

Ian Lafrenière visits the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GESGAPEGIAG - The Minister responsible for relations with First Nations admits that there is still a lot of work to be done before trust can be reestablished with the government.

While visiting Gesgapegiag and Listuguj on August 15, Ian Lafrenière indicated that efforts are ongoing to improve relations with these communities.

"It's obvious that these are difficult relationships. Why? We are talking about 400 years of history, punctuated by moments that have not been glorious as Canadians and Quebecers. There is certainly mistrust. I am not comfortable telling you that everything is fine, but I am comfortable telling you that we are moving forward. We are gaining trust one file at a time. It will take time," says the Minister.

In Gesgapegiag, the first

subject that was discussed between the minister and the community was the salmon fishing conflict that escalated in late spring.

An agreement that had provided compensation to members of Gesgapegiag for 16 years expired on March 31.

"The Wildlife file was transferred from the ministry, and it was more complex. Together, we agreed that we need to reach a medium and long-term agreement to avoid this type of situation that creates uncertainty and tension. We want to reach an agreement to provide more predictability," the Minister explained.

Given the difficulties in capturing other species, alternative possibilities were also discussed. Additionally, several other priorities were mentioned.

The Minister also took the opportunity to visit the memorial dedicated to Aboriginal Veterans, a significant moment



Minister Ian Lafrenière, Councillor Kevin Methot, Listuguj Chief Scott Martin and Councillor George Martin, in front of the Alaqsite'w Gitpu school.

Photo: Office of Minister Ian Lafrenière

for him as a veteran, and a project in which the Quebec government contributed.

In Listuguj, Mr. Lafrenière reviewed completed projects. "In all cases, these are projects that have respected both the budget and the deadline. I am thinking of the school and the police station. There is a lot of movement and it is very posi-

tive," the Minister mentions.

However, Mr. Lafrenière did not visit Gespeg due to a tight schedule but also for another factor.

"We know that there is a pre-election period in Gespeg. That is why I did not continue my trip. I would say that in terms of schedule and geography, I couldn't do it. And in ad-

dition to this pre-election period, I refrain from visiting the communities. It will be soon," he says, adding that he has visited the 55 communities in Quebec.

"It's important to see the communities. That's where we learn things. It's not in our office," maintains Mr. Lafrenière.

Gilker Residence visits Ferme Bourdages!



Photos: H. Chouinard



PENNY MACWHIRTER

NEW CARLISLE: On August 9, residents of the Gilker Residence in New Carlisle embarked on an excursion by RéGIM bus to the Ferme Bourdages in St-Siméon.

"What a pleasure it was to go as a group on a warm afternoon to the farm," says the director general of the Gilker Residence, Hélène Chouinard.

The staff at Ferme Bourdages reserved a table for the Gilker Residence group and served them strawberry and sugar pies along with tea and coffee.

The group visited the boutique, and made a few purchases of local products before heading to the fields by bus. "Tania Therrien, our guide, explained how the production fields happen and the work involved," explains Ms. Chouinard.

SÉPAQ wants more details before making a statement regarding the Ecorock Dalhousie project

GILLES GAGNÉ

MIGUASHA - The director of Miguasha National Park, Rémi Plourde, says he will make a statement on Dalhousie's pozzolan mine project when more information becomes available.

The project has raised increasing controversy over the last weeks as the company, Ecorock Dalhousie, plans to export 3 million tons of pozzolan from the Port of Dalhousie by 2026 or 2027. Miguasha National Park is managed by the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (SÉPAQ), a division of Quebec's Department of Parks.

The section of the port targeted by Ecorock Dalhousie is located right in front of the Miguasha National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, recognized for its unique fossil reserves. Some of the initiative's opponents are concerned that large-scale pozzolan extraction could cause a mountain facing the park to disappear.

"I am not taking a position at this time. I am not familiar with the project and its constraints. I do not yet have control over it (information). I do not know the repercussions. It

is not in our area. I have no jurisdiction in an area without control over all the elements. I have notified the authorities that could have an interest in monitoring the file. So, I spoke to the (Quebec) Ministry of the Environment, the Fight against Climate Change and Parks, since Miguasha National Park is part of its network. I also spoke to the Parks Canada Agency, which is responsible for UNESCO's World Heritage sites, of which we are a part," Mr. Plourde says.

"The buffer zone of our park is very small. It should also be remembered that the social acceptability of the project depends on New Brunswick. Will there be impacts here? I can't say for the moment. I'm watching the situation," assures Rémi Plourde.

Ecorock Dalhousie's developers are aiming to begin the environmental assessment process for the project in 2025. They are currently working on the engineering and economic study elements of the initiative. They hope to export pozzolan in the form of big rocks to the eastern United States in 2025 to generate revenue for the ultimate project. The end of 2026 or 2027 is a



Photo: G. Gagné

From the cliffs of Miguasha National Park, Dalhousie is only 4.8 kilometres away.

realistic time horizon for them if the studies are conclusive.

A large piece of land acquired in the former industrial zone by Ecorock Dalhousie includes a short railway subdi-

vision that was dismantled in 2011. Ecorock Dalhousie's director general, Francis Forlini, specifies that the mode of transport between the quarry and the port, two kilometres

apart, has not yet been decided. "It could be by truck, by rail or by conveyor," he says.

People from both sides of the Bay of Chaleur are expressing opposition to the project because of its potential visual impact, dust, noise, and the regular dynamite blasts that will be necessary to exploit the quarry on a much larger scale.

Pozzolan is volcanic rock used in cement, which reduces the amount of limestone that must be brought to high temperatures in kilns, therefore reducing greenhouse gas emissions from standard cement plants.

Ecorock Dalhousie is not revealing the amount invested in the project to date or the identity of the financial partners recently found. Francis Forlini, who until June was vice-president of marketing for Canada for cement producer Votorantim, the majority owner of Port Daniel's Saint Mary's Cement facility, assures that his former employer is not among the new partners. However, he plans to sell pozzolan to Saint Mary's Cement if the Dalhousie project is successful. European countries would likely be the largest customers, hence the use of the port.

Salmon: significant deficit anticipated at the Gaspé River Management Corporation

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé River Management Society is forecasting a deficit between \$100,000 and \$150,000 due to the challenging conditions affecting salmon this year.

The high temperature and lack of precipitation in July, along with the lower run numbers this year, have led fishermen to abandon Gaspé rivers, a trend seen across Eastern Quebec.

"The general situation of salmon in Quebec strongly influences the appeal of salmon fishing. We hear about anemic runs and difficult water conditions. In many cases, it's difficult," notes the Society's director, Rémi Lesmerises.

The count carried out at the end of July reported: York River: 683 large salmon, 97 grilse and 138 trout. Saint-Jean (incomplete data): 521

large salmon, 78 grilse and 58 trout. Dartmouth River: 329 large salmon, 39 grilse and 17 trout.

"However, if we compare ourselves on a larger time scale, we are closer to the averages than below," indicates the director.

"A lot fewer fishermen means a lot less money coming in, but we are still strong enough to deal with the situation," emphasizes the director. Currently, conditions are improving as the water is cooling with the colder nights.

"The salmon are no longer under thermal stress. On the other hand, the flows are still low. For the fish, it's not an issue," he says.

At this time of year, only five or six fishermen are active on any one of the three rivers compared to the usual average of 25 to 30.

"Low traffic means salmon



Low run numbers and high temperatures will impact Gaspé rivers, causing a significant deficit.

Photo: Gaspé River Management Society

that see fewer flies. The salmon are then more likely to take them, especially when the water conditions become more pleasant. The fishermen who brave the gloomy atmosphere

are successful. We've heard of several catches in recent days," says Mr. Lesmerises.

He is hoping for rain to increase the flow of the rivers. "It would boost the desire to

fish and allow us to end the year on a high note. And for the salmon, a burst of water would allow them to reach their spawning grounds more easily," notes the director.

Police report

The Listuguj mother of two young children who abandoned them in November 2022 was sentenced to 18 months in jail on August 15 at the New Carlisle Courthouse. The 25-year-old woman pleaded guilty to criminal neglect causing bodily harm after leaving them alone in her home for four days, a charge that carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison. "There was a stay of procedure on the abandonment charge because she entered a plea of guilty on a more severe charge. That's why a charge was dropped. It would have been overcharging. The woman didn't have a criminal record. She came from a broken family, with heavy drug problems. Her childhood was a tough one. She doesn't have parenting capacity. She lacks discernment. Another charge was dropped and the accusation related to causing bodily harm to an animal ended up with a concurrent sentence of two months in prison," explains criminal prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier. The woman will also be required to serve a three-year probation period, followed by an additional period of 18 months of supervision. "She wants to get rid of her drug addiction. She has been in prison since her Ontario arrest and she volunteered while imprisoned to start therapy to counter her addiction. We reminded her that she also had to deal with her court case and that's what we did. She will be required to undergo therapy while in prison just the same," adds prosecutor Frappier-Routhier. While under arrest in Ontario, the 25-year-old woman was sentenced to 90 days in prison for fraud cases.

Floribert Bélanger, 74, from Saint-Alphonse, was arrested and appeared in court on August 19 at the New Carlisle courthouse after failing to be present on August 15 for his sentencing presentations in a sexual assault case. "An arrest warrant was issued and he was arrested on Sunday (August 18) and he appeared in court the following day for his bail hearing. It was decided by the tribunal presided over by Quebec Court Judge Denis Paradis that he would stay in prison until his October 7 return to court for the representations over his sentence," says criminal prosecutor Sam Bernard. Floribert Bélanger is a repeat offender found guilty in February 2024 of two counts of sexual assault and one of indecent assault. Sam Bernard thinks that the October 7 court appearance will be used to set the official date of the sentencing representations and deliberations. "It will probably take place during that week, just a few days later," he adds. Floribert Bélanger was sentenced to 22 months of prison in 1991 and two years less a day in 2011 for similar sexual offences.

An act of vandalism was committed in the last few days at the Grande-Rivière cemetery. Ten tombstones were knocked over by unidentified individuals. The acting mayor of Grande-Rivière, Gaston Leblanc, indicates that a surveillance camera system should be installed by the parish administrators to avoid this type of incident. According to Mr. Leblanc, the vandalism likely occurred before August 16 but was not discovered until August 17. People mobilized on August 24 to replace the monuments. Sûreté du Québec communication officer Frédéric Deshaies did not comment on the case, suggesting that no formal complaint has been filed yet.

A man died from injuries sustained when his vehicle left the road on the afternoon of August 16 on Route 299 near Cap-Seize, south of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts. The Sûreté du Québec confirmed the victim's death the following morning. Accident investigators were onsite following the accident. At this time, the cause of the accident remains unknown. "The accident is still under investigation," says Sûreté du Québec's spokesperson Frédéric Deshaies. The police no longer reveal the identities of accident victims, leaving that task to the Coroner's Office.

On August 22, around 1:30 a.m., emergency services responded to a vehicle crash in the Montée Morris area in Gaspé. Upon arrival, police arrested the 18-year-old driver from Gaspé for driving while impaired by alcohol. The driver was transferred to a hospital for treatment of minor injuries. The file will be submitted to the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions for review and analysis regarding potential charges.

As hundreds of thousands of students prepare to return to school across Quebec, the presence of school buses, pedestrians, cyclists and crossing guards will increase road traffic. To enhance safety, Sûreté du Québec police officers will increase their presence around schools from August 26 to September 6. Road users are urged to be extra cautious to ensure a safe return to school for everyone.

The police therefore ask the public to respect the posted speed limits, noting that fines are doubled for violations in school zones during school hours. In school zones, the term is indicated by road signs or, in the absence of such signs, begins at 7 a.m. and ends at 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, from September to June.

Road users, including cyclists, must stop more than five metres away from a bus or minibus with flashing red lights or a mandatory stop signal displayed.

When traffic is directed by a peace officer, school crossing guard or flagman responsible for directing traffic during work, everyone must obey their orders and signals despite any signage to the contrary.

Drivers are required to stop when approaching a pedestrian crossing when someone has entered the yellow or white lanes or has clearly indicated their intention to do so.

It is also important to realize how important it is to respect signage around schools, particularly in areas reserved for buses, areas where parking is prohibited and drop-off areas. Many parents drop their children off at school. They must ensure that they do so in a safe place to avoid reckless maneuvers such as double parking and U-turns.

For more information on the various regulations, Sûreté du Québec officers invite people to consult the Société de l'Assurance Automobile du Québec (SAAQ) website at the following link: <https://saaq.gouv.qc.ca/securite-routiere>.



A CN train en route to Quebec

Photo: N. Sergerie

End of the conflict at CN: The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie is relieved

NELSON SERGERIE

NEW RICHMOND - The president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) expressed relief that the Canadian National (CN) labour dispute was short-lived.

CN declared a lockout at midnight on August 22, which was lifted about 18 hours later following the federal government's intervention in the conflict.

"It's a great relief for all of our customers, our employees, and for us since our operations were not disrupted," says SCFG president Éric Dubé.

On August 22, cars were still being transported to Matapédia, awaiting pickup by CN to be taken west. "I imagine that today (August 23), we will know exactly when CN will come. Will there be a pickup at the end of the day in Matapédia? I hope so. We will know during the day. By tomorrow (August 24), everything will be back to normal," Mr. Dubé hopes.

Since August 15, the company has accelerated operations to ship as many cars as possible to Matapédia so that they could be picked up by CN before rail traffic was interrupted.

"Will there be a day or two delay for the cars stuck in Matapédia or Mont-Joli? It's a lesser evil," he says.

The impacts for the SCFG will be minimal. "It will just have thrown our operating structure out of balance. Last

weekend, we had people work overtime in anticipation of the conflict but, no, we are very happy that it only lasted one day," Mr. Dubé says with relief.

Several economic and political players are now questioning whether railways should be declared an essential service. Mr. Dubé remains cautious on that point.

"Today, when it takes the economy of an entire country – and I do not want to get involved in negotiations between unions and employers – but in cases like that, there are things that are essential for the country. We were talking about \$350 million in losses per day of the strike. Taking the economy of an entire country... Yes, there may be things that should be reviewed," analyzes the president.

The company had planned to reassign its train personnel to maintenance activities on the railway during the lockout.

The two main railway companies in the country, CN and CPKC, transport \$1 billion worth of goods every day. Ottawa's intervention, which on August 23 was about to impose binding arbitration on the parties and the request to the Canada Industrial Relations Board to order the two railways to resume operations under expired collective agreements until new agreements are reached, led CN to backtrack and launch a back-to-work plan.

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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Inflation rate impact: We are slowly reaching a reduced impact

The inflation rate continues to fall, according to data released on August 19-20 by Statistics Canada. Although this is good news, we must recognize that the inflation rate is still above zero, meaning that prices are still increasing, but at a reduced pace.

In July, according to StatsCan's monthly report, the inflation rate stood at 2.5%, a 0.2% decrease from June. This was also the lowest rate since March 2021, which was 40 months ago. The encouraging sign is that the inflation rate continues to decline.

Factors contributing to the falling inflation rate includes the stabilization and occasional decline of prices in the automobile industry, travel, hydrocarbons, and reduced electricity expenses.

We are consequently approaching what we could call a comfort zone, without having reached it. Canada's society is nearing the target that will encourage the Bank of Canada, our central bank, which is a public entity, to lower its policy interest rate over a longer period. The reduction began on June 5 with a 0.25% cut, and was maintained on July 24 with a similar downward move. The policy rate now stands at 4.5%, compared to 5% at the end of 2023.

At 2.5%, the inflation rate is approaching the average of the last 20 years. Is there room for optimism? We could say yes, as we are nearing the balance we seek. The economy is not performing as well as it did in 2021 or 2022. We have entered a slowdown period. Consumers are more cautious with their spending, uncertain whether it will continue as it did two or three years ago. Employment has slowed down for two months, with some job losses, though we have not yet seen massive layoffs.

Inflation should ease further in the coming months. It will remain positive, but at a somewhat reasonable rate. The Bank of Canada lowers its policy rate as a way to counter inflation, so that the economic slowdown is not too severe. At the present time, the economy is growing at a slower pace than average.

Caution is required since there is neither a per-

fect inflation level nor a perfect economic state. Yes, the price of vehicles is going down but there is still price resilience in services.

Although our electricity bill is lighter this year, thanks to a mild winter (which should be a cause of concern, environmentally speaking, but that's another topic), Hydro-Québec rates have and will continue to rise. Our food bill looks more stable than it has been in the past three years, with the inflation rate currently at 2.7% in that sector, down from 8% last year.

Housing remains major concern

At the other end of the spectrum, the housing component of inflation is softening a bit but remains very high, with an inflation rate of 8%. This reflects the breathtaking growth of the country's population and significant housing shortcomings by both levels of government over the past 30 years. The Bank of Canada has nothing to do with it, although its increase of the policy rate from 0.25% to 5% between 2020 and 2023 didn't help recent years' housing accessibility.

On the one hand, the housing shortage drives property owners to increase their price when selling, keeping in mind that a portion of the population will abandon paying a rent for the so-called security offered by becoming owners as well. On the other hand, the shortage of rental apartments creates an upward spiral for rental prices.

For the moment, mortgages are still rising in Canada despite a restrictive monetary policy (decreasing policy rates) because the housing market is far from balanced. A balance market means that the vacancy rate should hover around 3% but in most Canadian cities and small towns, it is less than 1%. In fact, it is often close to zero.

However, the Bank of Canada will likely bring its policy rate from 4.5% to 3% over the next year, which is good news. The next adjustment is scheduled for September 4, and many people are eagerly awaiting Governor Tiff Macklem's announcement.

So, the forecast for the coming months is fair, without being overly good. If we exclude the mortgage component of the inflation rate, the latter currently stands at 1.8%.

With international trends pushing for policy reductions elsewhere, the inflation rate is likely to continue decreasing for some time. Jerome Powell, who heads the Federal Reserve in the United States, indicated on August 23 that a policy rate cut might be announced at the next Federal Reserve

meeting on September 17-18. He sounded quite determined to do so. Unlike Canada, the United States policy rate has not decreased in recent months.

Canadian consumers will need to be patient, as policy rate hikes of 2023 are still being felt, with their effect lasting up to 18 months. Similarly, the impact of Canada's policy rate reductions from June and July, and those to come, will likely be fully realized by the end of 2025 or later.

Letter to the Editor

In the July 31 issue of the Spec, an article by Nelson Sergerie concerning the garbage, recycling and compost bin service to the residents in Percé Municipality, particularly the Chandler area, said: "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 Gaspé Intermunicipal Residual Materials Treatment Board (GIRMTB).

While the Chandler region of the municipality noticed improved services at the time Nelson Sergerie wrote the article, here at Pt. St. Peter, we were receiving abysmal service.

At Pt. St. Peter after July 16, we had no blue bin pickup until August 13, a full four weeks. Several residents here phoned, including myself. I phoned Matrec on three separate occasions, speaking to Nathalie, Corrine and Myles all of whom assured me the bins would be emptied the next day, but to no avail.

I also phoned GIRMTN and spoke to Jose who assured me Marie Christyne would phone the next day. She never did.

I suspect the extra trucks being deployed in the Chandler region had been taken from this end of the municipality!

On August 6, despite all my phone calls, Matrec once again failed to pick up the green and brown bins.

It is nonsense for Matrec to make the excuse that there's a 32% increase in recycling, garbage and compost in the summer months. There's always a volume increase in refuse every summer, and this ought to be factored into the number of trucks and employees. If Matrec hasn't enough trucks, they should fulfill their mandate by having workers work overtime or on the weekends.

Elizabeth Ballans, Pt. St. Peter

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Increase in students at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles is expecting 1,279 students for the fall 2024 session, which began on August 19.

This marks an increase of 42 students compared to last year and 147 more than in the fall 2022 session.

"The CEGEP is doing great promotional activities in the Gaspésie but also in Quebec with some 250 students coming from other regions of Quebec. We have about 120 foreign students and we have better retention of students from the Gaspésie. It's a multitude of factors," explains the Director of Studies, Serge Rochon.

Among these factors, the Director notes the twenty or so programs offered, the small groups of students, and the close relationships between professors and students, which promotes success.

"We have positioned our educational institution well in recent years, and we have more and more students in our classrooms," he continues.

New measures were put in place to allow foreign students to come and study in Canada despite strict rules.

"We are managing to maintain the number of international students. Last year was a record year. We are maintaining these students who come from France and African countries. This is good news for our study programs, as it allows us to maintain them," explains Mr. Rochon.

The revision of the Childhood Education Technique program is still underway.

"We are going to equip ourselves with a new version of the program. We started our

work last winter and we will finish it this year. This is a program where we had no registrations last year. We are going to significantly modify the study program that we will present in a few weeks," indicates the director of studies, recalling the significant need for workers in the region.

The same reflection will be done with the Aquatic Products Transformation program offered in Grande-Rivière.

"The program has been suspended for several years. We are going to start a major project this year to try to look at it in depth and see how we can make it attractive for a relaunch at the UPAQ," emphasizes Mr. Rochon.

The Police Technology program is under development at the Gaspé campus.

"We are starting to hire our first professors. We have a version of the program that is not completed but is very advanced. We will be able to unveil it very soon because we will soon begin our promotional activities," emphasizes Mr. Rochon.

The first policing students are expected at the start of the fall 2025 school year. The work to build the laboratories for this training will be done during the year. "We need to create some pretty specific laboratories. We're talking about apartments, bars, and police stations where we do all sorts of simulations. We're going to prepare everything over the course of the year to be ready for the start of the 2025 school year," says the director.

As for the idea put forward this summer by politicians to train wildlife officers in the region due to a labour short-



The Gaspé campus of the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles

Photo: N. Sergerie

age, particularly in this region, the CEGEP has not been contacted.

"There are other CEGEPs in Quebec that offer this training. Sometimes, it's difficult to set up the program everywhere in the territory. We have a lot of programs at the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles, and sometimes it becomes difficult to add more since we already have Police Technology. We're always listening and, if we can meet a need in the region, we'll be there," says Mr. Rochon.

International students

The CEGEP believes that it is too early to comment on the Quebec bill that would limit the number of foreign students in the province.

The Coalition Avenir Québec government intends to table a bill in the next parliamentary session to regulate the registration of international students in higher education institutions.

Since the content of the

bill is not yet known, the CEGEP is unable to determine what the impacts of the legislation would be on its activities.

The college welcomes

about 120 foreign students this year, representing nearly 10% of the student body.

The CEGEP indicates that it will monitor the situation closely.



24-unit housing complex in Saint-Siméon.

Photo: Pierre Bourdages, architect

24 units are now available in Saint-Siméon

Nelson Sergerie

SAINT-SIMEON - The 24-unit complex in Saint-Siméon, designed for seniors and those with mild loss of autonomy, welcomed its first tenants on July 1.

The project, which began in 2018, faced delays and cost increases due to the pandemic and the sharp rise in construction costs, bringing the total cost to \$9 million.

All levels of government came to the rescue to make the project a reality.

"It's the lifeline of the housing industry. The 24 units were filled by people from Saint-Siméon. There are houses and apartments available. Houses for sale and new families coming in. It fills part of the demand we had," says Mayor Denis Gauthier.

The building includes 20 three-and-a-half apartments and four four-and-a-half apartments.

Depending on demographics, needs may shift after 2035, and some apartments could become available for social housing.

Attendance by campus for this fall compared to last year.

Campus	2023-2024	2024-2025
Gaspé French Section	585	653
Gaspé English Section	89	99
Îles-de-la-Madeleine	157	130
ÉPAQ	128	117
Carleton-sur-Mer	278	280
Total	1237	1279

Gaspé Municipal Update: Town Hall renovations higher than budget

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ: - Steps are still being taken to potentially file a legal appeal against the architects and engineers who designed the plans for the ongoing work at the Town Hall.

"It's still in the process. I can't go any further," said Mr. Côté.

When asked whether the parties are in discussions or if a formal notice has been served, the mayor once again remained cautious.

"We're at the legal level, so I'm going to keep a big reserve on my comments. We'll let the legal specialists chat among themselves. I don't want to interfere in the process," replied the mayor, who is a trained lawyer.

The contractor in charge of the project had discovered a problem between the design of the building's façade wall and what had been agreed upon during planning, a surprise that should have been noted by the engineers and architects when designing the renovation plans, Mr. Côté indicated in July.

The additional costs amount to \$700,000. The Town had adopted a \$4.3 million borrowing bylaw, which included plans and specifications, and the work contract was initially set at \$2.9 million, representing a savings of \$1 million.

"It had pleasantly surprised us, but the million has melted like snow in the sun. One of the issues we have is that we have no guarantee that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs will extend the missing amount. The ministry pays 65% of the bill after the call for tenders but now they do not want to go back up to the amount initially planned. It's not our fault if there were errors in the plans and specifications," said the elected official.

Rue des Touristes

Work to protect Rue des Touristes, located in the Anse-à-Valleau sector of Gaspé, will not be done until 2026.

The street, which has been highly vulnerable since a devastating storm in December 2016, will face a ten-year wait before it receives adequate protection but, even then, the solution may not resolve all the problems, according to the mayor.

"It required financial assistance from Civil Security and it took a long time to agree on the principle of compensation in



Rue des Touristes the day after the December 2016 storm

Photo: Archives

the case of bank erosion. It was a very long and painful process, from ministry approvals to everything. In short, it was endless," comments the mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté.

Once this step was completed and a financial agreement was reached, in which Quebec pays 75% of the estimated \$4 million cost, plans and specifications were ordered in June at a cost of \$644,000.

"If we didn't need environmental studies, the work would have been done before the end of 2025 but we know that environmental studies always have delays of a year, a year and a half, two years, which means that there will be no potential work until 2026," calculates the elected official.

He hopes that work will begin in early 2026 to be completed by the end of the year.

"The high tides have been around for eight years, and there is still about a two-year delay left. I understand the exasperation of the people in the area," says the mayor, who considers himself lucky that no new storm has hit the area.

However, the battle to protect the coastline is far from over.

The Ministry of Public Safety only wants to pay for the riprap for the area affected by the 2016 storm, leaving the ends of the planned work vulnerable.

"We fear the end effects. When the water hits the riprap, it will affect the sides of the riprap and create new erosion zones. We fear this effect, our specialists have these fears, but the ministry does not want to pay. We will continue to make the ministry see reason," says the mayor, who indicates that approximately 20% of the work remains to be completed.

The plans and specifications address this end effect, which is defined as the turbulence caused by water striking the

ends of a structure and eroding the soil of unprotected neighbouring properties. Severe erosion zones could emerge, potentially leading to significant land loss for neighbours.

"If we let nature take its course, it would take away the road and relocate dozens of houses. In short, we would have had to practically close the village if we had listened to what the people from the ministry told us at the beginning. No one had noticed that the road was the next to disappear and right after that, it was houses. It took them a while to realize that it didn't make sense to let nature take its course unless we decided to condemn the village of Anse-à-Valleau. As a town, we weren't ready for that," says Mr. Côté.

In the event of another storm causing further damage, the mayor believes that an emergency decree could be issued to bypass environmental regulations and allow for the street's reconstruction.

Questions about housing for foreign students

NELSON SERGERIE

BONAVENTURE - The René-Lévesque School Services Centre (CSSRL) denies allegations that it does not adequately inform foreign students about the housing situation in Gaspésie.

This response comes after an open letter addressed to the organization on social media claims that the "CSSRL puts immigrants in a situation of extreme vulnerability, even homelessness."

The letter specifically highlighted the housing crisis. "If you are going to bring students from another country, please take the necessary steps to find them housing. Putting the burden of finding housing on someone who has just arrived in Quebec, knowing that the alternative is a hotel at \$125 and up per night or sleeping on the street, leaves room for a lot of abuse and obviously puts vulnerable people in precarious or even dangerous situations," wrote Shawn Grenier of Chandler in the open letter.

The letter also pointed out the difficulties faced by students without access to a car.

The centre has acknowledged the letter. "We have a development agent who is working on this file. He communicates with students who want to study with us. In our communications, we mention it and we refined our communications last January to ensure that people understand the situation and we

clearly state that we are experiencing an unprecedented housing crisis," explains the CSSRL executive director, Sandra Nicol. For a decade, the centre has welcomed between 30 and 40 international students per year and emphasizes that no active recruitment is being done internationally.

The centre is also working on developing housing for students in vocational training.

A project is already underway in Carleton-sur-Mer in collaboration with the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des îles to create six housing units.

Authorizations and funding are expected to move forward.

"We are also working with Bonaventure to develop six housing units. We have a great project with Chandler where we will have the possibility of having six rooms. We are also starting some steps with Grande-Rivière who have some projects of their own. We would like everything to come to fruition to have housing for those in vocational training," notes Ms Nicol.

The director further emphasizes that the centre will have to sit down with partners, as the housing crisis goes beyond education and also impacts immigration.

"We have already had a few meetings with different groups to see how each will clarify their respective roles," mentions the director.

Worst Shrimp Fishing Season Ever

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The 2024 shrimp fishing season will go down in history as the worst ever in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, says the Quebec Shrimp Fishermen's Office.

Out of just over thirty Quebec shrimp fishermen, only eight set sail this year to try to catch the meager quota of 3,060 tonnes. Despite the low participation, most of the quota will still be caught. "There weren't many fishermen, but there wasn't much shrimp to catch either," says Patrice Element, the director of the Quebec Shrimp Fishermen's Office.

Catch rates varied across different sectors. "Personally, I think it's even worse than I expected in Sept-Îles. It's probably better in Anticosti. In the Estuary, it looked pretty much like what we expected to see. In Esquiman, where it's mostly people from New Brunswick and Newfoundland who fish, there too it looks like what we expected at the start of the season," says Mr. Element.

Currently, only three fishermen are still actively fishing. "For people who managed to recover quotas from other fishermen, we may be getting close to recover the costs. For those who only made one or two trips or who didn't fish and who continue to have payments to do, it's catastrophic," says the director, adding that there is still no openness from governments to support the fleet.

Looking ahead to 2025, the director is cautious, as the scientific assessment has not yet been done. "Based on what we see, we could expect something similar to this year or maybe a little better, because in Anticosti, the catch rates have been interesting, but it is still too early to make assumptions," mentions Mr. Element.

"Obviously, if the processing plants continue to operate, we are dependent on the plants' ability to buy shrimp and their ability to obtain products from outside. With the little shrimp we can deliver, it is unlikely that a processing plant will operate with only that," says the director.

ELAN captures documentary material will visiting the Coast

GILLES GAGNÉ

SHIGAWAKE – From August 16 and 22, a crew from the English Language Arts Network (ELAN), visited the south shore of the Gaspé Peninsula, capturing stock shots of Gaspésians from different walks of life within their communities.

The crew's presence also served to provide technical support for CASA's studio in New Carlisle. ELAN's audio technician offered suggestions on soundproofing the studio, how to maximize the use of software, and oversaw a test recording to ensure high-quality sound in CASA's audio/visual studio, which was developed mainly over the last two years.

The crew spent a significant amount of time at the Shigawake Agricultural Fair and Music Festival, considering the importance of the event and the fact that a large cross-section of the Bay of Chaleur population typically attends the event.

"We arrived on Friday night (August 16) around 9 p.m. at the Shigawake Fair, and we threw ourselves right into it. We had an awesome day on Saturday. We took so many shots and did so many interviews. It was my first time in the Gaspésie, and I can appreciate the different landscapes. There was a lot to see and such a short, concentrated



Photo: G. Gagné

Many people along the south shore of the Gaspé Peninsula saw that video crew between August 16 and 21 as Vanessa Rigaux, William Patrick and Tyler Rauman travelled up and down the coast, capturing interesting stock shots. They were quite present at the Shigawake Agricultural Fair and Music Festival.

amount of time," explains Vanessa Rigaux, community development manager and project manager of the Community Digital Arts Hub in the Regions project.

The Community Digital Arts Hub in the Regions is an initiative funded by Heritage Canada's Strategic Fund, within the community life branch responsible for the development of official language communities. The Community Digital Arts Hub in the Regions is an extension of the services offered by the Community Digital Arts Hub (CDAH) designed to reach English-speaking artists and

arts, culture, and heritage organizations located in the various regions of Quebec.

The project fosters partnerships with regional arts, culture and heritage organizations to offer training, capacity-building workshops, paid internships, and mentorship circles focused on digital media.

Partnerships to develop in 10 Quebec regions

CDAH in the Regions supports the production of digital media projects with the overall goal of increasing local content in regional communities.

"After organizing a digital launch in November of 2023, my role is to form 10 partnerships in 10 different regions of Quebec. So far, we have partners in Quebec City, Eastern Townships, Outaouais (Pontiac, Gatineau), Montérégie (Hudson), the Lower North Shore, Mauricie, and the Laurentians. Basically, I put together teams in different regions to support a specific project identified by the partner. This might be a podcast, promotional videos, and workshops around those areas," adds Ms Rigaux.

She and her crew also found time to visit Percé and

explore a bit of the Gaspé Peninsula, despite a very busy schedule, which included work at CASA's studio in New Carlisle.

When will Gaspésians see the material shot in the region by Vanessa Rigaux's crew?

"I am not sure. It will maybe be released through different pieces. There will be a short video promotion for sure," she stresses.

"We captured interviews, performances and festival events. We will work with different editors and use the material as content for the communications staff to work with. (...) Remotely, we will continue to work with the communications staff with CASA-CAMI-VISION throughout the year and provide online training and mentorship in social media strategy and planning," adds Ms. Rigaux.

She was very impressed by the Shigawake Agricultural Fair and Music Festival.

"It is important to say that it was a wonderful experience. We were invited over the final night to the bonfire. Seeing the mix of vendors, music, the agricultural fair, and how the festival has created opportunities to support budding musicians with new music was great. Overall, Shigawake was so welcoming, especially the members of the farming and fishing communities," concludes Vanessa Rigaux.

Quebec again asks Ottawa to collaborate in the fisheries sector

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Quebec Fisheries Minister André Lamontagne took advantage of the annual meeting of the Canadian Council of Fisheries and Aquaculture Ministers on August 15 in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, to once again urge the Department of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard to intensify its collaboration with fishermen, processors and the provinces, as climate change is impacting several fisheries.

While in Gaspé on July 5, Mr. Lamontagne deplored this lack of collaboration at a time when the industry is going through a crisis and must define its future.

He mentioned that the federal government does not seem to have a clear vision for the future.

In the current crisis, it is

more than necessary that future actions be the subject of real consultation in order to ensure the sustainability of coastal communities, said Mr. Lamontagne.

Using the example of shrimp, the Minister mentioned that despite repeated calls from Quebec for increased collaboration between levels of government to respond to this crisis, the federal government has still not indicated its intention to offer substantial structural and financial support measures for struggling fisheries sectors, including Quebec's shrimp fishery, as the Quebec Shrimp Fishermen's Office recalled on August 15.

Last year, 4,500 tonnes of shrimp were landed by Quebec fishermen out of the 8,193-tonne quota. This year's quota is set at 3,060 tonnes.

Another example is the resumption of redfish fishing,

which should have benefited this sector. However, the 5,500-tonne quota currently allocated to Quebec shrimp fishermen is far too small to contribute to the restructuring of this fleet, which is in a very precarious situation.

The Minister also met with his counterparts from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island to discuss the pressing fisheries issues they share.

They agreed that federal government intervention was necessary to support shrimpers and any fisheries in difficulty, emphasizing the importance of joint management of fishery resources overseen by the federal government.

"Several fisheries are currently experiencing major upheaval. I saw this again during my recent visit to the Magdalen Islands, the Lower St.

Lawrence, and the Gaspé Peninsula. In the middle of the fishing season, it is inconceivable that boats have to remain docked. I took advantage of the meeting to reiterate the federal government's responsibility to contribute to the measures needed to ensure the restructuring of fishing fleets in difficulty, particularly shrimp fishermen. We must develop a common vision, which will be supported by jointly developed strategies and action plans. Silos have no place in fisheries," says the Minister.

Mr. Lamontagne mentioned turbot, where the quota fell by more than 50% between 2021 and 2023, from 4,500 tonnes to 2,400 tonnes, with landings of only 179 tonnes last year.

He also mentioned that since 2023, fishing for winter flounder and yellowtail flounder in the Gulf of St. Lawrence has been subject to a morato-

rium. While the federal government is dragging its feet, the Minister mentioned that Quebec has stepped in to provide support to the various stakeholders in the shrimp sector since 2023, including the creation of a working committee made up of fishermen, processors and the Ministère de l'Agriculture, des Pêcheries et de l'Alimentation du Québec (MAPAQ).

Financial assistance of more than \$3.5 million has been granted to the shrimp sector, including \$528,000 to fishermen in difficulty.

In addition, the Quebec government guarantees loans to those at risk for an amount of nearly \$20 million.

Projects to support the sector and hire resources, presented by associations and regional county municipalities, were also funded during this period.

Great weather and good attendance at Shigawake Fair and Music Festival

GILLES GAGNÉ

SHIGAWAKE – While it's too early to finalize the financial details of the 2024 Shigawake Agricultural Fair and Music Festival, early observations

suggest that attendance was among the best in recent years. There were people everywhere during the day or the evening or late at night. Despite the smoky haze from Western Canada's forest fires,

the heat and the sunshine created perfect weather for the event.

Dave Felker, the event's director general, noted that while attendance under the big tent was slightly lighter on

Saturday night, the crowd remained substantial.

"The weather is so nice that a lot of people decide to stay outside," he summed up between stints as a drummer on the stage, presentations of

the bands as the master of ceremony, or short walks here and there to give the strong team of volunteers a thumb up and see if everything is alright.

Here are a few images of this year's event.



Gaëlle Boudreau, from Carleton, was so thrilled to compete in the rabbit competition that she slept in Shigawake and the first word she said upon getting up was "lapins!" (rabbits), her father Mathieu Boudreau (left) told the SPEC. Both rabbits belong to Escuminac documentarist Maryse Goudreau (right), and they both earned second place in their category, much to the delight of Gaëlle.



Lawn tractor drivers were ready for action as they awaited the starting signal, drawing a large crowd to the track. Meanwhile, a music break was called under the big tent.

Photos G. Gagné



The horse haul competition attracted a large crowd on Sunday afternoon despite the heat. A single horse haul was also held on Friday. Gymkhana competitions on Sunday were also well-attended, after a relatively lengthy absence.



Dominick Briand, right, has played in many bands over the years since the inception of a music festival to the agricultural fair in 2009 and, this year, he was the lead singer of Entrepôt Country Live. His band's Saturday afternoon performance was solid. He is joined here by fiddler Benoit Joncas and bassist Kevin Jones.

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Marc Grenon, Missisquoi Historical Society

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Secrétariat aux relations avec les Québécois d'expression anglaise

Québec

Shigawake Fair and Music Festival



The volleyball tournament is always a popular event. Molly Gallibois is seen here making an awesome shot.

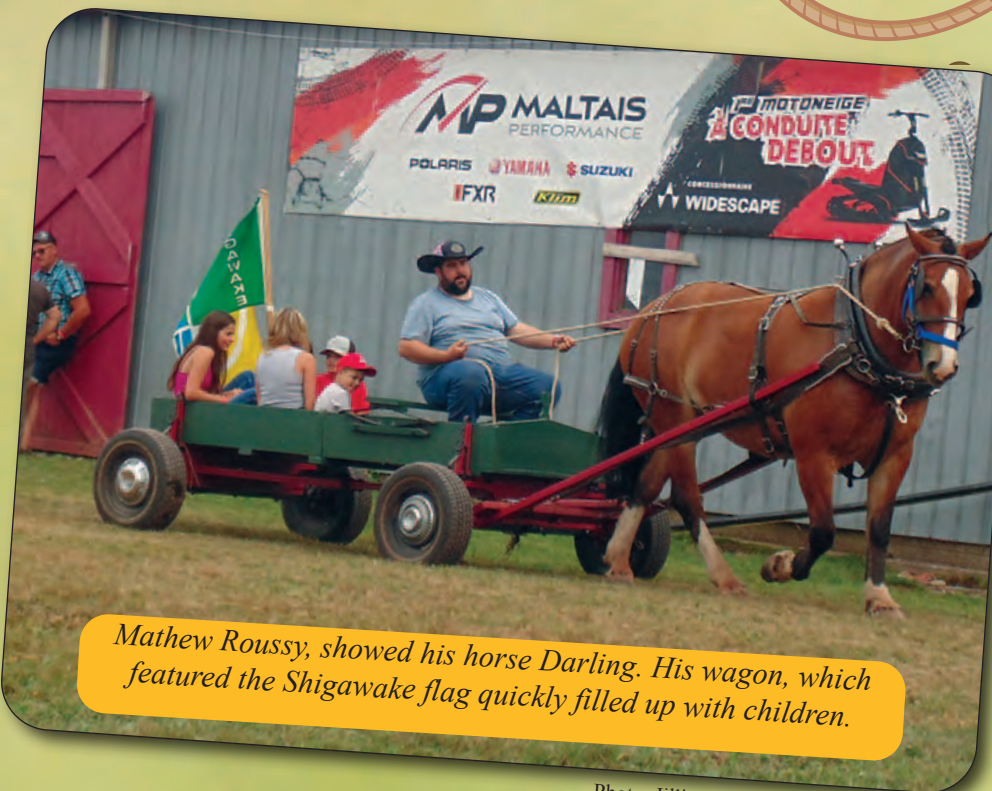
Photo: Jillian O'Connell



Stephanie Huntington won in the new Cowboy Cowgirl Competition



Photo: Daphne Renouf



Mathew Roussy, showed his horse Darling. His wagon, which featured the Shigawake flag quickly filled up with children.

Photo: Jillian O'Connell



Lightning McQueen, AKA Beaux Couture

Photo: Tiffany Grenier



The Tots and Wheels pageant was a popular feature at this year's fair and music festival. It was the second year for the pageant.



Julie Wylie and nephew David are picture-perfect farmers in their flannels and little tractor.

Photo: Tiffany Grenier



Josh Curtis and his daughter Mia.

Photo: Tiffany Grenier

Going out of the region for health care? Call Steve!

CYNHTIA DOW
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CASCAPEDIA: - Travelling outside the region for health care can be intimidating and stressful, but there is help and support. Steve Guimond has been working for Travel4Health, a service established in March 2016 by the Community Health and Social Services Network in partnership with a host of regional anglophone associations including CASA, Vision Gaspé-Percé Now, Council of Anglophone Magdalen Islanders, and the Coasters Association from the Lower North Shore.

The funding for the position has come from the Quebec Community Health Foundation.

Mr. Guimond offers a range of services and supports for people who have to travel to the Quebec City area for health care. Some have to travel more than 1,000 kilometres to receive the medical care they

need.

"We survived COVID and we are still here!" Mr. Guimond told SPEC during a recent interview. He noted that before his position as Patient Navigator was established, the regional groups used a printed toolkit to provide patients with information about the hospitals they were scheduled to visit and find travel services and accommodations in Quebec City.

The toolkits may still be available, but the online site at <https://www.travel4health.ca/> has a host of information that can be easily accessed and walks patients through many of the issues they may face while travelling to and staying in Quebec City.

"People come to the city for a range of treatments," Mr. Guimond explained to SPEC, "Probably number one is oncology (cancer treatments) and number two cardiology (to see heart specialists) but we also have a lot of people coming for surgery, dialysis, and MRI



Steve Guimond.

Photo: Courtesy of Steve Guimond

scans. Many regions do not yet have MRI machines."

Mr. Guimond noted that Gaspesian patients perhaps face the most challenging travel situation, as from most other regions, air travel is relatively simple. "What people from the Gaspé Coast have to go through to get here is unbeliev-

able," he said, "Ten to twelve hours on a bus or in a car... two full days to get here and return, and sometimes the medical appointment lasts just 15 or 20 minutes. If changes were made, the health care system could save a lot of time and money for everyone."

Mr. Guimond mentioned

that many patients are not travelling alone, but have been allowed to bring someone to accompany them. However, eligibility to cover those expenses varies a great deal from region to region. "I sometimes see people here who really should not be travelling alone."

There is also a serious loneliness factor for some who have to stay a long time in the city. "I am currently helping a woman who is in the hospital from May until July 3 and then must stay another 100 days in Quebec City for follow-up treatments. She also needs to remain in isolation. In cases like that, I check in regularly on people."

He noted that representatives of the English-speaking community are working at the level of the regional access committees to highlight the issues that some patients are going through. So far, Mr. Guimond has served almost 500

Cont'd on page 13

St. Andrew's UC prepares to celebrate 185 years

CYNTHIA DOW

NEW RICHMOND: - A series of events will be held this fall to help celebrate the 185th anniversary of St. Andrew's United Church in New Richmond. The cornerstone of the current building was laid on St. Andrew's Day, November 30, 1839, and the church has been at the centre of community life for Protestants in the area ever since.

At a meeting of the session in early August, it was decided to use the upcoming anniversary to promote the church's role in serving the community. Four activities are planned.

On Sunday, September 8, the congregation will celebrate Grandparents Day under the theme "Bring your grandkids

to church," with the service focussing on children and teens. A lunch featuring hot dogs, cupcakes and "a surprise" will be served afterwards in the hall.

The second event for "those who grew up in the congregation" will be held Saturday, October 19. "Teaspoon Night" will be an evening of tasting, with the best dishes in categories such as soup, meat, vegetables and pudding selected. Winners will choose from the white elephant table in the basement.

The third event will be held on the actual anniversary day, Saturday, November 30, from 2 to 4 p.m. A Coffee Shop-themed gathering will feature music and story-telling based on memories of being part of

St Andrew's through the years.

Finally, on Sunday, December 1, representatives of various community partners and other denominations will be invited to a service of Holy Communion, with a lunch served afterwards in the hall.

The celebrations cap off a year or more of upgrades to the lovely wooden edifice, which is one of the oldest religious buildings on the Coast still in use. "People have a lot of pride in it," remarked Jean McWhirter, a member of the anniversary committee.

Several generous donations were received, and then the congregation applied for a Faithful Footprints grant from the United Church to replace the oil furnaces with three heat pumps: one in the hall and two

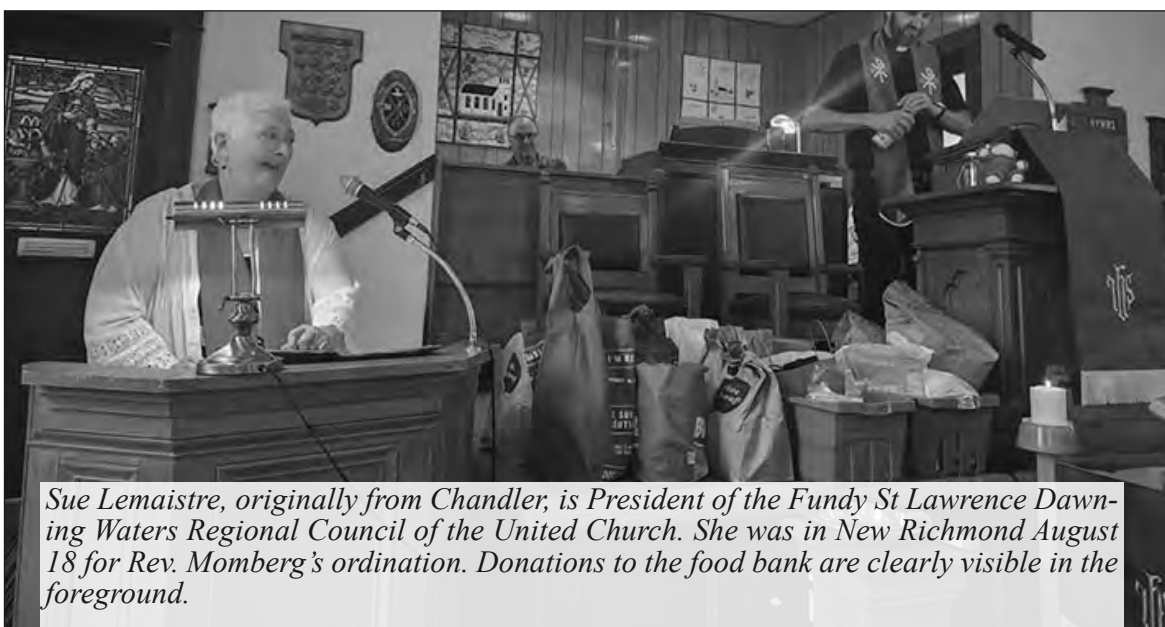
in the sanctuary. "The United Church puts a lot of emphasis on being environmentally friendly," noted Mrs. Powell-Bujold, who sits on the Property Committee for the regional council.

"We also upgraded the hot water tank and we have other things on our to-do list," explained Rev. Pierre Momberg, the current minister. "We want to upgrade the insulation in the roofs of the church and the manse."

Service to the community is a priority of the United Church. An ongoing activity is monthly donations to the food bank in Maria. "We are the

only continuous contributor to the food bank," Mrs. Powell-Bujold explained.

The planning committee also have their eye on next year, when the United Church of Canada will celebrate its centenary. St Andrew's was the home church of the very first Moderator of the United Church, Rev. George Campbell Pidgeon, who was born in Cascapedia in 1872. He helped bring together the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregationalist churches in 1925 to form the United Church and was a key figure in the ecumenical movement in Canada for the rest of his life.



Sue Lemaistre, originally from Chandler, is President of the Fundy St Lawrence Dawning Waters Regional Council of the United Church. She was in New Richmond August 18 for Rev. Momberg's ordination. Donations to the food bank are clearly visible in the foreground.

Photo: Courtesy of Pierre Momberg



Members of the organizing committee include, from left, Jean McWhirter, Rev. Momberg and Delena Powell-Bujold. Missing: Kathleen Paquet and Delilah Hardy.

Photo: C. Dow

A Tribute to the Everyday Worker

HOLLY SMITH

For many people, Labour Day marks the unofficial end of summer, the summer's last hurrah, a time for one last barbecue with the family or that final dip in the ocean. However, Labour Day weekend marks a day with deep importance - a day to remember the struggles and victories of everyday workers.

The Roots of Labour Day

Labour Day started because working conditions in the 1800s were tough. Back then, people often worked 12 hours a day, six days a week. The idea of a "work-life balance" wasn't a thing. In 1872, some brave workers from the Toronto Typographical Union decided they'd had enough. They went on strike, asking for a nine-hour workday, something many of us take for granted today.

Their protest wasn't just a small fight. It sparked a movement across Canada. When 24 of these workers were arrested for standing up for their rights, the public supported them. The outcry

pushed the government to change its views on union workers' rights. This strike was a key moment that led to Labour Day becoming a national holiday in 1894.

Why Labour Day Still Matters

Fast forward to today, and even though the type of jobs Canadians do has changed, Labour Day is still important. It's not just a day off. It's a day to appreciate the hard work that keeps our country going. Whether you're a cashier handling everyday transactions, a nurse working the night shift, a truck driver delivering goods across the country or a construction worker building the roads we use, Labour Day is your day.

Canada's workforce is big and diverse. According to Statistic Canada, there are just under 20.8 million people employed across the country. Yet, even in 2024, the fight for fair pay, safe workplaces, and job security still continues. Statistics Canada estimates that 30% of Canadian workers are unionized. These unions help get benefits like



Labour Day weekend offers the perfect opportunity to take that last road trip of the summer.

paid vacations, safe working conditions and minimum wage laws.

How we celebrate

Labour Day is a chance to celebrate what workers have achieved. In Canada, people mark the day with parades, picnics, and gatherings that show how workers in all

kinds of jobs contribute to Canada. Cities like Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal host large parades where thousands of people come together to celebrate.

These celebrations aren't just about reflecting on the past, they offer an opportunity to look towards the future. They highlight ongoing issues, such as the push for

fairer wages and the need for job security, especially with the economic challenges that many Canadians face daily. It's a reminder that the fight for workers' rights is never truly over.

A Day to Appreciate Work

For many, Labour Day is a well deserved break, a chance to relax and enjoy time with family and friends. But as we fire up the barbecue or take that last summer road trip, it's worth taking a moment to remember why we have this day in the first place.

Labour Day is all about recognizing hard work and the strength of working together. It's a chance to honour those who fought for fair treatment of workers in Canada and to keep working towards fairness for everyone.

So, whether you're taking a break, working or spending time with loved ones this Labour Day, remember, you're part of something bigger. You're helping write a story that honours and values the hard work of everyone.

WI hands out Creative writing awards

CHELSEA FLOWERS

On Monday, June 4, the Gaspé Women's Institute (QWI) visited Gaspé Elementary School to award prizes for the annual creative writing competition.

As part of an extracurricular lunchtime activity, students in grades 4, 5 and 6 were given the opportunity to take part in the Creative Writing Competition for the Women's Institute. This year's theme was to describe their *Everyday Hero*.

Mrs. Bonita Annett and Mrs. Donna Phillips were present at Gaspé Elementary School to announce the regional and provincial winners. Regional Winners:

Grade 4

3rd place: Logan Lapierre, 2nd place : Elizabeth Boulay, 1st place: Samuel Harbour.

Grade 5

2nd place: Rory Kennedy, 1st place: Allister Hunt

Grade 6

2nd place: Alyssa Langlais, 1st place: Kaitlyn Adams

The winning entries for this year's competition were sent to Montreal to compete at the provincial level. This year, there were two students from Gaspé Elementary who won!



The winners of this year's creative writing competition received awards from WI members. From left to right: students Elizabeth Boulay, Samuel Harbour, Logan Lapierre; President of the Gaspé WI Bonita Annett; Principal of Gaspé Elementary Beryl Boyle; Gaspé WI member Debbie Phillips; and students Allister Hunt, Rory Kennedy, Kaitlyn Adams, and Alyssa Langlais.

Samuel Harbour won 3rd place at the Grade 4 level and Allister Hunt won 3rd place at the Grade 5 level.

The aim of the World-Wide organization named the Women's Institute is to assist communities and to help to

create a better world to live in.

The Gaspé County Women's Institute has promoted education in local schools for over 85 years, by sponsoring awards, donating school supplies, snacks and Secret Santa gifts, and sup-

porting the annual creative writing initiative.

"We are very happy that the Gaspé Elementary School has once again participated in the QWI Creative Writing Contest. Writing helps us discover who we are and who we

can be. It is a wonderful opportunity for the students to express their creativity and at the same time be recognized for their efforts and abilities." stated Mrs. Bonita Annett, President of the Gaspé Women's Institute.

Is a letter worth the effort?

PENNY MACWHIRTER

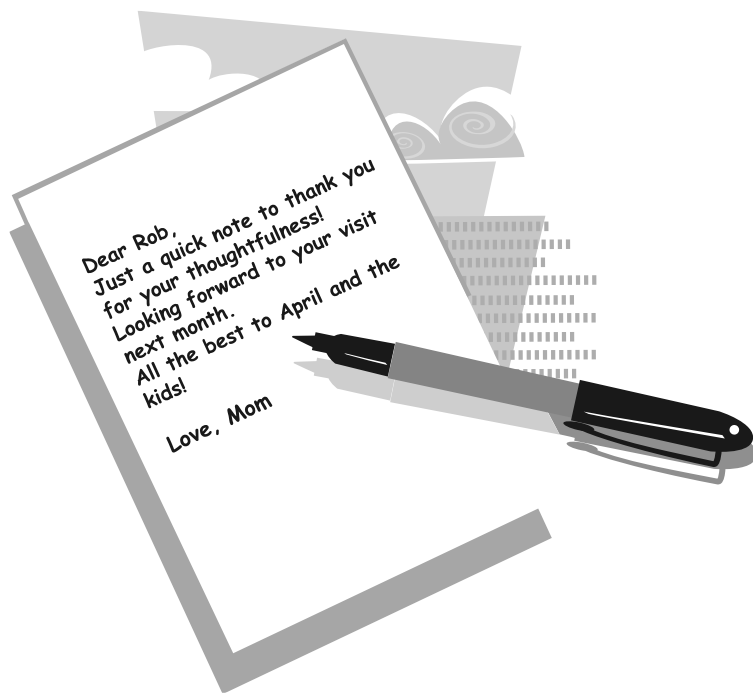
World Letter Writing Day on September 1 was founded by Richard Simpkin, who decided to write to people he considered legends. He was pleasantly surprised to receive their responses and published a book about his letter-writing experience in 2005.

Letter writing has existed for centuries, with ancient letters crafted on metal, wooden tablets, pottery, animal skins and papyrus, and served specific purposes.

Over time, letters evolved into a form of art and, later with postal services, letters took on a more personal purpose.

In today's world, where a text, instant message or email can be sent, and reach its destination within seconds, is there still value in writing letters?

World Letter Writing Day provides the perfect opportu-



nity for anyone wanting to give letter writing a try.

Writing a letter to a friend or relative will show the recipient you care. You tell them about what's happening in your life and inquire about their life. This will compel them to write you back in return. (Don't forget to include your return address.)

Letter writing is also a great way to renew a friendship or acquaintance without any awkwardness. Start with a light and short letter, gradually increasing in length and details as you reconnect.

In addition, you can add small tokens to make your letter special. A special sticker, dried flower, or pho-

tograph are sure to make the recipient feel special and cherished.

A love letter can help you express your emotions and thoughts, that you might not feel comfortable saying out loud. A little spritz of your favourite perfume can add a nice touch to your letter. A quick note slipped in your spouse's lunch box after an especially difficult day or week at work, can remind him/her how much you care.

Don't fret if you have no one to write to. Many veterans associations and facilities for seniors will accept letters. Writing to an elderly person can help reduce their isolation and provide a meaningful connection.

There are other perks to writing letters, including practicing penmanship, a skill that isn't used so much in today's world. Letters also make nice keepsakes. When missing a loved one, taking a letter out of your keepsake

box to reread and hold, can make you feel closer to your loved one.

Other types of letters can help you make a point or share information. Did you recently use a product and were dissatisfied? You could write a complaint letter to the company. Maybe you have an opinion that you want to share regarding current affairs. If that's the case, writing a letter to the editor of a newspaper is a good choice. Organizing your letter helps clarify your thoughts, enhances the impact of your message, and allows you to express yourself more effectively. Letters to the Editor of The Gaspé Spec can be sent to specs@globetrotter.net.

So, find your favourite pen, locate a piece of paper and start writing. ***“Or don't you like to write letters? I do because it's such a swell way to keep from working and yet feel you've done something.”***
~Ernest Hemingway

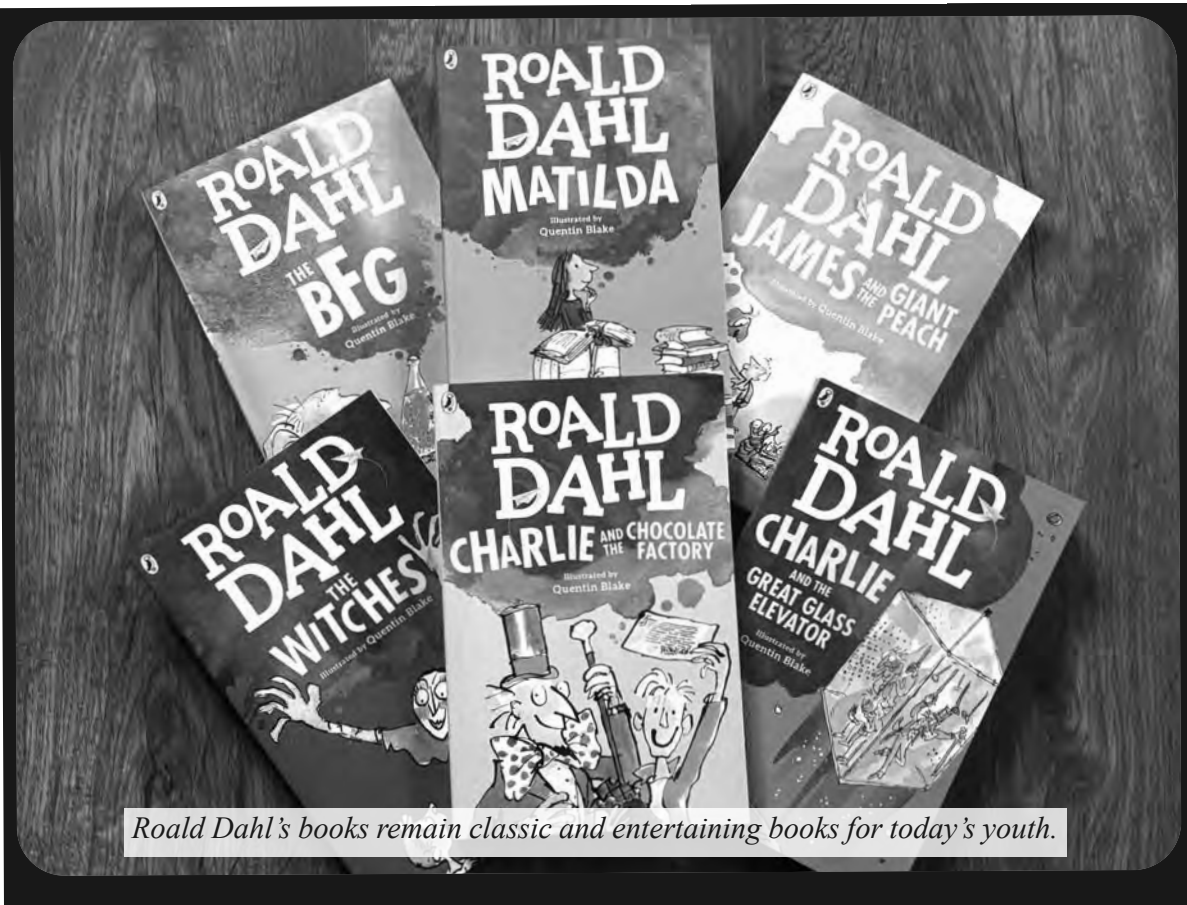
“Those who don't believe in magic will never find it”

PENNY MACWHIRTER

JILLIAN O'CONNELL

On September 13, Roald Dahl fans worldwide celebrate the birthday of the ever-popular author of unforgettable children's books such as Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, Witches and The BFG.

Dahl was born in Llandaff, South Wales, on September 13, 1916, to Norwegian parents. As a child, he spent his summer vacations visiting with his grandparents in Oslo. He was a mischievous child who liked to play pranks. He says in his autobiography *Boy: Tales of Children*, that upon graduation, his mother wanted him to attend university, but he responded, "No thank you. I want to go straight from school to work for a company that will send me to wonderful faraway places like Africa or China." It wasn't long after that he went on an expedition to Newfoundland. After that, he worked in Tanzania, Egypt and Africa. When World War II broke out, he enlisted as a special constable and later in the Royal Air Force, serving as a fighter pilot. In 1942, he worked as the assistant air attaché in Washington, D.C., during which time he also



Roald Dahl's books remain classic and entertaining books for today's youth.

spied for the British Government. Dahl's writing career began when author C.S. Forester encouraged him to write about his experience in the Air Force. Those articles were published in the *Saturday Evening Post* magazine.

He eventually wrote several books, including one for Walt Disney, and even a romance story. Although he hit best-seller status, true fame didn't occur until he started writing children's books.

During his career, he authored 16 children's books, which have been translated into 68 languages and many of which were made into movies. One might think Dahl's books and characters seem silly, but they each have profound lessons within. When reading *The BFG*, readers will learn that not all heroes wear capes. The power of friendship and kindness is also a recurring theme in the book. In the novel *Matilda*, Roald Dahl

demonstrates how being unique is a good thing. He also teaches children to be advocates and push when they feel strongly about something, that their beliefs and opinions hold value as illustrated in this excerpt from *Mattilda* "Never do anything by halves if you want to get away with it. Be outrageous. Go the whole hog. Make sure everything you do is so completely crazy it's unbelievable"

Although the books were

widely popular with young readers, teachers and parents, they did receive some criticism. Some critics and parents considered the books controversial since oftentimes the themes involved revenge on adults, who had wronged the children in the story. Dahl, however, claimed that children have a cruder sense of humour than adults and young readers found appeal in the themes of the stories.

Perhaps one of the things children find most entertaining aspects of Dahl's books is his use of funny-sounding words such as Esio Trot, Fimbo Feez, Bungo Buni, Dafu Duni, Yubee Lini, Kirasuku Malbuku, Alipenda Kakamenda, Fuikika Kanderika, Kitimbibi, Fumboleezi, Gugumiza, Anapolala. His unique use of language led to the publication of the *Oxford Roald Dahl Dictionary* in 2016, which highlighted 8,000 words used in his books. Approximately 500 of the words were invented by Dahl, while the others were real words which had fallen out of use, which Dahl succeeded in reviving.

With 300 million books sold and one new book sold every 2.5 seconds, Roald Dahl's books remain classic and entertaining books for today's youth.

patients, with support offered to just over 100 people per year, sometimes for multiple trips to the city. Altogether 1,036 interventions have been undertaken.

There have been considerable improvements already to the way patients from the regions are being treated. For example, in the past, patients who had been transported by the health care system to Quebec City were sometimes required to find their own way home. Now, those brought in by the medivac transporters are also sent home that way.

Mr. Guimond also noted a significant increase in the ability of Quebec City hospitals to respond in English to the needs of his clients. "Things have changed a lot in the local hospitals. It's never been much of an issue with doctors, because many of them have trained in English. Now at the nursing level, the younger generation of recent recruits enjoy speaking English... and I find that the staff here really have the interests of the patients at heart. They do an incredible job in difficult circumstances, and that is not always fully acknowledged."

However, a problem that requires a solution is the lack of English-language printed material about things like preparation for surgery and post-surgery instructions. "What's frustrating is that all this material exists in the English institutions in Montreal. But we are told that the documentation is institution-specific, so it is not being shared."

He said a major challenge that affects all people throughout the system is the long waiting lists for treatment.

For more information about the services he can offer, you can contact Mr. Guimond directly at 418-932-0095 or by email at navigator@qchfoundation.org. Don't forget to check out <https://www.travel4health.ca/> to help you organize your trip.



ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

It's easy to lose perspective when it comes to the important friends and family in your life, Aries. Start rethinking where to devote your attention and energy.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, if you feel adventure is calling you, you can always take a break and get out there and answer that call. Take a road trip this week or even explore a new neighbourhood nearby.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, be sure to get off to an early start regarding plans this week. Let others involved know that you'll probably be picking them up bright and early.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, if you are not up for a night out on the town or much socializing the next few days, it's perfectly fine to stay close to home. Everyone needs a break from time to time.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, when you are in a good mood, it's hard for people around you to keep up with your level of energy. Don't be surprised if some people in your posse tire out before you.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you've never been good about asking for help. This week you'll be pleasantly surprised by how quickly a family member jumps in to give you the boost you need.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Typically you are very easy to get along with, Libra. But this week others may describe you as

uncompromising and uncooperative. Think about what is prompting this change of tune.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you aren't about to settle without getting what you want. When road blocks come up this week, you may be frustrated when things don't go your way. Stay the course.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Try to fill your days with the arts and music this week, Sagittarius. They are what you need right now to put you in a positive mood and turn things around.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Things have been busy in your life, Capricorn. That mile-long list doesn't seem to be getting any shorter. You might need to call in some help to get through all of the tasks.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, someone has been keeping tabs on what you have been doing from afar. You don't know whether to be flattered or concerned about this attention. You'll learn soon enough.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, it is time for loved ones to get together and have a serious conversation about something that involves the whole family. You just don't know if you're ready to deal with it.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER 4

Beyoncé, Singer (43)

SEPTEMBER 5

Anabelle Wallis, Actress (40)

SEPTEMBER 6

Idris Elba, Actor (52)


SEPTEMBER 7

Gracie Abrams, Singer (25)



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Announcements



In Memory

BEARISTO: Jack

February 10, 1930 – September 1, 2023

In loving memory of a dear husband, father and grandfather.

*I don't need a special day,
To bring you to my mind.
The days I don't think of you,
Are very hard to find.
Each morning when I awake,
I know that you are gone.
And no one knows the heartache,
As I try to carry on.
My heart still aches with sadness,
And secret tears still flow.
What it meant to lose you,
No one will ever know.
My thoughts are always with you,
Your place no can fill.
In life I loved you dearly,
In death I love you still.*

Sadly missed by wife Jean, Daughter Kim (Bryan), granddaughter Melissa.

Happy Birthday



Happy Birthday to Nelson MacWhirter, who celebrated his 81st birthday on August 18.

Wishing you a birthday filled with love, good health, laughter, and the company of cherished loved ones.

Thank You

Thank you, everyone for your thoughtfulness in celebrating my 90th birthday with me. It was a very enjoyable afternoon, and your kind words and warm wishes made the day even more special.

Elsie Willett



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COAST ROUND-UP

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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.

HOPE TOWN:

Sports Club

September 28: A Gift bingo will be held at the Hope Town community centre starting at 7 p.m.

November 30: A Christmas gift bingo will be held at the Hope Town community centre starting at 7 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 RICHMOND:

St. Andrew's United church

September 8: Grandparents Day - "Bring your grandchildren to church day." A service focusing on younger children and teens, following the service a luncheon with hot dogs, cupcakes and a surprise will be served in the hall.

October 19: Starting at 4 p.m. there will be a "Teaspoon night." It will be an

evening of tasting, chatting and laughing. The best dishes in the "soup, meat, vegetables and Pudding" categories can choose a prize from the white elephant table in the basement.

November 30: Come join us between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. in our "Coffee shop with music and storytelling." Coffee, tea and sweets will be provided, as we listen to music and share stories of our memories of St. Andrew's throughout the years.

December 1: A celebration with Holy Communion will take place. All our partners who helped us throughout the years are invited to the service, following the service will be a luncheon in the hall.

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 hosting an exhibition entitled "By Gone Days" featuring photographs by Barry Le Blanc.

UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN

Sunday, September 1

10 a.m. Service

Sunday, September 8

2 p.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, September 1

10 a.m. Service

Sunday, September 8

10 a.m. Service

The exhibit will run until **September 6** and will include more than a dozen photographs of barns from the surrounding area.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, September 1

New Carlisle

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, September 1

St. Andrew's - York

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, September 8

St. John/St. Philip

Sandy Beach

7 p.m. Evening Prayer

Every Wednesday

No Morning Prayer for the Month of September

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On the lighter side...

Times are tough

There lived in a house, five animal friends. There was Ducky who spent her time on the computer trying to understand the mysteries of modern technology. Lulu, the orangutan, lived on the bedpost where she liked to throw things. Cola, the Koala, resided in the library and tried to read the books but he was dyslexic and had only succeeded in getting through one book after many years of trying. Snaky was a snake. He also occupied a bedpost and his thoughts ran to squeezing the life out of other living things. Thus far, the malevolence had not gone beyond thought. Finally, there was Moosee, a very friendly fellow, but he had a major problem. He liked to eat rotten vegetation. This produced methane with a very pungent aroma, forcing the other animals to flee from Moosee with their eyes streaming and their breath in short supply.

One day, after Moosee had ingested a great quantity of foul leaves, he went near an open flame and he burst into fire, leaving behind only an antler as evidence of his once existence. While science was overjoyed at finding proof for a great mystery, the friends were sad that he had spontaneously combusted. His manner of death explained how some forest fires had occurred. "Spontaneous Moose Combustion" was the answer.

The friends decided to celebrate Moosee's life. They chose to go to a nearby tavern and raise a glass to his memory. The tavern was two fields, a small forest and a bog away. So they set out on this trip.

The first field was easy as it only consisted of hay and flowers. The second field had been recently plowed, and mud soon coated everyone. In



Photo: Renaud Cyr

the forest, some of the mud dried and flaked off. While the bog proved damp, it helped remove a little more of the dirt.

Arriving at the tavern, they realized that this was the night with "all you could eat" wings and chips. Each chowed down on this feast, although Ducky wouldn't eat the wings as some of her relatives were chickens and others were actual chickens. This was fine with Snakey, as he didn't like the chips but he did like the feel of crushing bones. With the exception of Lulu being reprimanded for throwing chicken bones at the other patrons, the evening passed, and Moose was fondly remembered. Finally, it was time to return home.

The road home meant that they got wet in the bog, which allowed leaves from the forest, mud

from the field and even a few blades of grass from the other field to stick to them. Combined with the grease from the wings and chips, they were a sorry-looking group when they arrived home. All agreed that a wash was necessary before they could continue their life.

All jumped into the washer and went for a spin. All agreed that this was the worst experience they had ever undergone. None were willing to try the dryer. Thus they all ended up on the line, just hanging out after a night on the town, celebrating the departure of a loved one.

The end - Renaud Cyr

FROZEN DESSERT WORD SEARCH

M	K	W	F	G	L	M	A	E	I	F	E	E	Y	T	N	B	A	Y	W
C	O	N	E	G	E	L	A	T	O	I	Z	A	M	S	O	R	B	E	T
C	H	G	N	I	H	S	E	R	F	E	R	M	E	K	B	K	P	E	A
P	I	K	O	T	D	N	O	P	D	Y	R	R	E	H	C	C	T	M	X
U	E	S	M	W	I	E	P	E	A	N	U	T	B	U	T	T	E	R	S
R	F	S	P	H	K	L	X	L	D	A	F	S	Z	B	Y	Y	T	G	P
Y	S	E	C	I	L	B	P	I	U	K	I	R	L	W	A	R	C	X	R
S	K	N	G	P	H	F	S	S	M	D	R	E	R	P	U	P	B	U	I
E	T	T	M	P	K	G	Y	M	A	R	T	C	I	G	N	W	N	W	N
T	D	E	A	E	K	M	R	T	Z	N	O	Z	O	Y	A	W	T	I	K
A	A	H	E	D	R	A	T	G	K	O	A	Y	S	F	S	C	A	L	L
L	Y	O	R	C	D	Y	U	C	K	T	N	N	F	U	U	S	I	O	E
O	N	H	C	R	W	W	H	I	E	E	E	L	A	P	N	M	T	K	S
C	T	P	E	E	W	Y	E	I	Z	X	E	B	M	B	E	D	B	U	W
O	K	A	C	A	O	D	N	O	G	Y	D	W	R	C	H	K	A	X	N
H	H	W	I	M	O	W	R	L	H	Z	F	M	I	E	M	G	M	E	W
C	C	I	D	U	O	F	H	X	F	G	G	X	H	X	H	M	Z	M	U
B	O	Z	G	R	K	B	H	O	T	F	U	D	G	E	I	S	X	G	S
I	L	H	B	F	L	G	U	A	A	B	S	I	U	L	B	R	Y	A	H
T	D	Z	M	D	H	X	S	X	W	E	X	O	P	B	P	R	F	T	D

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| BANANA SPLIT | FROZEN YOGURT | PEANUT BUTTER |
| BROWNIE | GELATO | REFRESHING |
| CHERRY | HOT FUDGE | SHERBET |
| CHOCOLATE SYRUP | ICE CREAM | SORBET |
| COLD | ICE MILK | SPRINKLES |
| CONE | ICES | SUNDAE |
| COOKIE DOUGH | MIXED | WAFFLE |
| CUP | NUTS | WHIPPED CREAM |

WORD SCRAMBLE

Rearrange the letters to spell something pertaining to ice cream.

RYUSP

--	--	--	--	--

Answer: Syrup

What's this CHALLENGE

The gadget in last week's issue is a canning lid rack. The tool is used to place canning lids in boiling water to sterilize prior to using.



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

Sailboat races draw visitors from across Quebec to Carleton

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – People passing by Carleton between August 8 and 11 might have noticed an unusually high number of sailboats navigating in front of the town.

They saw a glimpse of the 13th Régates Éco-voile Baie des Chaleurs, an event first held in 2012 that continued even during the pandemic in 2020 when COVID cases were down to zero in the Gaspé Peninsula for most of that summer.

“We had 70 participants and 40 boats on the water all weekend. People came from Venise-en-Québec, Montreal, Quebec City, Matane, Gaspé and Camp Trois-Saumons (in the backcountry of L'Islet near Montmagny). Sailors were racing in six categories: Optimist, Laser, 420, F18, multi-hull and open. We have experienced nice consistency in terms of participation over the last three years,” com-



Photo: G. Gagné

The Carleton water body was a busy place between August 8-11.

ments Laurent-David Beaulieu, the event's spokesperson and president of Éco-voile, Carleton's sailing

school.

“We hold the largest ‘multi-class’ saltwater regatta in Quebec, with Gaspé, where there

are less race classes. Weather-wise, the forecast was bad because of Storm Debby (Hurricane). We thought about

cancelling the Saturday races. We moved up the Saturday race start to Friday to allow the runners to compete. Finally, the storm passed during the night. We let the gale pass on Saturday morning and spent the rest of the day sailing. It (Saturday's reorganization) required some understanding from participants and volunteers, and they collaborated,” says Mr. Beaulieu.

Looking ahead, the regatta is set to return in 2025 for the 14th edition. “We could say that we are already off to a great start for next year. The competitors are arriving earlier and earlier as years pass. They know we have good wind conditions. The catamarans arrive three or four days in advance now. We can build on this event. We have a budget of \$8,000 to \$10,000. A big chunk of that goes to our insurance, which costs \$1,800. That budget doesn't count the contribution of volunteers,” concludes Mr. Beaulieu.



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