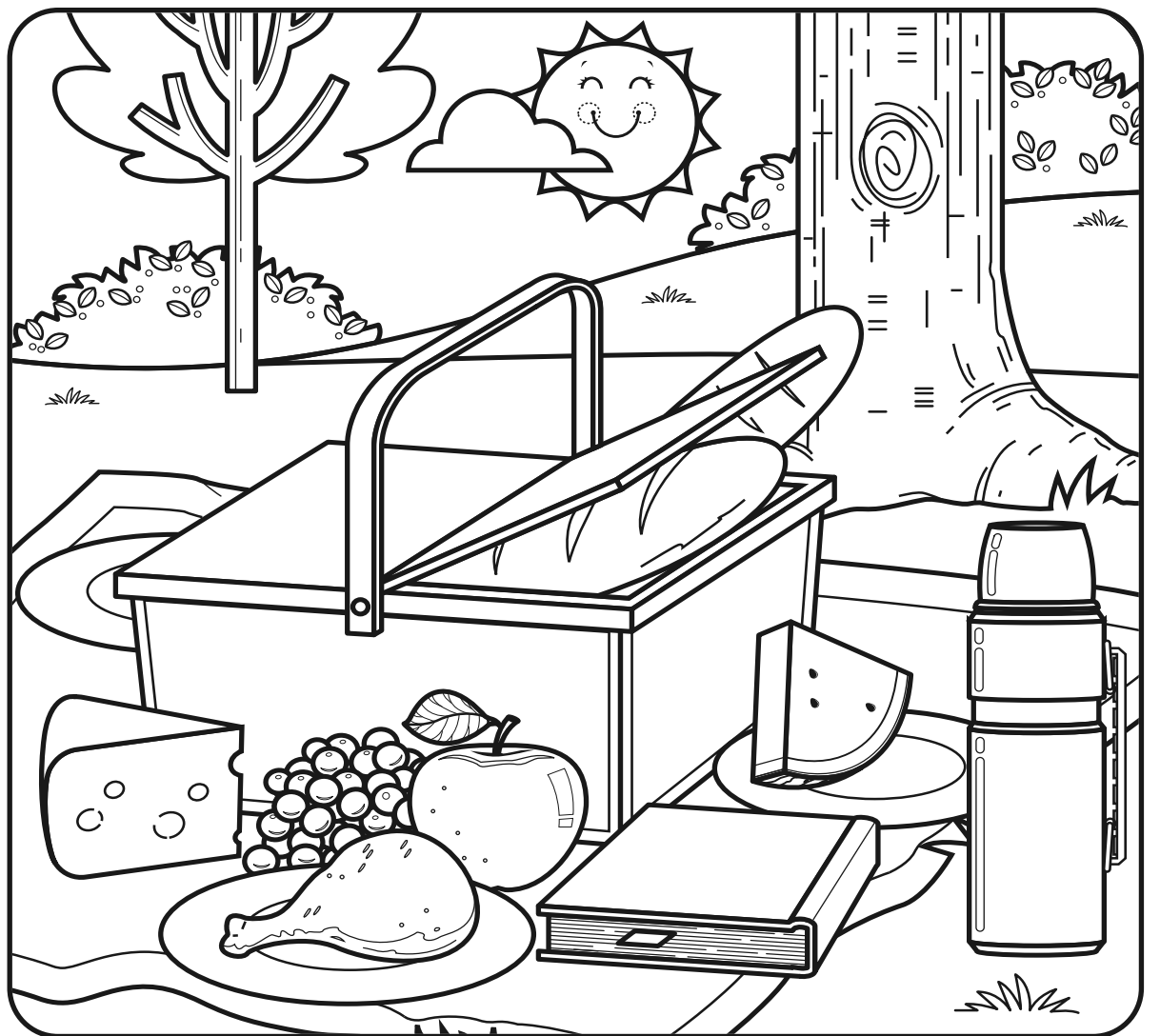
-Constance Brochet

What's this CHALLENGE

Do you know what this gadget was used for? Let us know at specs@globetrotter.net or inbox The Gaspé Spec on Facebook. (Answer in next week's paper.)

Photograph submitted by Ruth Craig.

Do you have an antique tool or gadget that you're not sure of its purpose? Send SPEC a photo and let our subscribers help you solve the mystery.
specs@globetrotter.net



HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

You may have a renewed sense of energy and motivation right now, Aries. Capitalize on that to tackle a laundry list of projects that have been sitting on the back burner.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, your sense of humor and quirky personality could get you a few extra chuckles from friends this week, but try not to take it too far. Factor in time for serious pursuits.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

Gemini, when focusing on your

health this week, remember that stress reduction is an important component of getting healthy. Aim for activities that focus on relaxation.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Everyone's heads are seemingly in the clouds right now, Cancer. It may feel like you are the only person with your feet on the ground ready to get down to business.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, people have been gravitating in your direction for some time seeking advice. You can open up conversations to other topics that are important to you with such a captive audience.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Strong emotions could be

drummed up this week and may cause you to be distracted more so than usual. Try to get a break so you can make some time sort things out.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, being honest with yourself is important as you confront a notable challenge. Accept a self-assessment and devise a plan to make the most of this opportunity.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

You have to develop a strategy before making your next move, Scorpio. Whether it is a business proposal or something with a friend or family member, don't be too hasty.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, you may notice that people are very sensitive to what

you are saying, so you may have to change your approach if you want your message to be well-received.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Something could be brewing but you can't identify what it is just yet, Capricorn. This could lead you to feeling restless and out of sorts. Give it some time and it will work out.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Others' words are meaningful to you right now, Aquarius. Consider these opinions and spend time figuring out how to incorporate this advice.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, often it can be challenging to take the high road But that's

just what you have to do right now. Others will recognize your willingness to set a good example.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

AUGUST 25

Blake Lively, Actress (37)

AUGUST 26

John Mulaney, Comic (42)

AUGUST 27

Aaron Paul, Actor (45)

AUGUST 28

Shania Twain, Singer (59)

AUGUST 29

Liam Payne, Singer (31)

AUGUST 30

Cameron Diaz, Actress (52)

AUGUST 31

Jeff Hardy, Wrestler (47)

New Richmond Agricultural Fair to be held between August 22-25

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The New Richmond Agricultural Fair will be held from August 22 to August 25 at the fairgrounds in New Richmond West. A blend of family activities, games, horse riding events and music will mark the fair.

Activities will start on Thursday with the traditional wine and cheese event, followed by a jam session led by Michael Brash. Entrance to the site will cost \$5 for people 13 and over, and \$3 for children between 6 and 12. Admission is free for children aged 5 and under.

On Friday, the Gymkhana

event will be followed by a show featuring Bonaventure-based singers Alex and Caro. DJ Ash will conclude the music program that night. Entrance fees are \$10 for people 13 and over, and \$5 for children between 6 and 12.

On Saturday, the busiest day at the fair, the program will start with a brunch. Tickets are available in advance and at brunch time. Activities for children, the judging of the dogs, an Extreme Cowboy event, and the junior and 17-plus Gymkhana events will take place during the day. In the evening, Nash Stanley will provide musical entertainment. Entrance fees are \$15 for people 13 and over, and \$7

for children between 6 and 12.

Sunday will also be quite busy, with a brunch, equestrian games, the magic tricks of David Philippe, the ever-popular washer tournament, and the single horse haul. Prizes from the competitions will be handed out at the end of the afternoon.

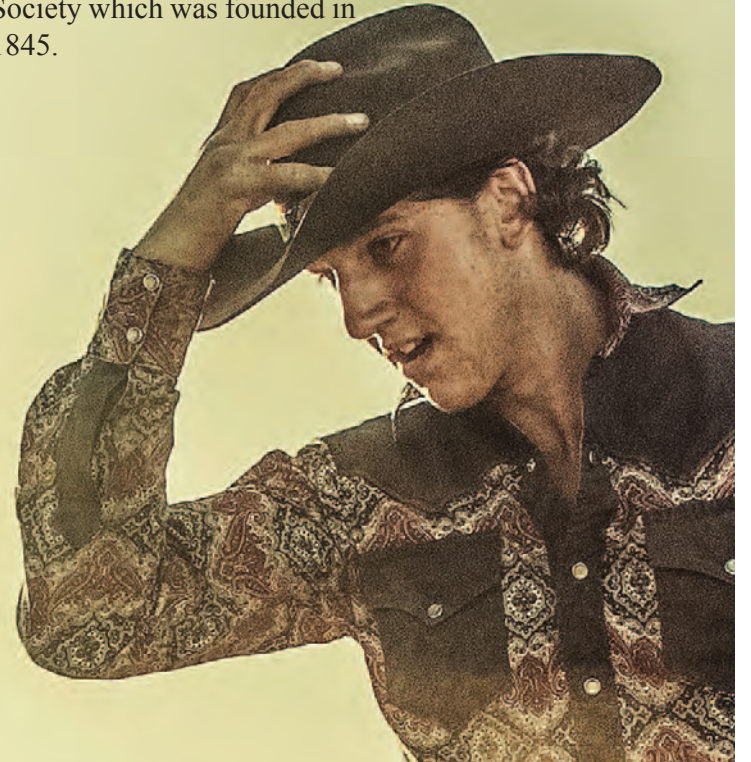
Throughout the weekend, attendees can enjoy canteen service and bar service. In addition, there will be several vendors on site.

Throughout the weekend there will be inflatable games onsite for the young ones to enjoy.

A weekend pass is available for \$35 for people aged 13 and over, and \$15 for chil-

dren between 6 and 12. Check the schedule for more details.

The event is organized by New Richmond's Agricultural Society which was founded in 1845.



Good luck to all participants in the 2024 New Richmond Agricultural Society Fair!

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AUGUST 22-25
AGRICULTURAL FAIR

THURSDAY

- WINE AND CHEESE
- JAMMING SESSION WITH MICHAEL BRASH

FRIDAY

- GYMKHANA OPEN
- MUSIC WITH ALEX&CARO,FOLLOWS BY DJ ASH

SATURDAY

- BRUNCH (TICKETS ON SALE NOW)
- JUDGING OF DOGS
- ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN
- EXTREME COWBOY
- JUNIOR AND 17 + GYMKHANA
- MUSIC WITH NASH STANLEY

SUNDAY

- BRUNCH (TICKETS ON SALE NOW)
- EQUESTRIAN GAMES
- MAGICIAN DAVID PHILIPPE
- WASHER TOURNAMENT
- SINGLE HORSE HAUL
- PRIZES FOR GYMKHANA

ENTRANCE PRICE

THURSDAY

- 13+ : \$5
- 6 TO 12 : \$3
- 5 AND UNDER: FREE

FRIDAY

- 13+ : \$10
- 6 TO 12 : \$5
- 5 AND UNDER : FREE

SATURDAY

- 13+ : \$15
- 6 TO 12 : \$7
- 5 AND UNDER : FREE

SUNDAY

- 13+ : \$15
- 6 TO 12 : \$7
- 5 AND UNDER : FREE

WEEKEND PACKAGE

- 13+ : \$35
- 6 TO 12 : \$15
- 5 AND UNDER : FREE

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