

Giant 850-lbs tuna caught off Chandler

● GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – A team from Poissonnerie Gagnon in Rimouski caught an 850-pound tuna off the coast of Chandler on August 15. More precisely, the giant fish was caught near Miscou Island, New Brunswick.

Boat captain Richard Desbois of Cape Cove had just released some bait in the sea when the tuna bit the hook five minutes later. The battle to bring it up lasted a little more than an hour.

Once gutted, the fish still weighed 700 pounds, according to Joël Landry, co-owner of Poissonnerie Gagnon (with his sister Sarah and their father René). The fish was bought in advance by the fish market from Richard Desbois who holds a tuna fish permit. The collaboration between the two parties has been on-going for a few years.

“Once out of the water and

gutted, we put the fish in a container in what we call slush, a mix of water and ice, in order to loosen up the flesh, in a way to let it die. Once the flesh relaxed, after 24 to 48 hours in that slush, we cut it up. People want their fish as fresh as possible, as soon as it comes out of the water, the same day, but that's not what gives the best quality in the case of tuna fish. It is the same for halibut. You have to let it die. It is different for cod and haddock, which are tender soon after being caught,” explains Joël Landry of Poissonnerie Gagnon.

He praises how boat owner Richard Desbois works with the Landry family fish market.

“Richard has developed effective methods for fishing tuna. He took the time to study it. He is the only fisherman I know who catches tuna early in the evening when it is

still light,” adds Mr. Landry.

The fish was cut into smaller pieces by the fish market staff, with 450 pounds available for customers

“We were almost overwhelmed in the morning when we put the fish up for sale. If we had been able to sell two tuna fish, we would still have sold them in one day. We are thinking of a double fishing outing next year. At the same time, we want to keep it as an event. Out of 450 pounds of flesh, we

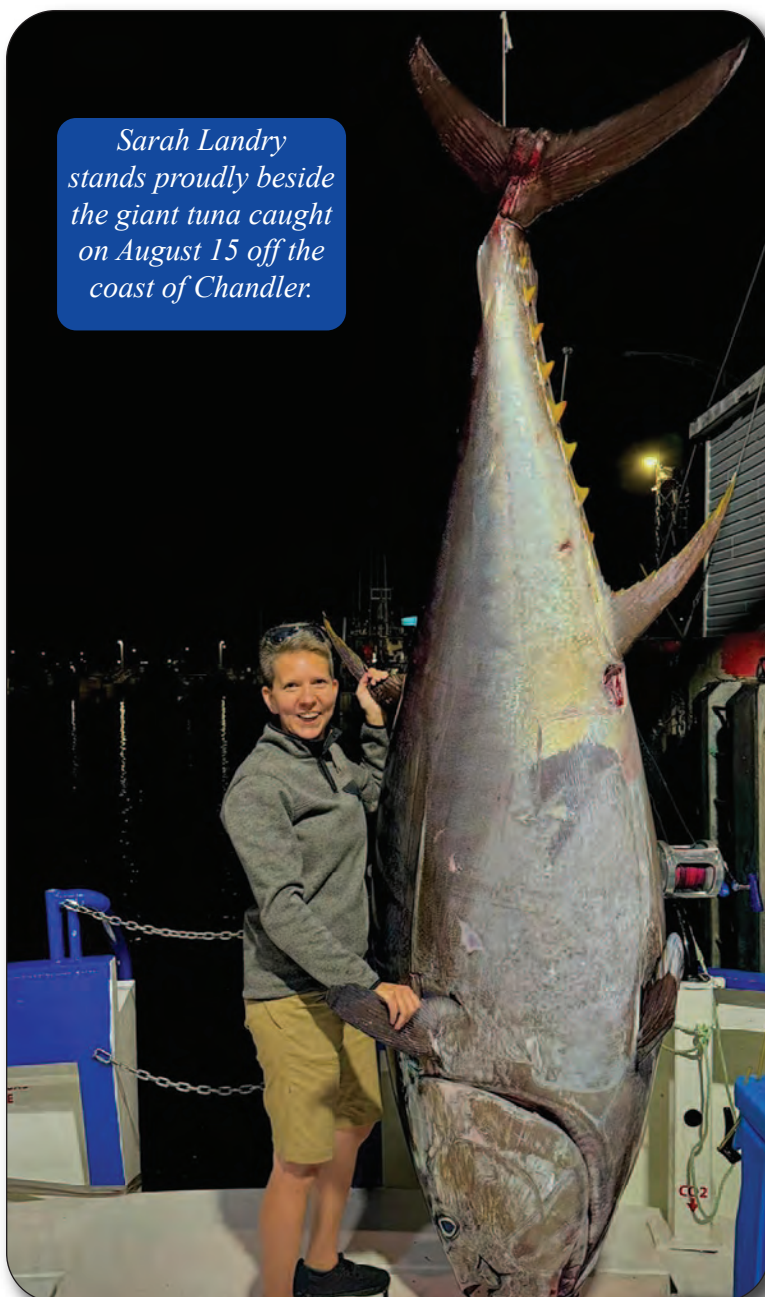
mostly sold portions of one pound for two people,” points out Joël Landry.

The retail price was \$35 per pound. While it looks like a lot, the whole process requires a lot of work.

“It's quite expensive at our end of the process too. We have to pay for it on a per pound basis and cut it up. We have to run tests, which costs \$2,000, to see if it's good. We have to pay for transport. I had to bring in four or five additional employees to

process it and for the day we sold it. It's essentially a marketing ploy. Even for the fisherman, it is not really a paying outing. Most tuna fishermen are former holders of other permits, and they go out for fun. We are talking about established fishermen,” says Mr. Landry

Will the Poissonnerie Gagnon continue its partnership with Richard Desbois for tuna fishing in 2025? “We're definitely going back,” assures Joël Landry.



Sarah Landry stands proudly beside the giant tuna caught on August 15 off the coast of Chandler.

Photo: Courtesy of Poissonnerie Gagnon

New Carlisle Fire Department wins at 13th Regional Firefighters Competition



New Carlisle Fire Department team: Nicolas Castilloux, Brent Hocquard, David Thibault, Kyle Flowers and Steven Cayouette. Missing from the picture is Robert Benwell.

● PENNY MACWHIRTER

PORT-DANIEL: - On August 17 the Port-Daniel Fire Department hosted the 13th Regional Firefighters Competition.

A total of 10 teams from Paspébiac to Matapédia participated in the competition.

The firefighters competed in four events and the scores from each event were tallied in order to determine the overall winners.

The New Carlisle Fire Department won first place in three of the four events, taking first place overall. St. Alexis de Matapédia came in second and Paspébiac received third place.

Photo: Courtesy of David Thibault

Construction is underway for 32 affordable, accessible social housing units in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The official groundbreaking for the Han-Logement project, which will consist of building 32 affordable and accessible housing units, took place on August 26. This \$10.3 million project, located on Forest Street, is set to accommodate individuals with physical or intellectual disabilities or those with autism spectrum disorders.

The Government of Quebec is providing \$5.6 million to the project through the Société d'habitation du Québec and the Government of Canada is contributing \$222,343 through the Affordable Housing Innovation Fund.

Desjardins is injecting \$3.2 million in mortgage financing, the Fonds immobilier de solidarité FTQ is injecting \$800,000 in long-term capital, and the Town of Gaspé is contributing the land and a tax credit for a total of \$443,000.

These homes will be affordable. "They are affordable because there is a subsidy from the various levels of government but also because we will offer the rent supplement program and tenants will not pay more than 25% of their income in rent," explains the Minister responsible for Housing, France-Élaine Duranceau.

"We are looking to increase all types of housing in Quebec. This one is for clients who live with a disability and this group that is leading the Han-Logement project is a community group that is very effective in the way it builds housing and makes it available. We are delivering in a shorter time frame and within a tight and reasonable budget. For me, this is a project to support and see repeated elsewhere in

Quebec," adds the Minister.

The first tenants are expected to move in by July 1, 2025.

The Han-Logement Gaspé development will consist of four buildings with 32 units, including 24 one-bedroom units and eight two-bedroom units. It will feature landscaped outdoor spaces, easy access, proximity to services and private parking.

Stakeholders are also planning for a second phase of the project. "We agreed with the Town to look at this. With the land acquired, there would be the possibility of adding units. When we signed for this land, we were given a challenge and we are looking at when it would be possible to do a phase 2. Maybe other projects. There are several requests," says Han-Logement President and Chief Executive Officer Anik Roy Trudel.

The group's goal is to raise \$100,000 for each complex built. Dr. Thierry Petry has already contributed \$100,000 to the Gaspé project.

"It's an excellent project. He wanted to move quickly. We organized ourselves to move quickly," says Mayor Daniel Côté.

The project came to fruition in less than two years.

"We worked extra hard to be on the fast track and we're already seeing the results. A second phase is planned and we're ready to hand it over. It's a model to follow. The developer arrives with plans and specifications. He also has his builder and financiers attached. When he knocks on our door, he's ready and needs land and for the zoning rules to be changed quickly," says Mr. Côté.

According to the mayor, between 16 and 32 additional units could be added in a second phase. Each apartment costs around \$300,000.

"We're very rigorous. We have a model and here, it's



The official groundbreaking ceremony was held in the presence of the minister responsible for Housing, France-Élaine Duranceau.

Photo: N. Sergerie

our 2.0 model that we've been using for six years. This allows us to know it very well and optimize costs. Our contractor is on the ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth building. He knows how much it's going to cost him and how long it will take. That's the predictability of the model. But it's a challenge," agrees Ms. Roy Trudel.

These new housing units in Gaspé are part of Han-Logement's second project supported by the Desjardins Affordable Housing Initiative in partnership with the Quebec and Canadian govern-

ments, following a 24-unit affordable housing development in Rivière-du-Loup.

The developer also has plans for other locations in Gaspé Peninsula, with a potential project in Chandler. "We're finalizing the details. There's a whole preliminary project phase where we do analyses at the land level. We have to agree with the deed of donation of the land. Things are going very well despite some minor issues and we are hopeful of announcing the start of construction next year," says Ms. Roy Trudel.

New Richmond and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts are

also in the plans. "We want to go around the Gaspé and expand to the Lower St. Lawrence. We have several towns that are approaching us. You will definitely see us again in the Gaspé. The secret is a town that has the drive and wants to get on board with us. That's the ingredient we need to start a project," she concludes.

In fact, a building with 24 affordable housing units has been built in Rivière-du-Loup. It already accommodates people living with a physical or intellectual disability or with an autism spectrum disorder.

Ville de
PERCÉ

Ville de Percé

By this public notice, Gemma Vibert, the returning officer, announces the following to the electors of the municipality.

Public notice of election

Polling day: October 27, 2024

1. The following seats are open for candidates:

Mayor seat

Candidate for the seat of councillor of electoral district n° 8

2. Any nomination papers must be filed at the office of the returning officer on the following days and times:

From September 13 to September 27, 2024.

Schedule

Monday to Thursday

From 8:15 a.m. to 12 noon

From: 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Friday

From 8:30 a.m. to 12 noon

Important: On Friday, September 27, 2024, the office will be open continuously from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

3. If more than one person wishes to be a candidate for the same seat, you may exercise your voting right by going to your assigned polling station on the following dates and hours:

Polling day: **Sunday, October 27, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.**

Advance polling day: **Sunday, October 20, 2024, from noon to 8 p.m.**

4. The following person was appointed as election clerk: Mrs Mélanie Loubert.

5. You can contact the returning officer at the following address and telephone number.

Address: City Hall, 137, route 132 Ouest, C. P. 99, Percé (Québec) G0C 2L0

Telephone: 418 782-2933, extension 92003

Given in Percé, on September 4, 2024.

Gemma Vibert,
Returning officer



VILLAGE
Real Estate Agency

Suzanne Landry

CERTIFIED REAL ESTATE BROKER AEO

418-752-0792

suzannelandry@royallepage.ca

www.suzannelandry.ca

**Friendly bilingual service
from Matapédia to Port Daniel
24 years experience**

Police report

A 16-year-old remains in critical condition following a serious road accident on the evening of August 25, on Highway 132, in Nouvelle. The teenager, who was driving a scooter, was struck by a vehicle. "The teenager on the scooter tried to make a U-turn when he was hit by the vehicle coming from the opposite direction. Emergency services were called immediately. It was about 8 p.m.," explains Frédéric Deshaies, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec. The victim was transported to Maria hospital. An accident reconstruction specialist was onsite and traffic was stopped on Highway 132 for almost six hours, causing significant delays due to the lack of detour routes. As of August 27, the teenager's condition remained critical, according to Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Frédéric Deshaies.

On August 24, an 11-year-old boy from Carleton suffered serious injuries during a soccer tournament in Matane. According to CIEU-FM, the goal post the 11-year-old was hanging on tipped over and fell on him. The player suffered a fractured skull. An emergency transfer to the CHUL in Quebec City was necessary. His condition has since improved. According to the father, Joël Bérubé, surgery was not required and no lingering health issues are anticipated. However, he believes the goal should have been anchored to the ground. He maintains that the organizers of the tournament were grossly negligent, leading to his son being seriously injured.

The event has plunged the Eastern Quebec Regional Soccer Association into turmoil. General manager Marie-Ève Ouellet confirms that the goal was not anchored to the ground. The equipment was stored away from the playing surface, along a fence, because it was not used during this tournament. Without hesitation, Ms. Ouellet also believes that all goals must be anchored, whether used during games or not. The end-of-season soccer tournament in Matane brought together 1,500 people.

Marie-Ève Ouellet reports that the Eastern Quebec Regional Soccer Association is staying in touch with the family. The event took place on the soccer field belonging to the Centre de Service Scolaires des Monts et Marées.

Pierre-André Roussy, 37, from Grande Rivière, pleaded guilty to several charges, including break and enter and assault causing bodily harm, on August 26 at the Percé Courthouse. He admitted to entering a house on Baril Street in Percé on December 18, 2023, with other men to collect a drug debt. The victim of the assault allegedly owed him and three other men money relating to a quantity of 25,000 methamphetamine pills.

Judge Andrée Saint-Pierre took into account the 207 days Mr. Roussy had already served in prison since his arrest on February 2, 2024, in Grande Rivière. Considering each day of preventive detention counts for a day and a half, the time served represented 311 days. Following the ruling, Mr. Roussy still had 689 days to serve in his 33-month sentence. He also pleaded guilty to an extortion charge in connection to the incident on Baril Street.

Additionally, Mr. Roussy's arrest in February 2024 was also tied to a drug bust that occurred on October 14, 2020, at his father's home in Grande Rivière. During that bust, authorities seized drugs, cash, firearms and tools used for drug trafficking. That case was pending when he was arrested in February

for the assault that had occurred in December 2023 on Baril Street.

"He took the opportunity to settle these court files, as he also entered a plea of guilty on three drug-related charges (two counts of possession and possession for the purpose of trafficking). He had no criminal record prior to these cases. He received a sentence of two years in that (2020) file, to be served concurrently," explains criminal prosecutor Émilie Landry-Therriault of the Percé courthouse.

In another case, Pierre-André Roussy pleaded guilty to fraud related to a renovation job between October and December 2022. As a certified general contractor, he was hired by a man living outside the region, Raymond Brault, to carry out some renovation works at a cottage located in the Cap-aux-Os part of Gaspé. The agreement was reached at an amount of \$68,000. Based on photos supplied by Pierre-André Roussy, Mr. Brault was under the impression that the work was progressing and sent money up to the amount of \$57,000. However, when the owner came to his cottage for the Christmas break, only 15% of the work had been carried out. Pierre-André Roussy was sentenced to 12 months of prison for this fraud case and ordered to reimburse \$57,000 to Mr. Brault. This sentence will run concurrently with his other sentences.

Upon his release from prison, Mr. Roussy will be on probation for two years and will be prohibited from possessing firearms during that period. He will also be required to provide his DNA.

"The three other men charged in the December 2023 Baril Street aggression, Jonathan Racette, Michael Bourque and Tommy Albert Lantin will soon return to court. Michael Bourque's court date is set for September 30. He has other court files to deal with. The date is subject to changes. Jonathan Racette asked for a preliminary hearing. Some discussions will take place between now (August 28) and then," adds Émilie Landry-Therriault.

The trial date for former Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Claude Doiron will be set on December 9. On August 27, the parties requested a new postponement at the Percé courthouse. The defence has new elements to verify that could influence the length of the trial and lead to a different direction. In April, the former police officer had opted for a trial before a judge alone following the preliminary hearing where only one witness was heard.

Claude Doiron is accused of sexual assault, sexual interference and incitement to sexual contact on a person under the age of 14 for alleged acts that occurred between May and September 1988 in Cloridorme. At the time of the alleged offences, Mr. Doiron was a police officer, but he was not with the Sûreté du Québec.

"The defence and the prosecution must hold discussions between now and this date (December 9) to determine among other elements the length of the trial," specifies criminal prosecutor Louis-Philippe Desjardins, who is based in Quebec City. He was asked to take the case when Claude Doiron was charged, in the summer of 2023. Claude Doiron was the spokesperson of the Sûreté du Québec in the Gaspé Peninsula, the Magdalen Islands and the Lower Saint Lawrence regions for 12 years. He was arrested and questioned in Quebec City only days before his retirement. At the time, he was attending training for retiring police officers when an internal investigation led to charges being filed.

A second candidate for mayor of Percé: Olivier Lafontaine

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - Olivier Lafontaine is trying his luck again for mayor of Percé.

Having been defeated by Cathy Poirier in 2021, the candidate is motivated to continue the work he began three years ago, which "has borne fruit".

"I have a lot of support from the population and the business world. I wouldn't see myself going back on what has been done," Mr. Lafontaine said in an interview.

At present, he would face Daniel Leboeuf, the president of the Géoparc de Percé, a declared candidate.

"Over the last three years, it has been a long process of clarification in terms of understanding what was happening

in the Town. A major cleanup has begun at the administrative level and it will continue. This is really a time when Percé is freeing itself from the grip that was exerting on it," believes Mr. Lafontaine.

He is running for the citizens. "And not to continue with the same old squandering of funds. Our economic level must stabilize," he says.

"We must stop the most abusive spending that had no use, with the Pratto as an example, which is a total failure. We are going to restructure the way we manage our money. In this way, the citizen will always be the winner," says the candidate who has already prepared his nomination paper.

"Since the last election, I have never stopped working

with citizens, local entrepreneurs and the group of merchants who went to court (to contest the tourist fee). I have never stopped. I have always been in the outdoor setting where I kept in touch with people," he says.

Mr. Lafontaine had already intended to run in the 2025 election.

"I built my network around me compared to the last election. Unlike the last time, when I was alone and managed to practically win this election, now I have a big team next to me. People have gotten to know me and my values, and these are values that people are looking for. I represent what the population is looking for," said Mr. Lafontaine.



Olivier Lafontaine will be making his second attempt to become mayor of Percé.

Photo: Courtesy of Olivier Lafontaine

He received 46% of the vote in the 2021 election compared to 53% for the resigning mayor Cathy Poirier. The election is scheduled for October 27.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Same old! Same old! Pierre Poilievre's manners are stable!

Canadians will head to the polls at the federal level in October 2025 at the latest. Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre kicked off the upcoming parliamentary session by urging New Democratic Party (NDP) leader Jagmeet Singh to pull out of the deal he reached in March 2022 to collaborate with the Liberal Party's minority government.

Those who hoped Mr. Poilievre would have taken advantage of the summer to refine his political manners were surely disappointed, as he released on August 29 the content of a letter sent to Jagmeet Singh in which he asked the New Democrat to scrap a deal that is supposed to end in June 2025.

"Canadians can't afford or even endure another year of this costly coalition. No one voted for you to keep Trudeau in power. You do not have a mandate to drag out his government another year," wrote the Conservative Party leader.

Pierre Poilievre has been leading in surveys for a year-and-a-half. His potential victory margin as of now would range between 15% and 20% depending on the survey. He is entitled to beg for an election as opportunism is part of politics.

However, the tone of his letter or the statements that accompanied it in an ensuing speech are rather insulting for Jagmeet Singh, thus proving that Pierre Poilievre's attempt to break the NDP-Liberal Party temporary alliance was essentially another display of his pit bull behaviour, which he thinks is beneficial.

"Pull out of the costly coalition and vote non-confidence in the government this September to trigger a carbon tax election in October of THIS YEAR or you will forever be known as 'Sellout Singh,'" added Mr. Poilievre.

He also suggested that Jagmeet Singh delay an election until he qualifies for his Member of Parliament pension. The New Democrat leader was first elected at the beginning of 2019. He will qualify for retirement benefits after six years of parliamentary service. That qualification will enter into force in February 2025.

Mr. Poilievre's lapses

However, Pierre Poilievre forgot two important aspects in his acid statements. First, he qualified for his full pension at the age of 31, in June 2010, after the mandatory six years of service at the House of Commons. He had first been elected in 2004!

Secondly, Pierre Poilievre will be in a position to get his full pension at the age of 55, because he qualified before the rule change. Jagmeet Singh will not benefit from the same privilege, as the regulation was modified over recent years and relatively new Members of Parliament will only get

their retirement package after turning 65.

People can now bet that come the electoral campaign, New Democrats will bring back to the surface the insulting and degrading statements of Pierre Poilievre,

The Conservative Party leader seems to forget that he lives in a house of glass and that he should consequently be careful about his statements.

Nobody really thought that Jagmeet Singh would listen to Pierre Poilievre's order to break what has often been called the supply-and-confidence agreement with the Liberal Party.

Calling him "Sellout Singh" and referring to his pension qualification were unnecessary statements though.

Pierre Poilievre was talking to his political base upon uttering those insults in order to stimulate the anger of the republic of the dissatisfied.

However, his letter and his speech were an insult to the intelligence of most Canadian voters.

So far, Pierre Poilievre's solutions to resolve the country's problems would easily stand on a small Post-it.

During the lockout imposed by Canadian National and Canadian Pacific-Kansas City railway companies, he essentially refused to take a stand. On August 28, he finally muttered something to the effect that the rail work stoppage was triggered by a dispute over wages during a time of higher inflation. He then affirmed that inflation will not be an issue if he accesses power!

That is magical thinking! Inflation is a worldwide phenomenon notably triggered by the pandemic and Mr. Poilievre, without ever discussing at length what he would do to curtail it, or solve any other problem by the way, would magically make inflationary pressures disappear!

Double speech

New Democrats feel that Pierre Poilievre will make deep cuts in social measures, in fact, the social measures they have imposed on the Liberal Party government since the supply-and-confidence agreement was reached two-and-a-half years ago.

The NDP is talking here about the dental care program which has already benefited 450,000 Canadians, Employment insurance, health care transfers to the provinces and the upcoming pharmacare, which is slated for implementation in the coming weeks, would allegedly be included in the Conservative Party's first round of cuts, would

Pierre Poilievre become prime minister.

The NDP is challenged to a certain degree by the Conservative Party because Mr. Poilievre, over recent months, has often talked about defending workers, which has traditionally been the New Democrats' bread and butter.

Peter Julian, the NDP's House of Commons leader, alleges the Conservative Party "will give more to big corporations" after the first rounds of cuts.

Whether Pierre Poilievre will stick to supporting workers or adopt the Conservative Party's traditional approach, which consists of defending private companies, remains to be seen.

In the meantime, there is another aspect of Pierre Poilievre's positions that is mind boggling. It is a totally different speech whether he is talking to anglophones or francophones.

In English, he is denouncing the NDP-Liberal Party agreement. In French, he criticizes the Bloc Québécois-Liberal Party alliance. He knows that the NDP has minimal impact in Quebec and that he will have to beat some Bloc Members of Parliament to get some representation in La belle province.


However, the Bloc Québécois has not voted systematically for some Liberal Party decisions since the 2021 election, far from that. Repeatedly, Justin Trudeau, whose party is 14 seats away from a majority, has counted on the 24 NDP Members of Parliament to win House of Commons confidence votes, not the Bloc Québécois.

In English, Pierre Poilievre essentially uses the "Axe the tax slogan", referring to the carbon tax, while in French, he talks about other taxes knowing that the carbon tax is basically accepted in Quebec.


Recently, out West, Pierre Poilievre designated Environment Minister Steven Guilbeault as the "crazy carbon tax minister", and pronounced his name "Stéphane", while Mr. Guilbeault's real first name is Steven, his mother being an anglophone. The Conservative Party leader allegedly tried to take advantage of a certain lack of popularity of francophones in Western Canada.

In Quebec, knowing that Steven Guilbeault is well-perceived, Pierre Poilievre refrains from bad-mouthing him.


Pierre Poilievre is not the first politician to use different strategies in Quebec, compared to the ones applied to the rest of Canada. However, showing that truth is of little importance will not facilitate his access to power, as we near election time




ESTABLISHED - MAY 1978




Publisher:
Penny MacWhirter



News Editor:
Gilles Gagné



Circulation/Office Manager:
Holly Smith



Office Assistant:
Jillian O'Connell

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Elaine Sexton
Fred Kirch
Maria Chatterton
Hayden Sams,
Bonita Annett
Patricia Ste-Croix
Annett
Roger Wise


208-B Gérard D. Levesque
New Carlisle, Que.
G0C 1Z0


Tel: 418-752-5400
specs@globetrotter.net
thegaspespec.com

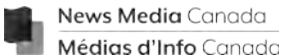
(Taxes included)
1-year (paper or digital): \$50
6-months (paper or digital): \$29
Outside Canada:
1-year paper to United States
\$175, International \$370


Published every **Wednesday** by:
Les Publications de la Côte Inc.
(Sea-Coast Publications Inc.)


SPEC welcomes letters to the editor on subjects relevant to topics covered by the paper. Letters must be kept within 300 words or less and may be edited for clarity or to remove any slanderous, sexist, racist or homophobic statements. We reserve the right to reject any letters. Opinions or letters published do not necessarily reflect the editorial policies or beliefs of this newspaper. All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include the address and number(s) for verification purposes (address & phone number will not be printed). The Publisher shall not be liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. The Publisher's liability for other errors or omissions in connection with any advertisement is strictly limited to publication of the advertisement in any











We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.
We acknowledge special funding from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.

Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia abolition contested - not before 2025

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The judicial review request following the decision to abolish the federal riding of Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia will not be heard before the beginning of 2025. This is what Droits collectifs Québec reported following a management conference on July 25.

The judge asked the attorney for Droits collectifs Québec, François Côté, to file his brief on August 16.

"The case is continuing but, unfortunately, for a hearing in the fall, hopes have been dashed out of hand by the length of the legal proceedings," explains Mr. Côté. The Attorney General of Canada contested Droits collectifs Québec's right to act, a motion that Justice Alexandra Steele dismissed in July.

Thus, the Attorney General and Elections Canada will have until November 15 to file their complete case to defend the abolition of the riding.

"We must file a request for

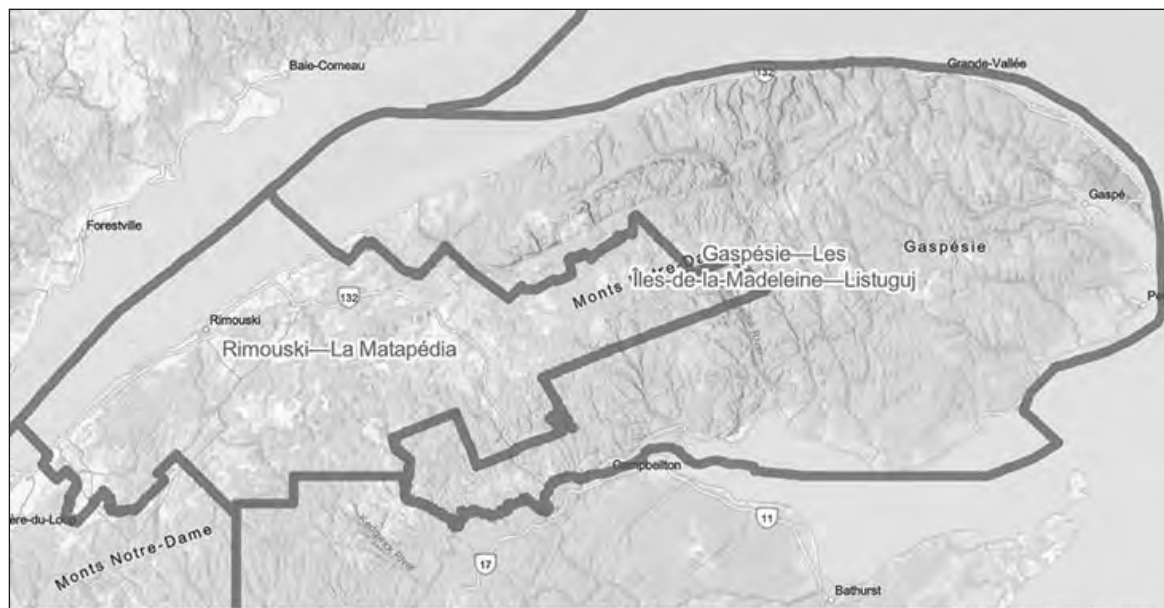


Photo: Elections Canada website

The electoral map in effect since April 2024.

a hearing by November 29, 2024, at the latest. We have completed our steps and the ball is now in the court of the Attorney General and Elections Canada," said Mr. Côté.

"I don't expect to get through (to be heard) before November 29, even with a miracle. I would be surprised if there were dates available between November 29 and December 31. We are heading towards something a little later than I had hoped," notes

the lawyer.

In the event of an early election call, the application for judicial review may not have been heard. Voting is scheduled for October 2025.

"We can only find it unfortunate that the courts did not uphold our request for a stay during the proceedings. If we find ourselves in a situation where we win our case while an election is called, there are questions to be asked about the speed and manner in

which the rights of voters will be guaranteed by the Attorney General and Elections Canada. For the moment, we are in a hypothetical situation. We will hope for a resolution in the best-case scenario and everything is going well," says Mr. Côté.

The application for judicial review is based on an opinion rendered by the Supreme Court of Canada referencing the Provincial Electoral Boundaries in Saskatchewan

and the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

"The basic argument is that of effective representation and effective representation is not just a question of numbers. Regions, communities, geographic areas and regional histories also matter. If we only had a system with one head, one vote, we would have a democracy where the large metropolises have all the political power, which means that the less dense regional entities could not make their voices heard in a democracy," argues Mr. Côté.

"Our parliamentary system tries to balance the two by having a system based on the right to vote, but which also takes into account the regions, the regional specificities, so that the diversity of everything that makes up a society does not only take into account the simple number of the population, but also its variety," he maintains.

The adopted map presented in the summer of 2022 provoked an outcry from the entire political community in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Liberal Frédéric Beauchemin visits Gaspésie to discuss the economy and leadership race

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Frédéric Beauchemin, one of the candidates expected to run for the leadership of the Quebec Liberal Party, wrapped up a two-day tour of the Gaspé Peninsula on August 23. During his visit, he explored local businesses and met with activists.

The member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Marguerite-Bourgeoys and opposition critic for the economy and innovation met with various organizations including GD Rail in New Richmond, the Bourdages Tradition farm in Saint-Siméon, the Regroupement des pêcheurs professionnels du Sud de la Gaspésie, and E. Gagnon et Fils in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé. He also met with activists in Bonaventure and Gaspé, had lunch with the Town of Gaspé municipal council, and stopped in Murdochville to discuss the Osisko-led revival project for Gaspé Mines.

During his meetings, issues such as challenges in the shrimp fishing industry were raised. "Finding a way to sustainably develop the resource, and that involves ideas for finding more profitable market sources. People have a sustainable approach and that's what's interesting," commented Mr. Beauchemin.

He further suggested the creation of a separate ministry for fisheries, an idea previously discussed. "It's up to the government to ensure that the ecosystem is in place for it to work. As far as I'm concerned, creating a real Ministry of the Maritime Economy should be the solution," says the MNA.

Regarding the Osisko Metals project, Mr. Beauchemin believes that it is an essential project.

"Look at your cell phone. It takes copper. There is copper here. We will organize ourselves so that it works sustainably and fairly and I will tell you, we are fortunate to



Photo: Facebook

Liberal candidate Frédéric Beauchemin completed a two-day tour in the Gaspé Peninsula focusing on economic issues and meeting with activists.

have such a well-stocked basement. Why not use the advantage we have to ensure that the economy is moving? This is a project worth several hundred million dollars. The benefits will be significant for Murdochville, for the entire tip of the Gaspésie, and for Quebec," he maintains.

On environmental concerns, the MNA points out that there are protocols in place to ensure responsible exploitation.

"We are no longer in 1900. We are in 2024. There are processes that are put in place to respect the environment. Mining companies are mod-

ern companies with a modern vision of protecting the environment and the neighbourhood. It will be an approach that reflects the fact that it is 2024," says Mr. Beauchemin. The leadership race was also a topic of discussion with activists.

"Those I met, it was a warm and positive welcome," says Mr. Beauchemin.

"The Liberal movement exists. The way Quebec can come back Liberal is through the regions. The activists want an economic, credible and responsible candidacy. I am one of them. We must ensure that we have a presence in the regions," he noted, mentioning that he has been touring Quebec for two years.

"I tell you: the only way to win back the regions is to be present. My long-term idea when we are in power will be to make regional development the number one priority for the development of Quebec," suggests the leadership candidate.

Bloc Québécois leader tours the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Bloc Québécois leader, Yves-François Blanchet, wrapped up a three-day tour of the Gaspé Peninsula on August 28, aiming to amplify the region's voice in Ottawa so that the region's message resonates across the country.

Mr. Blanchet has been making this annual visit since 2019 and, he admits that at first, he found the situation strange.

"It's normal that I go back to see them because it's changing. We see a lot of the same people and we add new ones every year. I visited Gespeg, I hadn't been there. I went to the Musée de la Gaspésie. I hadn't been there," says Mr. Blanchet. He also stopped at Fort Prével, for a second time, in order to review the projects presented last year.

During his visit, he met with various fishing associations, entrepreneurs, Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté, and representatives from the Cap-des-Rosiers lighthouse and the Percé Geoparc.

"I think it's our contribution to put pressure on by having a good knowledge of the

issues, by being serious, and committed to politics with the players in the field. It's not just about winning three votes or slogans. We try to be really useful," says Mr. Blanchet.

Reflecting on his trip, Mr. Blanchet mentions, "I'm probably going to invite people from the region to come meet the parliamentary press in Ottawa to give them a pan-Canadian reach. Sometimes, that's the right way to close files," says the Bloc Québécois leader. After meeting with processors and fishermen, Mr. Blanchet wonders if the actions of the Minister of Fisheries and MNA (Member of the National Assembly) for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, Diane Lebouthillier, have produced concrete results.

"My question is: Are people happy? Is it better than nothing? Or does it not solve the problem at all? That doesn't solve the problem at all, because even if the biologists say 'Yes, you have to open up the redfish quotas.' I went to visit the plant that processes the redfish. A market that is opening up, and there will not be any large redfish for a long time anyway and there are too

many for it to grow. All these issues are discussed in real long-term solutions," he says, mentioning that Fisheries and Oceans Canada's ecosystem approach to closing fisheries must be seen differently. "An ecosystem approach for the entire Gulf of St. Lawrence will require collaboration with fishermen from the Maritimes. We must go well beyond superficial announcements whose purpose may be to save Ms Lebouthillier's seat. The best way to do politics and have people respect us is to get real results by getting really involved," he says.

Mr. Blanchet visited Gespeg for the first time to meet with the Mi'gmaq community and tour the Interpretation Centre.

"To discuss the issues and needs and the need to better understand the relationship with economic development, particularly fisheries, between the community and non-natives. It seems completely legitimate to me that Gespeg have the same recognition, reserve status with the advantages that it gives. It would even be good for the Gaspé economy if the federal gov-



Photo: N. Sergerie

Bloc Québécois Leader Yves-François Blanchet

ernment stopped this discrimination against a single Mi'gmaq community. I found it interesting and necessary as a reflection," suggests Mr. Blanchet.

Immigration was another topic discussed during the visit, particularly concerning potential restrictions on foreign workers outside the Montreal region.

The Bloc Québécois is ready for the next election. "The Bloc has been ready for

a long time. It is an obligation during a minority government. Our funding over the last three years has gone from record to record. We are ready as soon as there is an election. I doubt it will be this fall. It could go to the next budget and it could stretch until next fall," he believes.

Yves-François Blanchet plans to return to the Bay of Chaleur area at the end of November to follow up on various issues.

Chandler Wharf: Discussions continue with Ottawa

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER - Discussions between Transport Canada and the Town of Chandler regarding the ownership trans-

fer of the commercial wharf are advancing.

The Mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche, spoke with the authorities on August 27 to discuss the latest develop-

ments.

The Town remains committed to converting the wharf into a recreational and tourist site, shifting it from its initial industrial purpose.

"Initially, it was an industrial wharf, but contact with the targeted industry [Editor's note: McInnis Cement] did not bring us enough quantity. We moved on to plan B, which was a tourist wharf. We are staying the course on that," said the mayor.

Transport Canada had considered three scenarios.

"The complete demolition of the wharf and the approach to the wharf. Then, there was part of the approach and part of the wharf. I think that what will now be prioritized will be a demolition of only part of the wharf and the rockfill," explains Mr. Daraïche.

The town is also planning to revitalize the area between the two wharves to make the site more welcoming.

"We are in the process of developing this space with lighting and it will go well with the wharf," continues the elected official.

In 2016, an evaluation suggested a \$19 million project and, in 2019, estimates reached nearly \$40 million for

a renovation.

"We don't really have any figures yet, but we know that it will be much higher. Transport Canada will assume the costs and we are hopeful of seeing the wharf revived for the population," believes the mayor.

Our information indicates that the costs could be around \$60 million. The roll-on-roll-off ramp, which served as a terminal for the CTMA Vacancier cruise ship between Montreal and the Magdalen Islands, might be demolished.

However, the mayor intends to consult CTMA to see if Chandler could be included in future plans.

"We will definitely sound out the terrain. The equipment is still there and is all ready. We will see if there is still interest," says Mr. Daraïche.

The wharf was closed in 2016 for safety concerns related to its age. It was originally inaugurated in 1970 to serve the former Gaspesia paper mill, which closed in 1999.



Photo: G. Gagné

Between its inauguration in 1970 and 2016, when it was closed due to Transport Canada's lack of maintenance, the port of Chandler was notably used by commercial ships, like here, in June 1994, when paper from the Gaspesia mill was loaded in foreign cargo liners.

Listuguj conducts successful prescription drug drop-off drive

HOLLY SMITH
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PENNY MACWHIRTER
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

LISTUGUJ: - On the afternoon of July 17, a successful prescription drug drop-off drive was held at the former church site in Listuguj. This initiative was designed to support safe disposal practices for unused or expired medications.

To maximize outreach and encourage participation, the drive was promoted through a range of channels including social media, the local radio station and Listuguj's digital message board encouraging

residents of the Indigenous community to drop off expired or unused prescriptions; over-the-counter medications such as pain relievers, cough suppressants and sleep aids; vitamins; and other products such as diaper rash creams and hand sanitizers.

"Why is disposal of medication important? In addition to expired medications no longer being effective, having fewer medicines in your home also means having fewer safety risks," states one of the advertisements for the drop-off activity.

The event was a partnership

between the CLSC, Listuguj Wellness, Listuguj Police and Listuguj Health and Community Services.

Michael Isaac Jr., Communications Manager for the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government, says, "Multiple containers of solids, liquids and needles, such as those used for insulin were collected." He adds that "the total amount was brought to the CLSC, and they sent them off for disposal."

The response from the community was overwhelmingly positive. Many participants and partners suggested that similar initiatives should be held more

frequently. The Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government is currently conducting an online survey to determine at what frequency drop-off drives should be held. According to Michael Issac Jr, the feedback has been taken seriously, and plans are underway to organize additional events and focus groups through the Listuguj Wellness Renewal Initiative (LWRI).

The LWRI is an initiative that is supported and endorsed by the Listuguj Chief and Council. It focuses on the well-being and health of all commu-

nity members making education, resources and overall support available and accessible to all ages. In addition, the LWRI promotes a cultural and holistic approach to wellness, empowering community members to overcome substance abuse and addictions, while advocating for positive change.

While it is too early to fully assess the long-term impacts of the drive on the community, the success of the event highlights the community's commitment to responsible medication management.



A sign promoting the prescription drop-off in Listuguj.

Photos: facebook



The collection kiosk at the Listuguj drop-off.

Why safe disposal of expired or unused medication matters

The medicine cabinets in many households have expired or unused medications. The medication could be leftover following the death of a loved one, a prescription that was not finished due to a reaction, among other reasons. Disposal of the medication is usually free and can prevent accident or deliberate intoxication. In addition, it can reduce inappropriate self-medication, adverse reactions and harmful interactions.

In order to reduce the amount of over-the-counter medications in your home, don't immediately reach for the largest size, but rather the one that meets your needs, taking into account the expiry date indicated on the package.

Proper disposal of unused medication is important for several reasons:

- Preventing misuse: Unused medication left in home cabinets are a common source of prescription drug misuse. By safely disposing of these drugs, the risk of misuse by individuals, including children and teenagers, is reduced.
- Protect the environment: Improper disposal of medications, like flushing them down the toilet, can lead to contamination of water and is harmful to wildlife.
- Overdose risk: Many overdose deaths are linked to the misuse of prescription medications, By ensuring that unused drugs are properly disposed of, the likelihood of accidental overdoses is minimized.

Drug disposal procedures in Quebec

According to the Government of Quebec, expired or unused medication can be returned to any pharmacy in Quebec, at any time of the year, particularly:

- Once a year, after sorting through your medicine cabinet. Choose a time of the year that is easy for you to remember, such as during your fall or spring cleaning;
- After a loved one has died, return his or her medication;
- When there is a change in dosage or medical treatment;
- At the end of a medical treatment.

Be proactive and return your prescriptions sooner, rather than later. The primary types of medications that should be disposed of are medications sold under a prescription or controlled by a pharmacist, including opioids for pain or cough relief; over-the-counter medications; natural health products; and antibiotics. Medications purchased from a veterinarian clinic must be returned to a veterinarian.

In addition, injectable medications, syringes, needles, lancets used for glucose testing must be returned in a special container. You can obtain and return your sharps disposal container from your local pharmacy, CLSC or hospital.

Fun for all ages at the New Richmond Agricultural Fair

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The New Richmond Agricultural Fair was held from August 22 to 25 at the fairgrounds, enduring particularly hot weather, especially the last two days.

People from all age

groups gathered for one or many events. It was also a great opportunity to chat, buy horse-related items and produce, and see animals, independent of the scheduled events.

James Martin, who many associate with the New Richmond Fair, even though he is

no longer on the board of administrators, has noticed that the COVID-19 pandemic has left its mark on the event.

“It is taking years to come back to pre-Covid participation. Sometimes, I think it will take 10 years to return to normal and, sometimes, I wonder if we will ever reach

normality again,” he mentioned.

However, he is confident the fair's management team is making the adjustments needed to keep the fair going

and expanding. Mr. Martin was also particularly pleased with the performance of Nash Stanley and other music performers in the saloon.



Photos G. Gagné

Eight teams were registered in the single horse haul, four in the light class and four in the heavy class. Nouvelle's Robert Robinson and his horse Black won the light class with a total of 3,250 pounds. In the heavy class, Stephen Robinson, shown on the left in the picture, and his horse Tom finished first with 3,750 pounds. Robert Robinson walks right behind Tom. Some horsemen were registered with more than one horse. The event was held under a beaming sun.

Gesgapegiag's Faith Martin finished third in the Extreme Cowboy event. The word "extreme" might suggest a lot of movement. The event requires significant calm and concentration from both riders and horses along the course. Claude Arsenault won the event.



Magician David Philippe was present at the fair, as is often the case, and presented his tricks, much to the delight of families. "I prefer walking in the stands and doing tricks for small groups instead of being static in a specific place. People also appreciated it more," he explains. The Magic Man who had to battle cancer again last year, insists that he is recovering well.

Sylvia Martin prepares to throw one of her washers during the August 25 tournament, as organizers Jenna Boudreau and Yves Bujold watch closely. The tournament was won by Danny Sexton and Yves Bujold who defeated Billy Harrison and James Martin in the finals.



WELDING AND FITTING

COURSE STARTS JANUARY 2025

Do you:

- Have good shape perception?
- Enjoy physical and manual tasks?
- Have good visual acuity, dexterity and good execution precision?
- Have excellent powers of observation?

If so, **WELDING** is for you!



SCAN ME

Register by January 2025

100% placement rate

FREE residence



Fun for all ages at the New Richmond Agricultural Fair



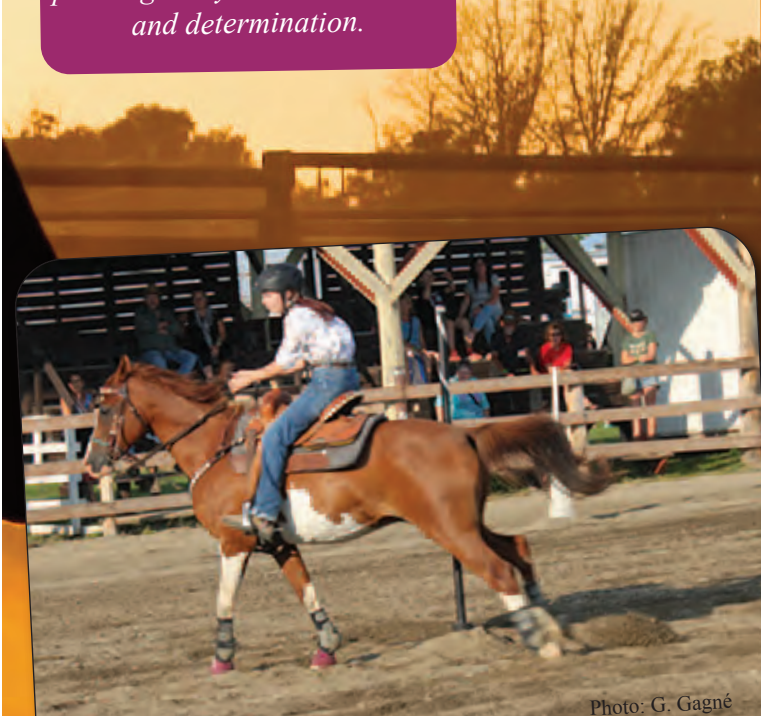
Shylah Sweetman earned a well-deserved 3rd place in the Cowboy Extreme event, impressing everyone with her skill and determination.

Photo: Melina Dolbec-Trudel



Kilian James Maltais and Denis Poirier also participated FOR FUN in the (single horse haul) with Ti-clown, the miniature horse, bringing plenty of laughter and enjoyment to everyone present.

Photo: Sara Leblanc



Gesgapegiag's Malia Caplin demonstrated masterful skills in the Gymkhana Junior event, which she dominated. The event was held late on August 24, Saturday afternoon. Kaley Court was the event's judge. The riders put on an impressive show. A day earlier, Ashley Ferguson and Melina Dolbec-Trudel were the top winners in the Gymkhana Open.

Photo: G. Gagné



A Gaspesian event would hardly be complete without music. Jesse Hunt (Caplan Agrizone), Tom Eden (New Richmond Military Museum) and Mike Brash (Purple Fields), not only jammed together in the saloon on the evening of August 22, but also had outside kiosks next to each other and picked up their guitars to occasionally play a tune.

Photo: G. Gagné

Business & Professional Directory



DIANE LEBOUTHILLIER

MP • Gaspésie—Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine

Serving the English-speaking community of our beautiful region!

Grande-Rivière office
418 385-4264

Magdalen Islands office
418 986-1489

Sainte-Anne-des-Monts office
418 764-2890

New Richmond office
581 355-0060

Email: diane.lebouthillier@parl.gc.ca

diane

AXIO
ARPEUTEURS - GÉOMÈTRES

AXIO
arpenteurs-géomètres inc.
land surveyors

151B, Avenue de Grand-Pré, Bonaventure (Québec) G0C 1E0

Alexandre Babin, Arpenteur-géomètre
C abag@axioag.com

Guillaume Lapierre, Arpenteur-géomètre
C glag@axioag.com

Membre de l'Ordre
des Arpenteurs-Géomètres du Québec

418 534-3113 / info@axioag.com
axioag.com

LFG
CONSTRUCTION

PROUD PARTNER IN
YOUR CONSTRUCTION
PROJECTS FOR
MORE THAN
45 YEARS!

constructionfg.com

T 418-364-7082 / 1-844-664-7082

REG. / 2534-4813-98

Gaspésie—Les Îles | Côte-Nord | Bas-Saint-Laurent

BUILDINGS ENERGY AND CIVIL ENGINEERING INDUSTRIAL MECHANIC



ENERGY
TRANSPORTATION GROUP

WHAT MAKES US
DRIVEN TO BE DIFFERENT?



www.shipENERGY.com

DISCOVER MORE

The Gaspé Peninsula needs 1,500 housing units

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula faces an urgent need for 1,500 housing units in the very short term – within a year – to address immediate shortages. Despite this, the Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefects estimates that there will still be a shortfall.

Several elected officials took advantage of the visit of the Minister responsible for housing to Maria on August 27 to take stock of the situation prevailing on the Gaspé Peninsula.

"This is very difficult data to obtain and we did some quick calculations and, at the very least in the short term, in the next year, 1,500 housing units would be needed and we know that each year, more will have to be added. It's difficult to assess it. The needs are immense and the challenges are great," says Mathieu Lapointe, president of the Table.

Mr. Lapointe believes that Minister France-Élaine Duranceau is aware of the region's needs which have been conveyed many times.

"The particular challenge in the Gaspésie is the cost of construction, which is higher than elsewhere in Quebec. There are projects that come out at

\$600,000 or \$700,000 per door. We have to find solutions and that's what she's working on to reduce costs. This means that we're not able to complete the financial packages and carry out the projects," notes Mr. Lapointe.

In the private sector, a four-and-a-half unit costs nearly \$300,000 while social housing can reach \$450,000.

On several occasions, the Table has proposed possible solutions to stimulate construction. "What the private sector is telling us is that it's not profitable enough, especially the down payment, which is too high. That's why we suggested various measures such as tax credits or enhanced depreciation that could make a real difference and apply only to our region," says Mr. Lapointe.

"She (the Minister) is analyzing these measures and she was thinking about concrete solutions of this type or loan guarantees to encourage people to invest in rental housing without requiring a 20% down payment, which is too high given the return," says Mr. Lapointe.

On August 22, the two levels of government announced a call for projects to build 500 modular units across Quebec

to speed up construction.

"We wanted the details to position ourselves and for the region to benefit from it but the minister did not commit. As soon as we have solid files, we can go back to see her and present potential files to the municipalities. Her number one issue is to have additional housing quickly and we will position ourselves quickly to respond to this concern," notes Mr. Lapointe.

In Gaspé alone, there is a shortage of 400 housing units. Last week, the Quebec government presented a strategy to build 560,000 housing units quickly in Quebec. The Mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, believes that this could help with construction.

"It could help on the financial side in particular. In her statement, the minister asked the municipal sector to be more flexible. Here, we are doing it. We had a private meeting with her Monday morning (August 26) and she quickly understood that municipalities in Gaspésie were not the type to slow down projects," indicates the mayor.

Mr. Côté highlighted the importance of flexibility in financial assistance. The Affordable Housing Program Quebec (PHAQ) could be revised.



Photo: N. Sergerie

"The program is good for nonprofit organizations. The private sector has access to it but few get on board because it is a bit complex. She understands that. She is ready to reopen the PHAQ program. When she talks to us about a new financial assistance program that is better adapted to reality, that speaks to us. If we are told that municipalities must adapt their regulations, that speaks to us less because we have already done so. In short, there is some good in what has been said. There are things that may be good for others but, for us, the financial assistance speaks to us," com-

ments Mr. Côté.

The minister believes that her program, which has two development axes, has been well received. She wants to create an environment conducive to construction, affordable or not.

"We have new financial tools to support groups so that projects can be built at a lower cost. While waiting for everything to be built, we want to help people who have difficulty paying their rent. There are a multitude of measures to help people while waiting for the housing supply to increase in Quebec," mentions France-Élaine Duranceau.

New Richmond:

\$5.6M municipal garage now under construction

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – Announced in December when the 2024 budget was tabled, the construction of the Town of New Richmond municipal garage began several weeks ago. The completion of the project is anticipated either by the end of this year or at the beginning of 2025.

The \$5.6 million project is supported by a \$4,283,680 grant from Quebec's Department of Municipal Affairs' Municipal Infrastructure Improvement and Construction Program (PRACIM).

"When we take the whole equation into account including the provincial sales tax return, we reach a grant percentage of 83%. The opportunity was too good to overlook," explains Éric Dubé, the mayor of New Richmond.

The contract for the new garage was awarded to LFG Construction, whose head office is located in Saint-Omer.



Photo: G. Gagné

The company's main operational centre is situated in New Richmond's industrial park.

The contract awarded to LFG Construction is for the amount of \$5,651,584, taxes included. Considering the net taxes that the municipal administration must assume reached only 50% of the Quebec Sales Tax, the Town of New Richmond will recover the other 50% as well as 100% of the Goods and Services Tax paid to the federal

government. This means the net cost of the project will total \$5,224,000, including the \$4,283,680 from the PRACIM, leaving an amount just under \$1 million for the municipal administration.

In addition, Mayor Dubé explains that the offer made by LFG during the call for tender process was also too good to pass.

"LFG Construction included the architectural aspects of the project in the bid. That global offer saves us

money and time," he adds.

The structure of the new garage will be made of wood, which also contributed to increase the grant percentage coming from the Quebec government.

"The new building will offer enough space to fill the Town of New Richmond needs," specifies Éric Dubé.

"The new garage, built on two levels, right next to the current garage, will have a surface of 1,140 square metres. The project includes the de-

velopment of a garage area with ten doors, eight parking bays, offices, storage spaces and a kitchenette. Three inside bays will be reserved for our largest units of heavy machinery, and two more will be used for mechanical repairs and maintenance," he says.

The Minister of Natural Resources and Forests and Minister responsible for Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands region, Maïté Blanchette Vézina, as well as the Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, Catherine Blouin, visited the site of the new garage on July 12 to see the progress.

"We will keep the current municipal garage for storage purposes. It will be quite handy. The building is still good. It was just too small for our needs," points out Éric Dubé.

The financial assistance will also fund the renovation of the existing garage and the construction of a shelter for de-icing salt.

End of independent workforce: CISSS prepares a plan to maintain services

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - The Quebec government's plan to gradually eliminate independent health-care workers could lead to reduced services in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centres (CISSS) is developing a plan in the event that the 200 agency workers who work for the organization are no longer present in October 2026, the deadline for ensuring the transition (away from agency workers) in the region.

The increasingly restrictive rules that will apply in the coming months raise concerns about the availability of resources to fill uncovered shifts. "If people from agencies are less interested in com-

ing to the region, we could have needs that remain unmet and that would put us at a greater risk. That's why we are looking at a critical services plan and being able to identify people in our organization to maintain these critical services. That would mean that other services would have to be slowed down to maintain critical services. It's a plan. We want to prepare for the worst. We don't want to be forced to deploy it, but we have to think about it to maintain 24/7 services," says President and Chief Executive Officer Martin Pelletier.

Before getting to that point, the CISSS will attempt to recruit agency staff, particularly with the new working conditions established in recent collective agreements.

"We will solicit them to see if they would be interested in



Photo: N. Sergerie

CISSS de la Gaspésie CEO Martin Pelletier.

becoming employees of the CISSS de la Gaspésie. Some are in the region, but there are some in urban centres. It's a big life choice to say that we're moving to another region. We're going to submit the new

conditions to them. We're able to show them what's available now and they'll be able to compare what they do in their agencies. They'll understand that the network is becoming interesting in terms of money,"

believes the CEO.

So far, one or two people have chosen to work for the CISSS on their own.

Although about 80 international nurses will eventually join the workforce, the CISSS will not make any net gains.

"We still have a large turnover of people retiring and we have many who are not very far from retirement. We're in the process of making these projections. We hope the gap will be positive. It will all depend on the number of people we can retain from outside nurses," says Mr. Pelletier, who also hopes that some individuals will delay their retirement.

The CISSS is registered for a third international cohort expected next spring. According to Mr. Pelletier, about twenty new candidates could move to the region.

Mental health: fewer hospitalizations and more community services

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER - A new approach to managing mental health cases will reduce hospitalizations at the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) through the implementation of three programs in the Bay of Chaleur and Rocher-Percé local health networks.

The Minister responsible for Social Services, Lionel Carmant, visited Chandler on August 22 to announce the implementation of a brief support team in the community (ABC), the establishment of a brief intervention unit in psychiatry (UIBP), as well as the offer of brief intensive treatment at home (TIBD).

Quebec is providing \$700,000 to allow the hiring of five resources to achieve this. "Currently, when a mental health patient is presented to the emergency room, there is often a delay before they are seen. Generally, when emergency doctors are worried, patients are kept under observation or hospitalized. In general, hospitalization in psychiatry lasts on average in Quebec more than a month. We are tamping all that

down," says the minister.

A nurse and a social worker will be at the emergency reception.

"If they judge that the patient can be taken care of in the community, he will be taken care of in the community. If the problem is acute and can be corrected quickly by intensive intervention, he will only stay in the hospital for two or three days and have his follow-up in the community. Even more, if we believe that the problem can be resolved in the community, it will be resolved in the community," says the minister, who mentions that some patients don't go to the hospital to avoid being stigmatized or hospitalized. According to Mr. Carmant, the network between the new programs and the teams already in place will allow for efficiency in the new program.

Technology will play a role in supporting the follow-up process in the community. Programs

The Brief Community Support Team (ABC) provides services to people in a mental health crisis who have either been presented to the emergency room or who are likely to do so due to the ab-



The Minister responsible for Social Services, Lionel Carmant.

Photo: N. Sergerie

sence of an immediate and adequate response to their needs.

This clinical team, composed of a psychoeducator, an occupational therapist, a nurse and specialized educators, provides brief and rapid psychosocial follow-up, mainly in the person's living environment, at an intensity adapted to the situation. They ensure a smooth handover to community teams.

The services are offered within a maximum of 24 to 48 hours and aim to establish a

safety net, prevent the crisis or resolve it. The Brief Intervention Unit in Psychiatry (UIBP) will be fully operational next month with additional staff in the Bay of Chaleur and Rocher-Percé regions. It will provide a rapid and relevant response to urgent psychiatric needs for adult clients.

These services are specifically designed for individuals who consult the emergency room due to mental health crises requiring a short stay in a safe environment with 24-

hour monitoring. This stay is intended to resolve the crisis, initiate treatment and allow a return to the living environment with the appropriate services. The UIBP is complementary to psychiatric hospitalization. Brief intensive home treatment (TIBD), which is being gradually implemented and will be operational this fall, will eventually allow individuals experiencing an acute episode resulting from a mental disorder and requiring hospitalization to receive care at home during the day and evening, seven days a week.

This service provides users who wish the same quality of care as in a hospital setting, with several visits per day, while remaining in their living environment. The home intervention, which is done with the supervision of a psychiatrist, increases the possibility of offering support to loved ones and promotes the maintenance of autonomy and social ties. In addition, the use of digital tablets, with the support of caregivers, will allow for better monitoring of symptoms and other parameters.

Cont'd on page 13

Businesswoman buys the Thompson General Store in Barachois

GILLES GAGNÉ

BARACHOIS – On June 21, Christine Côté, who has been living in the Gaspé Peninsula for 10 years, concluded the transaction that made her the new owner of Thompson's General Store in Barachois, a business that had been up for sale for a bit over a year.

The store was founded in 1909 by Robin, Jones and Whitman and experienced a first period of uncertainty

when the company experienced financial problems at the end of 2004.

Harris Thompson, a Barachois native who moved out of the region when he was nine years old because of his mother's death, bought and saved the store in 2006. He sold a successful business in Ontario and invested \$400,000 to revamp the Barachois store in 2013-2014. Its name was changed from Robin to Thompson's.

However, over the last few years, Harris Thompson's health condition convinced him to sell the store.

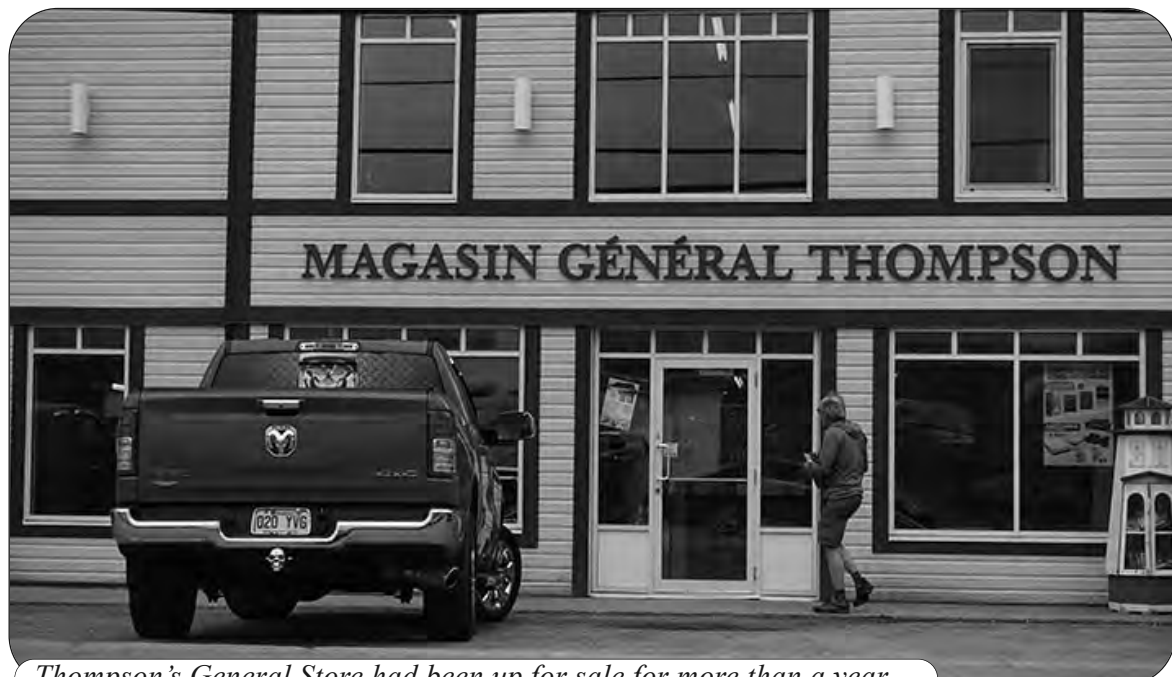
"The store had been up for sale for quite a while. Two real estate agents had been mandated to sell it. I didn't want it to close and not many people had shown interest in buying it. So, I started talking to the second real estate agent," explains Christine Côté, who has been running a maple grove with her partner since her ar-

rival in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Now, the store is her business and the maple grove is more her husband's business, although they help one another.

"He comes to help. He finds that I bought myself some work. The potential is extraordinary. It is just and it requires a bit of energy. The business was not in difficulty.

We will provide some love to it. We will change the refrigerators, the freezers, the floors so that it is even more welcoming. We will add to the variety of food. Even if the building was classified, the back walls remained to be upgraded. I promise that it will be the most beautiful grocery store in the region," adds Christine Côté.



Thompson's General Store had been up for sale for more than a year.

Photos: G. Gagné



Christine Côté wants to offer new services to the community.

Cont'd on page 13

Carl Bond reflects on 58 Years at the General Store

HOLLY SMITH

BARACHOIS: Carl Bond has been a familiar face at the Barachois General Store, where he has worked for nearly six decades, 58 years to be exact. Mr. Bond, who started at the store in the 1960s at the age of 17, has been a dedicated presence throughout the years and the numerous changes that have taken place at the store as well as the community it serves.

Mr. Bond's journey started with a simple recommendation from his father who was friends with the store manager. "It was the only job I've ever had," Mr. Bond says. Over the years, his role has evolved from cashier to helping new owners with everything from picking suppliers to managing stock. "I started as a cashier, and then Robins sent me to Paspébiac, and then to Chandler, Newport and even Nova Scotia for a little while. When the owner in Barachois passed away, they asked me to return to Barachois, and so I did," says Mr. Bond, reminiscing



Carl Bond is always eager to greet patrons at Thompson's General Store

Photo: Karen Bond

about his early days.

The store's product selection has shifted significantly since Mr. Bond first started.

"People used to make things like sleighs in the winter to go to the woods or do their own repairs," he notes, "Nowadays, it's all contractors and big stores. People used to make their own cupboards before. They bought plywood and cabinet hinges, but that has become less popular." Similarly, prod-

ucts like dried fish and coal oil have faded from the shelves as local needs and preferences have changed.

But not everything has changed. One standout product is the store's bologna. "We sell a lot of rolls of bologna. In fact, we sold 1,800 rolls in one year. Our price of \$57 is significantly lower than the big stores who charge by the gram, and customers know they can get a good deal here, so they come

here even from Gaspé," says Mr. Bond.

Garden seeds are another item that has seen a shift. "We used to sell up to five pallets of garden seeds each year," Bond explains, "Now, it's down to maybe one a year, except during COVID when demand surged." During the pandemic, the store saw a spike in interest in flour and garden seeds, as people turned to local shopping for essentials and home gardening products. "We sold a lot of flour during COVID, maybe a pallet a week. People didn't want to go to the big stores where there were a lot of people, so they would all come to Barachois," says Mr. Bond.

Bond has also observed the rise of digital interactions replacing personal customer service. "In the past, we had travelling salespeople who would come in and chat with us and show us their specials," he recalls, "If there was a problem they would fix it. Now, everything is digital and, if there's a problem, it's hard to get things done. They say they will call you back but sometimes they

never really do."

The store's role in the community has evolved as well. While older customers often "popped in", younger residents are more likely to head to the bigger stores or shop online. "The younger crowd doesn't come in just to talk like the old timers did," observes Mr. Bond, noting that he's glad to see summer visitors still pop in to chat and show their support.

Despite the changes, Mr. Bond cherishes his memories of the store's role as a central hub for information and social interaction. "We would have people calling for all kinds of different things, like phone numbers and stuff. It's not like before. They look stuff up themselves online now," says Mr. Bond.

As for the future, Mr. Bond isn't ready to hang up his hat just yet. "I turned 74 this year, but I'll keep going as long as I can or however long they want me for," he says with a chuckle. "As long as my health is good, I'll be around," he adds.

GENERAL STORE:

▶ Cont'd from page 12

New services will be offered

The upper part of the building will be transformed to a certain degree, as an apartment will house a new employee at the store, Irène Ducharme, a friend of the Côté family who has spent the last 12 years working in the Banff area in Alberta.

"We will offer some office space to professionals who could give some services or appointments to the population of the area. We will make it free. We will supply that office space. The building is so big that there is room for that," specifies the new owner.

"It is not a financial project. It is a community project. It is not our pension fund. We want to break even, and have enough to keep it in good shape. We will keep the hardware store, the building materials, what makes it a general store. We will get rid of the electric appliance side because it takes a lot of space and, yes, we will keep selling nails by the pound. We still have the

big boxes in the back store. We gave a mission to Elmer this week to sort out what doesn't sell,"

Elmer is Elmer LeMesurier, one of the three long-time employees working for Thompson's General Store. Bernice Vibert, who works at the cash register, and Carl Bond, who has been working there for more than 50 years, complete the team.

"Since June 21, people are coming to say thanks. Everybody knows Bernice. It is more than a store. It is a community centre. Everybody comes for a chat, and leaves with a loaf of bread, or something else," stresses Christine Côté.

Nearby resident Cynthia Patterson praises the involvement of the businesswoman.

"She is an astute business person and someone committed to community values (...) This transaction has been a huge relief to us. I do not assume in my prayer practice to know better than our Creator the direction life should take but I prayed daily for the well-being of our village in this matter. We, in the village, are grateful for Harris Thompson

renewing the store after its closure by the longtime owners, the Legros brothers and we are grateful now to Christine and her family for taking up this essential service. I am confident that she will combine new services with the widely loved traditions of this general store. It is a rare example of a vanishing breed, as is the team that makes it possible," says Ms. Patterson.

She noticed that over the first full day of operations, Saturday, June 22, "Christine and her partner were there with buckets of hot water and cloths, cleaning the front door and windows! Hands-on people. That same day two large planters, brimming over with flowers, were placed one on each side of the door," she underlines.

In an article published in 2016, Harris Thompson, then aged 74, remembered how the first salvage of the store took place. In December 2004, the Robin, Jones and Whitman company, the oldest company in Canada after Hudson's Bay, placed itself under the protection of the Creditors Arrangement Act. At the end of 2005, the trustee ordered the closure

of the Barachois store, after almost a hundred years of service.

When Mr. Thompson learned about the closure, "I knew that if we didn't do anything, it was the end of the vil-

lage, because the store is the heart of the village. I acquired it in 2006 because it is a symbol of an important period, a meeting place for the community and a place of memories of my childhood," he added.

MENTAL HEALTH:

▶ Cont'd from page 11

"We have managed to fill our five positions," emphasizes Wayne McBrearty, head of the mental health service at Maria Hospital. The minister noted that hiring for new programs is generally easier because of the appeal of new programs.

"There will be a lot of work to do with the medical profession, but at the workers' level, it is done. At the CISSS level, we already had workers in the field, in the community. We follow an average of a hundred clients at home. The ABC team will come and strengthen the team in place," Mr. McBrearty says.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL NEWSPAPER!
 Subscribe • Advertise
 Report • Donate



Business & Professional DIRECTORY

Grenier, Grenier & Grenier
 LAWYERS




Réal Grenier, b.a.ll.l.
Jules Grenier, b.a.ll.l.

96 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd, P.O. Box 519
 New Carlisle (Quebec) G0C 1Z0
 Tel.: (418) 752-3308 • Fax (418) 752-6935

To reach the anglophone population of the Gaspé Peninsula, advertise in

The Gaspé Spec!
418-752-5400
specs@globetrotter.net



GAËL TREMBLAY
 Notary and legal counsel

TREMBLAY & BARRIAULT, NOTAIRES INC.
 119B Perron Blvd West
 New Richmond, (Québec) G0C 2B0
 Tel.: (418) 392-5282
 Fax: (418) 392-6155
 E-mail: gaeltremblay@notarius.net



Notaries and legal counsel

FULLY BILINGUAL SERVICE

Forage Moreau Inc.
418-392-9501
 Mathieu Mercier - Driller/Owner



- Artesian Well Drilling
- Budgetary Price
- Bilingual Service
- RBQ: 5672-1467-01


foragemoreaumercier@gmail.com




Going beyond and reliable since 1982

3 Rue Cerisiers
 Gaspé, Québec G4X 2M1
 Tel. (418) 368-5425
 Fax (418) 368-7290
 www.groupeohmega.com

Electricity - Plumbing
 Automation
 Industrial computing
 Counter sales



Dr. Pascal Cyr
 Optometrist



Dr. Stacey Starrak
 Optometrist

CLINIQUE D'OPTOMÉTRIE
L'ÉMERILLON

LENSES CRAFTED ON THE PREMISES

PASPÉBIAC: 104 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd West • 418-752-5553
 CHANDLER: 260 René Lévesque Blvd East • 418-689-5553
 MARIA: 435 Perron Blvd West • 418-759-5553



BILINGUAL SERVICE

MEMBER OF



Canada's Largest Network of Optometrists

Announcements



In Memory

SMITH: Harvey

In loving memory of a dear husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather who passed away 19 years ago on September 3, 2005.

Nineteen years have passed, yet love still binds, In every laugh and memory we find.

Husband, father, grandpa, great-grandpa true, Your spirit lives on in all we do.

In our hearts, your light forever stays,

Guiding us gently through all our days.

Forever cherished and remembered by your family. Until we meet again. xoxo


Obituary - under 150 words (\$50), 150-250 words (\$55)
250+ words (quote will be provided)

In Memory: under 150 words (\$35), 150-250 words (\$45)

Funeral, Celebration of Life, Card of Thanks, Engagement, Birth, Prayer, Birthday (\$35)



All photos are an additional \$10




Four Generations of Monument Craftsmen
HIGHEST QUALITY - BEST PRICES
MONUMENTS, MARKERS, CEMETERY LETTERING, LASER DESIGNS AND PORTRAITS
SALES REP:
Steven Imhoff 418-752-6041
Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond

SPREAD THE joy

Publish your WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT in The Gaspé Spec

What was your theme? Who was in the bridal party?

Share details such as who the bride and groom are, where they are from and who their parents are.

Would you like a sample announcement/template? Reach out to us on facebook (The Gaspé Spec) or at specs@globetrotter.net and we'll provide you with a sample.

\$65

Photo included
300 words max.



Send your announcement to specs@globetrotter.net, inbox The Gaspé Spec on Facebook, visit thegaspe-spec.com or mail to 208B Gérard D. Levesque, New Carlisle, QC, G0C 1Z0

COAST ROUND-UP

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

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.

MALBAY:

Harvest Supper

October 5: The Malbay harvest supper will begin at 5 p.m. tickets will be available after September 14.

YORK:

Gaspé County W.I.

September 7: Gaspé County W.I. will be hosting the annual W.I. fair at the York River Community Hall, 702 York Boulevard west. The hall will open at 3 p.m. for public viewing of all the exhibits and a delicious salad supper awaits you at 4:45 p.m. with takeout available. Adults \$15 children \$10 (12 and younger) we look forward to seeing lots of people

participate in our local W.I. craft fair and supper again this year. Everyone is welcome.

HOPE TOWN:

Sports Club

September 15: 21st Annual Terry Fox Walk. Registration starts at 12:30 p.m. and the walk begins at 1 p.m.

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

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, September 8

10 a.m. Service

Sunday, September 15

10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN

Sunday, September 8

2 p.m. Service

Sunday, September 15

No Service

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

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, September 8

New Carlisle

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Hope Town

3 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Shigawake

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, September 8

St. John/St. Philip

Sandy Beach

7 p.m. Evening Prayer

Sunday, September 15

St. James - Wakeham

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Every Wednesday

No Morning Prayer for the Month of September

On the lighter side...

HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, you are quick to spend money lately, and that can prove problematic in the long run. It may be a good idea to sit down with a financial planner and sort out spending and saving habits.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, this week you have free rein to follow your intuition and express your emotions to those around you. It's beneficial to get in touch with how you are feeling and explore things further.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

There is some unfinished business you need to clear up before you can fully focus on the week or even month ahead, Gemini. It may be scary, but you need to put it behind you.

CANCER – June 22/July 22

Cancer, it is time to rally the troops, as many hands will make much faster work of something you need to get done. Ask your friends or family to pitch in as much as possible.

LEO – July 23/Aug 23

Leo, you're finally ready to take a sizeable step toward completing a goal that has been on your list for what seems like an eternity. It will feel so great when it is far behind you.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Do you have an appetite for adventure this week, Virgo? You may not have to travel too far for all of the thrills and chills you desire. Look around for options close to home.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

You may not be feeling like yourself, Libra. There's something rumbling beneath the surface that you don't want to share with others just yet. There's time to be patient.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, as you move through the week, a certain relationship could begin weighing heavily on you. You're not sure if you should commit further or move on.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, you're not just ready to hit the ground running, you have the stamina to sail through at a rocket's pace. This renewed sense of urgency can help you achieve great things.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, the week may start off on a good note with plenty of entertaining distractions. Keep the fun going throughout the week.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Your attention span is limited this week, Aquarius. You may need to work from home or block out as many distractions as possible if you hope to get a single thing finished.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Make a point of delegating if your to-do list gets a little long over the next few days, Pisces. Your phone will be pinging constantly with alerts, so a little help can go a long way.

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)
- SEPTEMBER 8 Pink, Singer (45)
- SEPTEMBER 9 Michael Bublé, Singer (49)

The welcoming breeze of September

The transition from the heat and humidity of summer brings that blanket of morning coolness and evening chill that awaits us in the coming days. As we move into autumn, feeling that breeze from Chaleur Bay's saltwater, we realize it's time to enjoy more hot chocolate and tea.

Gaspésians know that shorter days are upon us, and those afternoon walks can be exhilarating with dry leaves rustling under our feet.

September may bring its own challenges, but our beautiful amber colours are starting to emerge in the distance, creating an extraordinary sight for locals and visitors to the Gaspé Peninsula.

We are truly blessed with all four seasons, and we can have moments of jubilation in what we have right in our own backyard.

Ken Ross, New Carlisle

What's this CHALLENGE

Do you know what this gadget is 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 Kim Major. The item was found in an old farmhouse and gets used often.

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



SUDOKU

		4			7			8
	2					3		
							4	9
					4		5	
	4		5				1	6
	8		1	6				
			6	1				
1		9					2	
				8		4		

Level: Intermediate

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Sixteen modular homes available for foreign nurses

GILLES GAGNÉ

MARIA – In just nine months various stakeholders from the housing and health sectors have succeeded in delivering 16 single-dwelling, three-bedroom, modular homes for nursing staff recruited abroad, mainly from Africa. Eight of the homes are located in Maria, and the other eight are located in Gaspé.

The Maria and Gaspé pilot project was announced on July 11, 2023, with work beginning shortly after.

The construction cost of each unit was approximately \$170,000 with additional related costs. This is significantly less than the unit cost of the “Maison des aînés” (seniors residence) concept, which has ranged between \$700,000 and \$900,000 over recent years by the Quebec government.

On August 27, the homes in Maria were officially inaugurated in the presence of the Quebec Minister responsible for Housing, France-Élaine Duranceau, who was visibly proud of the pilot project’s completion time.

This event demonstrates that it is possible to develop housing in a reasonable time-frame. “These units were born from an unprecedented collaboration between the SHQ (Société immobilière du Québec) and the health sector, which I hope will spawn offspring. We didn’t work in silos,” said Minister Duranceau.

She also made a connection between this Gaspé pilot project and part of her strategy to counter the housing short-



Photos: G. Gagné

In Maria, the houses are located in a neighbourhood very close to where the nurses work, as well as local businesses and services.

age, a strategy announced on August 22 in Trois-Rivières. This strategy includes the future construction of 500 modular housing units, grouped into buildings with 24 to 36 dwellings.

While the Gaspé pilot project featured single modular homes, the decision to carry out the future projects in batches of 24 to 36 units was criticized by the Fédération québécoise des municipalités, because this model is allegedly poorly adapted to the reality of villages and certain small towns, which, like urban centres, are struggling with a housing shortage.

In response, Minister Duranceau indicated that this choice of buildings with 24 to 36 units addresses needs identified by her department. “If there is a need for smaller projects, we will adapt,” she

said, adding that a demand exceeding 500 modular units would result in an additional phase.

Several partners to carry out the Gaspé project

From an idea formed by management at the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS), the 16 single-dwelling modular homes project quickly gained ground, thanks in particular to the commitment of the Société immobilière du Québec; the Municipality of Maria, which provided land; the CISSS, which provided the property in Gaspé; and the Office d’habitation de Baie-des-Chaleurs, which ensured quality monitoring, as it manages or owns 400 housing units between Paspebiac and Nou-

velle.

Les Habitations Mont-Carleton, a prefabricated housing manufacturer based in Carleton, built 10 units after submitting a proposal of \$170,561 per house. Profab, a company located in Saint-Apollinaire, near Québec City, built the other six.

Three of the homes in Maria are already occupied and a fourth will be soon. The others, both in Gaspé and Maria, will soon be ready. Tenants can live in the homes for six months. “This is to give (the nurses and their families) a transition period of a few months to settle here,” notes Minister Duranceau.

CISSS assistant chief executive officer Jean Saint-Pierre stresses that “when workers from abroad arrive here, they have very few belongings.” Maria Mayor Jean-Claude

Landry says his council’s decision to provide land was easy to make in the summer of 2023. “We made sure that newcomers would find themselves in a pleasant, friendly and welcoming environment,” he says.

Maria’s eight houses are built a few dozen metres from the Résidence Saint-Joseph, a long-term care facility, and 200 metres from the hospital. Newcomers can easily walk to work and their children, if they attend elementary school, only have to cross one street.

The SHQ owns 16 houses and rents them to the CISSS. Tenants must pay \$1,200 per month to live in them. The CISSS equips the houses with household appliances, furniture, dishes, bedding, towels and light fixtures. Cable television, heating and electricity are included in the rent.

To date, 60 candidates have responded to the international recruitment drive conducted by the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS. Applicants come from Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Haiti.

A second cohort of about twenty people is currently being recruited for the Gaspé Peninsula health institutions.

Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, where there is also a housing shortage, expressed interest in the unimodular units, but that town’s version of the initiative was not accepted in the initial project.

The pilot project was initially implemented in Charlevoix and Northern Quebec but on a smaller scale.



Minister France-Élaine Duranceau, centre right, with Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly, Catherine Blouin, cut the ribbon symbolizing the opening of single-modular homes for healthcare workers from abroad.

