

DALHOUSIE: Possible delay in zoning change that could open the door for a pozzolan mine

GILLES GAGNÉ

DALHOUSIE – The municipal council of Heron Bay in New Brunswick could postpone the amendments to its urban plan until 2025, in the face of pressure from the citizens of this town and from Gaspésians who oppose the open-pit pozzolan mine project in the Dalhousie sector.

This possibility of postponement came almost immediately after a tight decision by this same municipal council during a public meeting held on the evening of September 23 in the Dalhousie sector of Heron Bay.

The following afternoon, six of the town's municipal councillors held an informal meeting during which they came to an agreement on a common strategy. However, the details will not be made public immediately. Mayor Normand Pelletier was absent from this meeting as he was on



About thirty Gaspésians attended the Dalhousie meeting, including this group that left Nouvelle by bus.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

a hunting excursion.

At the September 23 public meeting, attended by approximately 200 people, the citizens present expressed common viewpoints, to either postpone the decision pertaining to the zoning change which opens the door to the pozzolan mine or

permanently refuse the project led by the Quebec firm Eco-Rock Dalhousie.

The public meeting opened seconds after the chants of "No mine in Dalhousie!" marked the entrance of the last attendees. The meeting was called to present to the public a different

wording of the zoning bylaw. It was the first reading of the bylaw.

The attendees repeatedly "booed" any reference to a possible adoption of the zoning change which, if eventually ratified by the council, would allow large-scale resource ex-

ploitation within the limits of the former town of Dalhousie.

A little over three hours into the meeting, of which a large amount of time was reserved for interventions by citizens, the municipal council nevertheless adopted this first reading. Three councillors voted for, and three voted against. Mayor Pelletier decided in favour of opening up to resource exploitation within the limits of the Dalhousie sector.

That was enough to provoke the anger of the citizens, who chanted "Resignation!".

This turn of events clearly prompted members of the council initially in favour of the zoning change to consider postponing its review until 2025.

Multiple objections

The objections to the development of the pozzolan mine

Cont'd on page 2

Shigawake Port Daniel School Launches Journalism Club for Grades 4-6

HOLLY SMITH

PORT DANIEL: - Shigawake Port Daniel School (SPDS) is sparking creativity and media awareness among its students with the launch of a journalism club for grades 4 to 6. Under the guidance of teacher Myriam Beebe, the club aims to empower young writers to explore the world of journalism. The students will write articles about school events, which will be published in The Gaspé Spec newspaper.

The initiative has already garnered enthusiasm from students eager to see their work in print, while also gaining valuable experience in journalism. To kick off their jour-

nalism club, students invited the staff of The Gaspé Spec to visit SPDS. The students prepared questions in advance in order to learn more about newspapers. They were also given the opportunity to view some of SPEC's archives.

The Gaspé Spec is excited to support this initiative, offering a platform for young students to share their voices and develop their writing skills. This opportunity will allow them to learn about media while connecting with the broader community. Look for future articles from these young journalists in upcoming editions of the Gaspé Spec!

Check out their first article on page 9.



SPDS students will be reporting school events in upcoming issues of The Gaspé Spec.

Photo: Penny MacWhirter

touched on multiple areas, including the health of citizens, the lack of information, the quality of the environment, Dalhousie's heavy industrial past that left the urbanized part of the town in a pitiful state, the lack of transparency of large companies, and politics.

Mickey Maloney, of Dalhousie, suspects members of the municipal council knew about the mine project for three years but have only disseminated information in recent months.

"How many councillors were in the loop from the beginning? Raise your hand! Have we been kept in the dark this whole time?" asked Mr. Maloney. Mayor Pelletier indicated that the council was not there to answer questions. About thirty Gaspesians attended the Heron Bay meeting, particularly because the Miguasha sector of Nouvelle and Fleurant's Point area of Escuminac are located directly across from Dalhousie, at a distance varying from 2.5 to 4.5 kilometres on the other side of the Chaleur Bay. These Gaspesians were warmly welcomed by the New Brunswick attendees.

One Gaspesian, Jean-Marc Beaulieu, questioned the validity of the public consultation process, since the advantages of the pozzolan mine project were described in the wording of the Heron Bay urban planning committee's notice, without the company's name being mentioned.

"We are here to talk about an amendment process, but we see in the notice that the project could generate millions of dollars, that the extraction could create many direct and indirect jobs. You are promoting the mine in this amendment, which was supposed to be general. You have a democratic problem in Baie-des-Hérons. It is inappropriate to let people fight and divide because of a lack of transparency," exclaimed Mr. Beaulieu.

His spouse, Lisa Mosher, from Miguasha, spoke with emotion, as did other members of the public. "We have spent 12 hours a day for two months opposing this project. (...) We do not understand this hasty approach. Slow down!" she advised the municipal council.

Pascal Bergeron, from the Gaspé ecological group, Environnement Vert-plus, addressed Normand Pelletier,



Dalhousie resident and former councillor Gail Fearon questioned the thoroughness of the town council's thinking.

Photo: G. Gagné

reminding him that he is straddling two roles, that of mayor and also that of Conservative candidate in the New Brunswick election on October 21. New Brunswick's Conservative Premier, Blaine Higgs, a former Irving oil employee, is known for favouring big industry.

"I don't want to give you lessons but, in Quebec, he (a candidate in a provincial election) would not vote to decide in a case of amendment like that," noted Mr. Bergeron.

The location of the quarry targeted for conversion into a mine is located a short distance from the nearest houses.

Gail Fearon, a former Dalhousie municipal councillor, and a defeated candidate for mayor, targeted council members who were in favour of the EcoRock Dalhousie project with several hard questions.

"You have not defined what adopting a resource development zone means in our community. Why don't you do a thorough job of reviewing the entire urban plan, taking into account water, minerals, clean air? (...) We are talking about pozzolan at \$75 per tonne, mined at a rate of 3 million tonnes per year. What will our share be? What will the effect be on our tax base? How much will we receive for the water that will be used by the company? What value will you give to air quality? Clean air is a resource!" said Ms. Fearon.

She suspected that the council had not done any overall assessment of the project's impact on citizens' health.

"How can you minimize the impact of digging in the middle of your town? There are people who call our town a ghost town (since its industries closed in the late 2000s). Well, I'd rather have a ghost town than a zombie town," Ms. Fearon said.

Others attendees pointed

out that pozzolan contains a high proportion of silica, a substance known to float in the air for a long time when reduced to fine dust, causing respiratory problems. The resuspension of polluted sediment at Dalhousie harbour, following its eventual dredging to facilitate the export of

pozzolan, added to the concerns.

Bernard Quintal, who practiced medicine for 40 years in Dalhousie, does not want to see his town plunge back into heavy industry.

"I saw arsenic poisoning at the power plant because it burned coal from Minto (a southern New Brunswick town). There was a lot of asthma, lung cancer. We wondered why. I feel stupid now for asking those questions. The (pulp and paper) mill was bad for people's health... We have less asthma and cancer now. I can't believe we're going back to where we were," he said.

Indigenous Presence

A few members of the Eel River Bar Mi'gmaq Nation and other Indigenous communities in northern New Brunswick reminded the town


council that it couldn't make a decision about land that didn't belong to them.

"You're talking about land that was never ceded. You don't own land because you put a flag on it. When there's an unjust acquisition, the ownership is unjust. How can you say that this land can be transferred, bartered or traded when it does not belong to you?" asked one of the attendees, without getting an answer from Mayor Pelletier.

Pozzolan is a volcanic stone that can be used in varying proportions in making cement. The main markets targeted by EcoRock Dalhousie are located in Europe.

In principle, there should be two more readings before the adoption of a zoning change that could transform the status of the location of the pozzolan deposit.

EcoRock Dalhousie will hold a meeting in Carleton on October 29.



Ville de Percé

Public notice of the revision of the list of electors

Polling day: October 27, 2024

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

1. The list of electors was filed with the office of the municipality on September 24, 2024. It is currently under review.
2. In order to vote, you must be entered on the list of electors.
3. You have the right to be entered on the list of electors if:
 - You will be 18 years of age on polling day.
 - On September 4, 2024:
 - you had the Canadian citizenship;
 - you were not under curatorship;
 - you had not been convicted of a corrupt electoral practice in the previous five years.
 - In addition, you must meet one of the following two conditions on September 4, 2024:
 - Be domiciled on the territory of the municipality and for at least six months in Québec;
 - For at least 12 months, own an immovable or occupy a business establishment located on the territory of the municipality.

NOTE: If you are not domiciled in the municipality and want to exercise your voting right, you will need to send an application for entry or a power of attorney, as the case may be, to the returning officer.
4. You will be able to consult the list of electors and, if you are an elector domiciled in the municipality, submit an application for entry, striking or correction before the board of revisors at the following location, on the days and during the hours indicated.

Address: City Hall, 137, route 132 Ouest, Percé

Days	Time
On October 10, 2024	From 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. From 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. From 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.
On October 11, 2024	From 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
5. For any application for entry of a person domiciled in the territory of the municipality, the person who applies must indicate the previous address of the person's domicile and present two documents: one indicating the name and date of birth of the person and the other, his or her name and domicile address.
6. 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 25, 2024.

**Gemma Vibert,
Returning officer**

Police report

A 47-year-old man from Caplan could face charges for driving while impaired by drugs and drug trafficking. The Sûreté du Québec (SQ) stopped the man around 11 p.m. on September 21 while he was driving on Chemin Trait-Carré in Bonaventure. He was quickly arrested for driving under the influence of drugs. During a search of the vehicle, SQ discovered over 400 methamphetamine pills and cash. A blood sample was collected. The man was released pending a court appearance at a later date. He is known to law enforcement for drug-related activities.

Devin Isaac, 26, from Listuguj, is suspected of aggravated assault for allegedly using a weapon during an incident that took place on the night of September 14-15. Mr. Isaac reportedly entered a Listuguj residence and an altercation ensued with the occupant of the premises. Devin Isaac allegedly pulled out a knife and injured the victim, who was taken to the hospital, but was not in life-threatening condition. Devin Isaac turned himself into the police on September 16 and appeared in court that same day. He appeared again at the New Carlisle Courthouse on September 26, but his bail hearing was postponed until September 27. "Additional charges could be laid in this file. He has a criminal record. For the moment, he faces charges of aggravated assault with a weapon. He was still under probation from a previous case, in which he was sentenced to a two-year prison term. He was not alone during the last (September 14-15) incident and one of the probation conditions was to refrain from being with the man who accompanied him," explains criminal prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier.

Awaiting a decision from the Court of Appeal on his guilty verdict of sexual assault on a minor under the age of 16, Marc-André Robichaud, 58, from Pointe-à-la-Croix, is back behind bars. Sentenced to a five-year sentence in June 2023, Mr. Robichaud had been released on several conditions while the appeal process was ongoing. He has been detained since August 28 for violating three of those conditions, and did not contest the criminal prosecutor's request to keep him in prison. In 2023, after a two-week trial, a jury also found Marc-André Robichaud guilty of causing bodily harm during the 2019 event in Pointe-à-la-Croix.

Yvan Dufresne, 46, from Gaspé, has pleaded guilty to a charge of harassment in a case involving one of the three women accusing him of domestic violence. He will be sentenced on January 29. For the two other alleged victims, two days of trial are scheduled in January and February. While awaiting trial, Mr. Dufresne is subject to several conditions including no contact with his alleged victims. The charges against Yvan Dufresne relate to events that occurred between 2002 to 2019 and include sexual assault, criminal harassment, death threats, assault and assault causing bodily harm, as well as threatening to use a weapon.

Reilly Brault, 23, from the Verdun area of Montreal, charged with assault with a weapon following incidents that took place in Listuguj on April 27, appeared again at the New Carlisle Courthouse on September 13 but the case was postponed until October 7. "I just received new elements in this file and additional charges should be laid against him on October 7," points out criminal prosecutor Florence Frappier-Routhier. Reilly Brault, who has a criminal record, was arrested on April 27 with an alleged accomplice in Listuguj after an altercation that occurred on Alder Street. Since the spring, he faces charges of pointing a gun, assault with a weapon and causing bodily harm. The 24-year-old victim, who was shot but not critically injured, was hospitalized. Reilly Brault's accomplice has not been charged so far.

Former Pit Caribou owner Francis Joncas failed in his attempt to have three of the five claims withdrawn in a lawsuit filed by the microbrewery's current co-owners, who are seeking \$693,400 in damages. The current owners of the microbrewery allege that Mr. Joncas overvalued the inventory, and sold a property where certain assets were defective. He also allegedly undisclosed a contract involving the use of cans, and might have infringed on intellectual property rights and have failed to comply with environmental laws. The defendant requested the withdrawal of the first three complaints. However, on September 16, the Superior Court dismissed the application which, in its opinion, was not clearly apparent in the proceedings, exhibits and interrogatories already produced. The merits of the claim will have to be made at a future hearing. The exact date of that hearing has to be set.

Nez Rouge will only be offered in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Gaspé will be the only place in the region where the Nez Rouge service is offered for the upcoming holiday season, which marks the 33rd edition of Nez Rouge.

Despite all efforts to convince other organizations to provide escorts during the holidays, the provincial organization mentions that they've had difficulty mobilizing volunteers particularly since the pandemic.

The fact that the funds raised must be used for organizations dedicated to youth or sports plays a role in the lack of interest among organizations elsewhere on the Gaspé Peninsula.

In Gaspé, there was a period when the service wasn't offered due to the pandemic and administrative issues, however, last year the service was reestablished.

Last holiday season, with the help of volunteers from the Maisons des jeunes in Gaspé and Rivière-au-Renard, 258 rides were carried out, raising \$4,715 for the youth organizations. Nearly

\$175,000 has been raised by Opération Nez Rouge in Gaspé during the 32 years of offering the service.

This year, Nez Rouge will be available in Gaspé November 29 and 30, as well as December 6, 7, 13, 14, 20 and 21. There will also be Nez Rouge rides in the Magdalen Islands, Rimouski and Trois-Pistoles. Matane hasn't yet confirmed if it will be participating.

The last time the service was offered in Bonaventure was in 2012 with 428 rides. It was offered in Chandler in 2015 with 396 rides. While the service was offered in Paspebiac in 2017, the number of rides was not compiled and, therefore, not available.



Ville de Percé

Public notice to immovable owners and occupants of a business establishment

Polling day: October 27, 2024

By this public notice, Gemma Vibert, the returning officer, announces the following to the owners of an immovable and the occupants of a business establishment.

1. You may have the right to vote if you are the owner of an immovable or if you are the occupant of a business establishment in the municipality for at least 12 months on September 4, 2024.
2. To be eligible, you must be 18 years of age or older on polling day and have the Canadian citizenship on September 4, 2024. You must not be deprived of your election rights on that date.
3. To exercise your voting right, you must submit the appropriate document:
 - An application for entry if you are the sole owner of an immovable or sole occupant of a business establishment.
 - If you are one of the co-owners or co-occupants of an immovable or a business establishment, a power of attorney designating one person among you, who will be entered on the list.

To obtain the required forms, contact the returning officer. Please send the completed form to the address provided below.

4. In order for the application to be valid for the current election, you must submit your form no later than October 11, 2024.

The application for entry on the list of electors or the power of attorney remains valid until it is replaced or withdrawn. If you want to replace or withdraw an existing application for entry or a power of attorney, please contact the returning officer.

CONTACT INFORMATION ON THE RETURNING OFFICER

137, route 132 Ouest
Number and street

Percé
Municipality

G0C 2L0
Postal code

418-782-2933
Telephone number

92003
Ext.

Given in Percé, on September 25, 2024.

Gemma Vibert,
Returning officer



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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Pozzolan exploitation in Dalhousie: Opponents will need patience and energy

For close to three years now, promoters from Montreal have been moving forward to land a pozzolan open pit mine in the former municipal limits of Dalhousie, which is now part of the amalgamated town of Heron Bay.

The project has been progressing well for the promoters, however, the general public only discovered the main aspects of the initiative around six months ago.

Regrouped under a company now called EcoRock Dalhousie, the promoters are currently facing stern opposition from both sides of the Bay of Chaleur.

Sometimes projects are kept relatively secret up to a certain point because promoters need time to fine-tune the aspects, sometimes define it, and also because the venture does not bear a great impact for the public.

Transparency is lacking

In this case, New Brunswickers and Gaspesians opposed to the pozzolan mine are under the impression that the project was hidden for way too long, especially considering the impact it could have on the surrounding communities. ("Communities" being the key word.)

The open pit mine would sit in an existing quarry located a few hundred metres from the nearest houses. The term "few hundred" is also important here. By mining standards, people will live very close to the pit.

Blasts will be felt by neighbours. Cracks will likely appear in some basements. That is not counting the crushing operation needed to reduce pozzolan to a fine powder. It doesn't take into account the transporting of 3 million tons of material to the western part of the port of Dalhousie, the closest harbour section to houses as well, not to mention the dust that will be generated by the above-mentioned industrial activities.

Should the magnitude of these activities have been mentioned earlier by the promoters and the municipal authorities?

Yes, considering the multi-faceted impact of the mine. Dalhousie's industrial past, in part, explains why

much of the local population either outright refuses the project or demands further explanation and guarantees of safety that might greatly affect its profitability.

Blasts, crushing, dust, noise, scenery modifications, general health hazards stemming from fine particles suspended in the air, polluted sediments that are brought back to the surface by dredging, ship loading operations that will likely increase an already high concentration of particles in the air, the impact of all these factors on the remaining resources of Dalhousie are factors that must be clarified, assessed and presented to the population in a transparent way.

However, the Government of New Brunswick is not renowned for the strength of its Environment Department, especially at its helm. Twenty years ago, the Conservative Party government of Bernard Lord and its Environment Minister Brenda Fowlie were in favour of the establishment of a contaminated soil incinerator in Belledune and the plant was built. It only failed because of the crooked management of Bennett Environmental.

World-class expert Paul Connett called the environment assessment document prepared for Bennett Environmental a "scientific disgrace", as blatant manoeuvres were made to favour the project by waiving basic evaluation procedures.

The environmental flaws of the Higgs government

The current Conservative government of Premier Blaine Higgs has shown over the last six years that big industries are welcome in New Brunswick and that sometimes basic environmental assessment steps can be skipped. The EcoRock Dalhousie looks like a good example. Without even looking at the track record of its promoters, the way the Higgs and municipal governments have played their cards so far is questionable.

A good example of that environmental negligence was illustrated on September 23 Heron Bay's public meeting held to adopt the first reading of a zoning bylaw modification that opens the door wide open to the mine.

As former Dalhousie town councillor Gail Fearon put it, too often, industrial towns are left with a wide range of problems once the big plants are closed. Such was and still is the case of Dalhousie.

The municipality was ready to vote on a bylaw that could, after its second and third readings, duplicate the "development" model that has too often neglected the impact of such projects on humans.

People from the Dalhousie area lived relatively well, money-wise, from the NBIP newsprint mill be-

tween 1928 and its closure in 2008. The Pioneer Chemical plant was also closed in 2008, as it produced chemicals for the declining pulp and paper industry. The third blow came in 2012 as public utility NB Power closed the generating plant, which produced electricity for much of Northern New Brunswick.

Over decades, Dalhousie, like Belledune, showed one of the highest cancer rates in Canada, the result, no doubt, of the chemicals in the air and water.

As Gail Fearon rightly remarked, the proposed bylaw contained no provisions for water and air protection, no financial advantages to the town budget and no protection guarantee against future pollution.

When people feel like something has been hidden from them, they keep that feeling for a long time. That notably explains the high degree of opposition to pozzolan exploitation in the Heron Bay area.

The impact on Gaspesians

Meanwhile, several Gaspesians are mobilized by the pozzolan controversy, for various reasons.

From the eastern tip of Miguasha to Pointe-à-la-Garde, the exploitation of an open pit mine producing 3 million tons of pozzolan yearly, close to the shoreline, will minimally have an impact on the noise, dust and sediment levels, and on the scenery, especially if a mountain disappears or is deeply affected by such exploitation.

So, it is in the best interest of Gaspesians to follow
- Continued on page 11

Letter to the Editor

Congratulations to Mr. Jean Marc Beaulieu for writing such a well researched and factual letter concerning the Pozzolan project slated for Dalhousie and congratulations to your paper, also, for printing it and letting people know what would really happen should this open pit mine get the go ahead.

He forgot one rather important consideration though: how much the value of those homes in Dalhousie will take a nose-dive if this mine starts up. Who would want to go and live there considering how much noise, dust, and other negative factors will be in place?

I cannot believe that I am not seeing more reaction to this being printed in the local paper, that being the Tribune. It is, after all, the Dalhousie paper, so to speak, and their citizens could be more proactive such as Mr. Beaulieu who lives on the opposite shore.

*Sincerely, Ann Lavoie
Ristigouche-sud-est, Quebec*




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Parks Canada recognizes Regroupment of the expropriated people of Forillon and their descendants

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Thirteen members of the group representing the expropriated people of Forillon and their descendants, along with the group's founding president, Marie-Laure Rochefort, received quite an honour: an Award of Excellence from the Director General of Parks Canada.

Four members of the Forillon Park team also received this distinction. The group of expropriated people distinguished itself in the "Spirit of Collaboration" category, when three of its members received the award of excellence from Parks Canada President and CEO Ron Hallman on June 7 in Gatineau.

Parks Canada wanted to highlight this fact during a meeting held at the Cap-des-Rosiers Discovery Centre on September 19.

"I am absolutely overwhelmed. I think it's a lot," said Ms. Rochefort, who was the initiator on June 14, 2009, in Grande-Grave of what would become the Regroupment of expropriated people of Forillon and their descendants, whose mandate is to represent the expropriated persons in all consultative bodies of Forillon National Park and to inscribe the history of expropriation in the history of Gaspésie, Quebec and Canada.

"I never imagined it would happen this way. We were a team of girls and we had our guy. We worked together and we had very specific goals. We developed the testimonies of the expropriated persons. I imagine that the people who were there had the same opinion and what was ultimately done is huge," says Ms. Rochefort, who follows the work of the group.

"I want to see the new things they are proposing so that the memory lives on. It's important. It was difficult for my parents who had to live it and endure it," says Ms. Rochefort with emotion.

During the ceremony, tears ran down the cheeks of the 40 or so people on site on several occasions.

Since 2010, the group has been an essential partner for Parks Canada. "Today's event was intended to recognize the relationship with the group of expropriated persons. It was



The executive director for Quebec and Nunavut for Parks Canada, Hugues Michaud, presents award to Marie-Laure Rochefort.

Photo: N. Sergerie

also Marie-Laure Rochefort's recognition for all her commitment from the very beginning to have sparked the relationship with Parks Canada and especially to have given us the opportunity to enter into her vision and, today, let's hope that we do better than we did at the time," explains Hugues Michaud, Executive Director for Quebec and Nunavut for Parks Canada.

In June 1970, Forillon became the first national park in Quebec within the Canadian network in order to ensure the protection of a territory of 244.8 square kilometres, including a marine strip more than 150 metres wide.

To proceed with its creation, some 225 families had to leave their properties and nearly 1,200 owners lost their woodlots and parts of their cultivated land. This expropriation caused major upheavals in the family, economic and social lives of these residents and the community.

"The relationship in the Gaspésie is a model and is probably the most advanced in the country," notes Mr. Michaud.

"The park is full of extraordinary natural resources, but this park is first and foremost a human story. The history of occupation by different generations and by different nations including the Micmac people and the grouping of expropriated people and their descendants. It is a priority and is moving towards greater emphasis. It is certainly not the flavour of the month," says Mr. Michaud.

The group is consulted at various strategic moments and

sits on the park's advisory committee. In recognition of this exceptional contribution, Parks Canada has granted \$25,000 to the group to sup-

port the completion of projects aimed at commemorating the expropriated people so that their history can be documented, told and recorded in the collective memory.

"In order to be able to recognize your commitment and to be able to continue this important collaborative project for several years, I have the honour of announcing that Parks Canada will give the grouping of expropriated people \$25,000 in grants to continue the work of remembrance," said Mr. Michaud during the ceremony. "This is just the first of many gestures we've made, but we must continue to believe in the future and say that the best is yet to come," believes Mr. Michaud.

"It has often been a problem to find funds to move forward with our projects. This

\$25,000 will certainly help us realize projects that have been on the back burner for a long time. I also want to say that during all these years what has helped us a lot is the fact that the door to Forillon Park has always been open and increasingly open. We have always been welcomed with a lot of respect and collaboration," said the current president of the group, Hermeline Smith, who hinted that something would be announced next year, which would coincide with the park's 55th anniversary.

"It's a great mark of respect for all these people, from Ms. Rochefort and her group, who campaigned for the recognition of the rights of the people of Forillon, so that they would have respect,"

Cont'd on page 7



PUBLIC NOTICE OF THE REVISION OF THE LIST OF SCHOOL ELECTORS

School Board:

EASTERN SHORES

Poll of:

2024 11 03

year month day

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given to electors of the Eastern Shores School Board by June Main, returning officer that:

- The list of electors of the school board was deposited at the head office of the school board on September 26, 2024.
- The electoral lists are subject to revision **only** when an election is declared for a particular ward or wards. These wards will be posted on the www.essb.qc.ca website.
- Only a person who, on polling day, satisfies the following conditions can be an elector and have the right to be entered on the list of electors are as follows:
Any person who, on November 3rd 2024:
 - Is at least 18 years of age;
 - Is a Canadian citizen;
 - Is domiciled in the territory of the English-Language school board and has been domiciled in Quebec for at least six (6) months;
 - Has not lost the right to vote due to a tutorship
 - Has not been convicted within the last five (5) years of an offence constituting a corrupt electoral or referendum practice under this Act

and

 - Has a child admitted to the educational services of the English-language school board serving his domicile.

or

 - Does not have a child admitted to the educational services of the English-language school board or the French school service centre serving his domicile. That person has the right to choose to be registered on the list of electors of the English-language school board or revoke that choice.
- The list of electors may be consulted via a board of revisors, a person designated for this purpose or the returning officer.
- Applications for registration, removal and correction as well as notices of a choice to exercise the right to vote in an English-language school board may be made before a board of revisors, a person designated for this purpose or the returning officer.
- When applying for registration, the previous address of the person concerned must be indicated. In addition, two documents must be submitted: one mentioning the name and date of birth and the other, the name and address of domicile.
- The places where the list of electors can be consulted and where applications can be presented will be available for consultation as of October 2, 2024 on the www.essb.qc.ca website of the school board.

June Main

Issued in New Carlisle, Quebec on September 20, 2024

June Main, Returning Officer

COVID-19: CISSS handles protocols on a case-by-case basis

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) is adjusting its COVID-19 interventions according to the situation at each of its facilities.

This is what the regional health network is reporting as cases persist at the Maria hospital and the CHSLD Mgr Ross in Gaspé, at a time when some people are calling for the widespread introduction of masks in health facilities.

"The reintroduction of masks is being carried out in relation to the epidemiological situation in a territory. We are making this decision to protect the population, clients and residents. We base this decision on indicators related to community circulation," explains the CISSS's director of nursing, Maxime Bernatchez.

Among other indicators are hospitalizations and the increase in cases in residences.

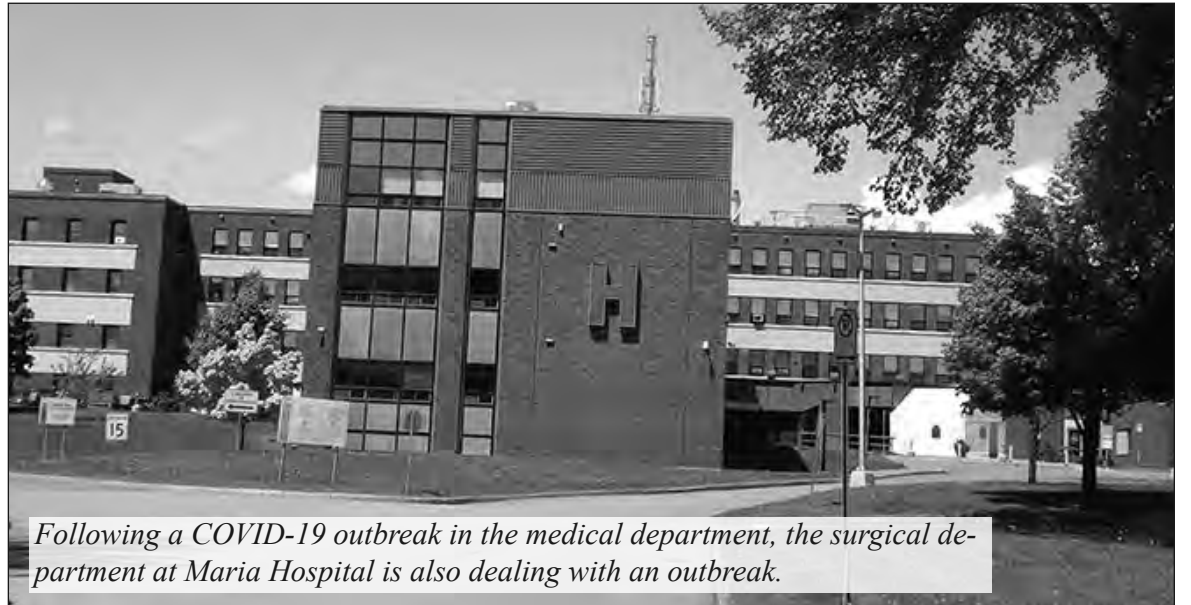
"If we do it in a given environment and we don't do it in another, it's because we are a large institution and in the Gaspé territory currently, there are areas where there are no outbreaks and community circulation is lower," notes Mr. Bernatchez.

This is particularly the case in the Rocher-Percé MRC where the virus is not prevalent.

The surgery department at Maria hospital and the CHSLD Mgr Ross have outbreaks, as well as in some seniors' residences.

As of September 25, there were six infections in Maria, and three units were affected at Mgr Ross.

"At Mgr Ross, we are talking about a large majority of residents affected in Unit 300 and the prosthetic unit,"



Following a COVID-19 outbreak in the medical department, the surgical department at Maria Hospital is also dealing with an outbreak.

Photo: N. Sergerie

emphasizes the director.

An outbreak in a seniors' residence is managed differently than in a hospital centre.

"We are in a living environment. We avoid isolating residents in their rooms. It is our health care workers who wear personal protective equipment," explains Mr. Bernatchez.

The infection prevention and control team provides recommendations based on the epidemiological situation in each facility.

The Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands region experienced a spike in COVID-19 related hospitalizations during the week of September 15.

According to the National

Institute of Public Health (INSPQ), twenty-one people were hospitalized on September 21, a peak not seen since February.

On September 24, 16 patients remained hospitalized due to the virus.

INSPQ reports 14 new hospitalizations during the week of September 15, with no deaths recorded.

Bids for the last of the four major tenders have finally been opened

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - After nine deadlines for the opening of bids for the last of four major calls for tenders launched on March 21 for the refurbishment of the railway between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé, the two proposals received by the Ministry of Transport were opened on September 18.

Pomerleau is asking for \$258 million and Partenariat Ferroviaire Gaspésie is suggesting \$286 million to carry out the work in the call for bids.

The work consists of repairing two bridges in Gascons, a third one between Gascons and Newport, another in Newport and one between Douglastown and Haldimand over the Saint John River. In addition, one of the two bridges between Grande-Rivière and Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé must be replaced. A retaining wall at Pabos Mills is also part of the bid.

The section between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons is supposed to be functional by the end of 2024,

with the section between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé ready for use in 2026.

The contract duration is estimated at 28 months, according to the call for tenders, which suggests that the time frame to reach Gaspé by the end of 2026 is extremely tight.

In June, the ministry indicated that questions submitted by contractors explained the postponements. Analysis is underway to validate the bids and award the contract if necessary.

Another call for tender result remains unknown

Meanwhile, the contract for the other revised call for tenders to repair various railway structures has still not been awarded.

The public call for bids initially provided for the repair or construction of nine infrastructures, but the request for quotes now only covers bridges.

The sites targeted are a small bridge in Pabos Mills, the Grand Pabos River bridge, the Pabos River bridge, the Barachois bridge, and bridge on Highway 132



The Barachois railway bridge.

Photo: N. Sergerie

in Barachois.

The Ministry of Transport has removed the four retaining walls at Anse-à-Beaufils and Sandy Beach from the project.

The ministry indicates that the revised contract is estimated at more than \$50 million.

Pomerleau submitted the lowest proposal of \$79 million on August 28. Hamel Construction, the only other bidder, is asking for \$83.8 million instead.

For the first contract involving nine structures, only

Pomerleau had submitted a bid of \$104 million.

The ministry had indicated in early June that it was analyzing several possibilities, while only one bidder submitted a proposal.

The option of splitting the contract was ultimately retained, as indicated by our sources. Two of the four major contracts in the calls for tenders promised by Premier François Legault in November 2023 have been awarded so far.

The first was with the Séma group from Sainte-

Flavie for the rehabilitation of the bridges over Grande-Rivière and Anse-à-Brillant, and those over the Émile-Couture stream in Grande-Rivière and the beach in Gaspé will be rebuilt for \$74.9 million.

Stellaire Construction from Saint-Augustin-de-Desmaures was awarded a \$37 million contract for six bridges to be repaired in Pabos Mills, Pabos and Anse-à-Beaufils. Quebec announced \$872 million to rehabilitate the rail line between Matapédia and Gaspé.

Protecting a cliff swallow colony

GILLES GAGNÉ

BRIDGEVILLE - This summer the Club des ornithologues de la Gaspésie (COG) built and installed cliff swallow nest boxes in the Malbaie Barachois area. The Club is currently conducting a crowdfunding campaign with La Ruche to secure funding, produce a video, and set up the monitoring and continuation of this ecological project. Out of a cost of \$22,000, \$6,500 is missing. The primary objective of the campaign is to raise \$3,500.

Like all species of swallows in Canada and, more generally, like many species of insectivorous birds, the cliff swallow has seen a considerable decline in its numbers for several years. Without efforts to protect and restore its populations, the future is rather bleak for this species, whose numbers have



Photo: Olivier Deruelle

The nests installed by bird watchers are being used.

declined by more than 86% in Quebec since 1970.

However, the Gaspé Peninsula is home to several small colonies of this bird, the largest of which is located in Bridgeville, in the Malbaie Barachois area. This colony

has even seen an increase in its numbers, at least since last year.

Located under an old bridge of Bridgeville, the swallow colony is threatened by the demolition and reconstruction work on the bridge

that will take place soon. The Quebec Department of Transport and Sustainable Mobility assures that the bridge will be rebuilt in such a way as to be able to accommodate the colony again and that the work will be planned to reduce the impacts on the swallows.

Despite this, the COG fears that the colony will be seriously affected by this project.

For this reason, the COG has implemented a project to build swallow nest boxes to serve as a substitute habitat for the bridge during the work and to provide additional habitat for swallows in the long term. The development is presented as wooden structures topped with sheet metal imitating a building roof under which the swallows build their nests using mud collected near the site and assembled on the struc-

ture.

From the first year, encouraging results were recorded with a few swallows having started building nests on the structures.

Next year, the Club will continue its efforts to protect this species as it has done for 40 years in various Gaspé bird conservation projects.

The COG highlights the excellent relationship with the Quebec Department of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, which is working not only to reduce the impacts of the bridge repair, but also to increase the potential of other infrastructures near the site for the nesting of the cliff swallows.

The project could not have been carried out without the collaboration of the Regroupement Québec Oiseaux, Nature Conservancy Canada and the MRC du Rocher-Percé.

Bloc Québécois calls on the Trudeau government to act before October 29

GILLES GAGNÉ

OTTAWA – On September 25, Yves-François Blanchet, the leader of the Bloc Québécois, publicized, along with his party's House Leader Alain Thérien, the conditions under which he will avoid overthrowing Justin Trudeau's minority government before Christmas.

According to Kristina Michaud, the Member of Parliament (MP) for Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, the opportunity to make gains for Quebecers requires first imposing demands and taking advantage of the situation to specifically improve the purchasing power of retirees, which has been cut by Justin Trudeau's government, and ensure the exclusion of supply management in future trade negotiations.

"I've repeated from the outset that our job is to serve Quebecers, and no one else. Triggering an election or preventing a general election is not an end in itself. Thus, the Bloc Québécois demands that the Trudeau government, by October 29, 2024, at the latest, obtain the irreversible implementation of two Bloc



Photo: G. Gagné

Kristina Michaud stresses that the Bloc Québécois will not overthrow the Liberal Party government before October 29.

Québécois bills. Failing to do so, the unpopular and worn-out Liberal government will have demonstrated that it is not useful to Quebec, perhaps even to Canada, and it would then be preferable to offer Quebecers the opportunity to review the composition of the House of Commons," advised the Bloc Québécois leader.

The bills whose irreversible implementation the Bloc Québécois leader demands are first C-319, which restores the purchasing power

of retirees aged 65 to 74, who receive 10% less than those over 75. It is a difference of \$80 per month.

On the other hand, the Bloc demands that Bill C-282, currently bogged down in the Senate, be processed and implemented so that supply management is no longer sold off during trade negotiations. The process involves several steps that the deadline set by the Bloc Québécois allows for, as the case may be: votes in the House of Commons, royal recommendation, adoption in the Senate and royal assent.

If these two bills are not established as laws by October 29, 2024, or at any time when it becomes certain that these two final adoptions will not occur, the Bloc Québécois will initiate discussions with the other opposition parties in order to overthrow Justin Trudeau's Liberal Government.

"Obviously, the Bloc will avoid overthrowing the government between now and October 29, and will not seek to overthrow it during the current session, if the conditions demanded by the Bloc Québécois are met," explains

Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia MP Kristina Michaud.

"That would be illogical. Except that the government must understand that we will continue to vote against anything that is contrary to Quebec's interests, even if the Liberals get bogged down along the way. The Bloc will not allow any interference, any affront to the French language or secularism, or any support for oil that would come from a vote in the House of Commons, despite the respect of our other conditions. We are and remain the Bloc Québécois!" she

adds.

The leader of the Bloc Québécois specified that their approach is in good faith: "We have been responsible and reasonable but firm," Mr. Blanchet added. Both bills are Bloc Québécois initiatives, both were supported by all parties in the Commons, Liberals, Conservatives and NDP (New Democratic Party), both are laws that serve seniors and farmers in Quebec, but also in Canada. The ball is in the Liberals' court. If they do not grant us these legitimate and clear desires of Quebecers, we will ensure that they are quickly overturned."

FORILLON:

Cont'd from page 5

commented Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté. The group has led to significant connections and mutually beneficial achievements, including the Park Pass Program to provide access to six generations of expropriated persons, the creation of commemorative panels for families who occupied different areas of the park territory and, more recently, the Grande-Grave Heritage Accommodation Project.

The 13 members of expropriated families who received the award are:

Marie-Laure Rochefort, Amanda Roberts, Andrée Bouchard, Claudine Noël, Debbie Phillips, Eileen Perry, Elizabeth Tuzo McGregor, Hermeline Smith, Kathleen Langlais, Lynn-Ann Smith, Pierre O'Connor, Pierrette Perry and Sarah-Émilie Fournier.

The four Parks Canada employees are: Michel Queenton, Émilie Devoe, Élisabeth Lacoursière and Stéphane Marchand. They were chosen to highlight the "Creation of a lasting relationship between the expropriated persons of Forillon and Parks Canada."

THEGASPESPEC.COM

Report focuses on myths about the ESC in Quebec

CYNTHIA DOW

At the Annual General Meeting for Vision Gaspé-Percé Now on Thursday, September 19, Alexandre Renaud of the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL) took the opportunity to share with attendees the results of a new study by the federal agency.

Entitled Building Bridges: Perceptions and Realities about the English-speaking Communities of Quebec and Their Relationship with French in Quebec and Bilingualism in Canada, the 44-page report was published in June of this year.

The objectives of the report were fourfold: Explore the nature and extent of certain myths and perceptions among the French-speaking majority and the English-speaking minority in Quebec about the English-speaking Community (ESC) and their relationship with the French language in Quebec and bilingualism in Canada, and identify potential solutions; inform the OCOL's reflections on the ESC; better equip the OCOL to help nuance mes-



Alexandre Renaud of the Montreal Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages presented a recent report about myths and perceptions about anglophones in Quebec at Vision's AGM.

Photo: Cynthia Dow

saging and communications on the ESC; and help to inform and nuance the perspectives of certain opinion leaders and target populations.

Mr. Renaud, Senior Regional Engagement Agent for the Quebec and Nunavut office of OCOL situated in Montreal, noted that the report is the result of three main data gathering activities: census data, public surveys and a series of focus groups held in

December 2023.

"It is important to deconstruct some of these myths," Mr. Renaud told the audience. For example, francophones tend to underestimate anglophones' use of French, while 71% of Quebec anglophones can speak French.

"And anglophones and

francophones in Quebec get along well in day-to-day activities. I have seen this myself through observations while I have been here," the young man indicated. He noted that the study shows that the majority of members of the English-speaking community engage in French cultural activities and support Canada's linguistic duality.

While the English-speaking community in the province is certainly disillusioned by recent measures to further restrict the public use of their mother tongue, the report expresses the belief that English-speaking Quebecers can be bridge builders, informing anglophones in other provinces of the importance of linguistic duality across the country.

Mr. Renaud shared some interesting statistics during his talk. For example, on average, 51% of francophones have some kind of daily interaction with anglophones, while for anglophones the rate is much higher: 76% have daily inter-

action with francophones. Some 89% of francophones say these interactions are positive compared to 81% of anglophones.

It is clear from the results of the research that francophones are less well informed about anglophone Quebecers than the opposite, perhaps to be expected given the minority status of the anglophones.

At the end of the presentation, there was a discussion about steps being taken to bring anglophone and francophone youth together at the Gaspé Polyvalent. Principal of the English section, Shauna Simpson, was in attendance and she said integration has improved, and "the greatest improvement has been with sports events and teams. When it comes to the arts, it is harder to encourage the youth to mix."

Kim Harrison asked if the study included information about francophone opinions on the restrictions on the use of English in Quebec, but that was not part of the study.

If you would like to have access to the report, you can find it at: <https://www.clo-ocol.gc.ca/en/publications/studies-other-reports/2024/building-bridges>

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Terry Fox Walk: An S.P.D.S tradition since 1988



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PORT-DANIEL: - On Friday, September 20, staff and students participated in the 44th annual Terry Fox Walk. Approximately 120 students participated in the event this year, raising \$3,472.65. Shigawake Port Daniel School (SPDS) has been participating in this event since 1988 and has raised more than \$87,000 for cancer research. This year, students raised money in two different ways, online and with pledge sheets sent home with each student.

New this year, elementary students and staff from New Carlisle High School joined, as well as a police escort from the Sûreté du Québec, to ensure the safety of participants.

Lauren-Makynleigh Walker, a Grade 6 student at SPDS participated and was a flag bearer during the walk.

“I am so proud that I am in Grade 6 and was able to hold the Terry Fox flag. It was a long walk, but I’m so happy I got a chance to participate in the fight against cancer.”

Kayliey Whalen says, “My favourite part of the walk was when we stopped for a snack, which was given to us by very kind people in the community. I also loved hanging out with my friends.”

Sisters Lucy and Leah Couture also participated in this year's event. “I was happy to participate,” says Leah, “My grandfather passed away from cancer in 2014 and it is a small way I can help find a cure,” Lucy adds.

Watch for future articles from SPDS reporters in upcoming issues of The Gaspé Spec.



Students took turns holding the Terry Fox flag during the walk.

Photo: Alexandra Evans and McKenna Flowers

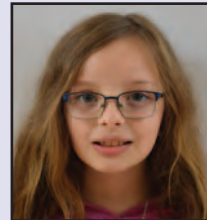
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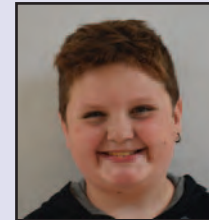
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LOBSTER 2024:

Catches smaller and average prices lower

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – Gaspé Peninsula lobster fishermen landed 4,713.3 metric tons of crustaceans in 2024, for a value of \$73,329,801, a decrease of 165.12 metric tons and \$9,020,219 compared to the 2023 season. This is a 3.38% decrease in catches and a 10.95% decrease in revenue.

These are still the second-best results in history for the region's lobster fishermen, following the record numbers of 2023. A year ago, catches were 4,878.43 metric tons and revenues reached \$82,350,020, data excluding catches by Gaspesian fishermen fishing along Anticosti Island.

Proportionally, the declines were most pronounced in Zone 21, with a 18.14% drop in catches, from 410.15 to 335.76 tons, and a 25.62% drop in revenues, from \$6,976,540 to \$5,189,443. That zone covers the sector between Bonaventure East and Miguasha.

The declines were much less pronounced in Zones 20A and 20B, which cover the rest of the Gaspé Peninsula's south shore. In 20B, catches fell by 9.5%, from 1,257.29 to 1,137.82 metric tons, while revenues, from \$17,889,272 in 2024 compared to \$21,035,150 in 2023, fell by 14.95%.

In 20A, the drops were less pronounced, at 3.18% for catches, which went from 2,607.19 to 2,524.2 metric tons, while revenues decreased from \$43,839,715 to \$38,979,774, a drop of 11.09%.

Zone 19, covering the north side of the Gaspé Peninsula, stood out while increases were recorded. Catches rose by 18.51%, from 603.79 to 715.527 metric tons, which generated revenues up by 7.36%. These revenues therefore increased from \$10,498,615 in 2023 to \$11,271,312 in 2024.

The 2024 data is still preliminary. The director of the Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen Group, O'Neil Cloutier, nevertheless draws fairly clear conclusions from it, in more than one sense, particularly because he considers the statistical report from Fisheries and Oceans Canada to be very late and fragmentary.

"This year, the data is more global. It's a way of protecting it. We requested this data on July 10 and it culminated in very incomplete information two months later. We started

working on the stability of the lobster sector in 1997, after a report from the CFRH (Fisheries Resource Conservation Council). Fisheries and Oceans Canada approved of our effort to recover the resource at the time. We thought we were a better partner," emphasizes Mr. Cloutier, who deplores the poor lack of data sharing.

This federal department therefore only provided general statistics for each of the zones, omitting to transfer the data for each of the subzones to the Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen Group.

"We need to analyze the subzones. Usually, we have that on July 23, as in 2022-2023. Now, we have it on September 10! We don't even know how many fishermen are included in this anymore. Before, we had a set of charts with year comparisons for the CPUE (catch per unit of effort, or weight collected per trap)," he adds.

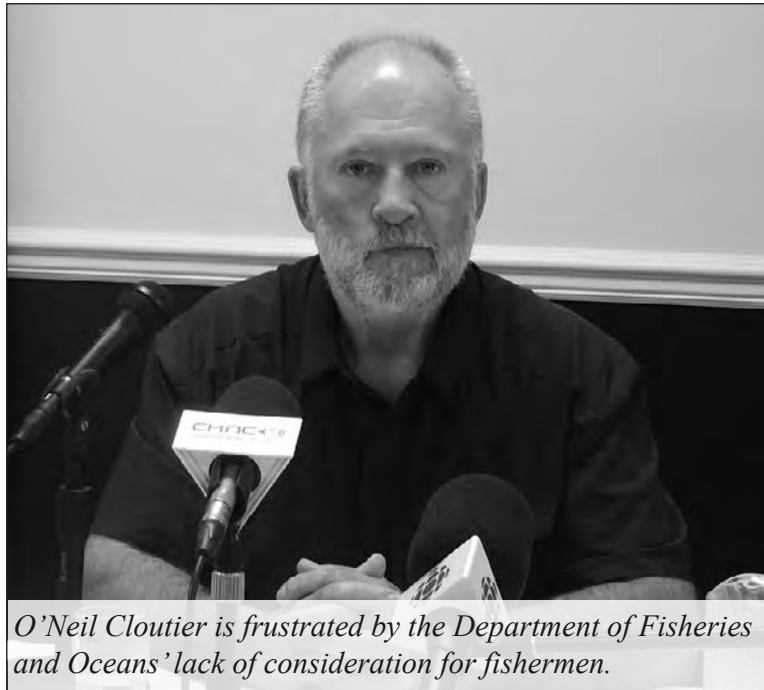
O'Neil Cloutier had sensed at the end of the spring a change in attitude from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) regarding the statistics.

"This tug-of-war for preliminary data began in June during an audit for MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) certification. They (MSC representatives) came here, then they went to see DFO. They (the ministry) refused to give the catches for Zone 21. Listuguj forbade DFO from transferring the data from 21B to anyone.

So, it was a yes to receive the entire total catch, except for one Indigenous band. We can no longer work. We are paralyzed by the lack of willingness of DFO to share the data," he analyzes.

Mr. Cloutier deplores that the department is using a dubious argument in this case, the potential identification of the catches of a single lobster fisherman when obtaining statistics for a subarea, to keep the data for these subareas.

"They (the statistics) are included in a data set. We too want to protect individuals' data. In the past, the department refused to disclose statistics when there were three fishermen or less in a subarea. They increased that number to five or less. Today, we exclude everyone. I cannot do any analysis of catches per unit of effort, to allow fishermen to make adjustments. My board of directors, I and everyone are mad," adds Mr. Cloutier.



O'Neil Cloutier is frustrated by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' lack of consideration for fishermen.

Photo: N. Sergente

He finds the situation all the more frustrating since the Southern Gaspé Professional Fishermen Group has been behind a major effort to restore lobster biomass in the Gaspé Peninsula for 27 years, an effort that has notably led to catches that are five times higher today than in the mid-1990s, and to the development of a research unit funded by fishermen.

"The fishery is managed by a unit of effort, by CPUE. Does DFO have the right to do that to such an important partner? We know what effort we have made. DFO was happy at the time when we bought back per-

mits. We are told that we are no longer important," he says.

Why a more pronounced drop in 21B?

O'Neil Cloutier points out a drop in catches that is much more pronounced in Zone 21 than in Zones 20A and 20B. He has reasons to believe that fishermen operating in subarea 21A has done quite well.

"We know from talking to fishermen in 21A that they had a good season. It went badly in 21B. Are there reasons why the ratios per unit of effort are not good? We've been saying this for years. DFO gave out li-

cences to Listuguj, 100 more traps to the community in the spring, and 100 more traps in the fall. That's not to mention that the same thing is happening on the other side, at Eel River Bar, in New Brunswick," complains O'Neil Cloutier.

"I haven't thrown in the towel. I'm going to have discussions at all levels (with Fisheries and Oceans Canada managers). So far, it's been unsuccessful. We're paralyzed. There's a political problem. What will happen in 2025 during the MSC audit for the next four years? The DFO tirelessly asked to us in 2012 to obtain MSC certification. We remember that. Today, they are threatening our certification even though they have not paid anything. I know what is wrong. It is the reconciliation agreements with the indigenous people, but not all of them. We work very well with Gespeg and Gesgapegiag," he says.

O'Neil Cloutier also plans to make his voice heard about the growing presence of striped bass in coastal waters frequented by lobster fishermen.

"There is a good chance that striped bass will partly explain the drop in catches in 2024, with overexploitation in specific sectors, such as 21B," he said.

New permits and lower prices

Gilles Gagné

CARLETON - The regular increase in landings in Zone 19 constantly comes up in discussions, when the idea of issuing new permits on the northern side of the Gaspé is raised.

"We fear this possibility. There is an experimental zone west of Rivière-à-Claude. According to what we know, through (regional manager) Éric Saint-Laurent, there will be new permits from Rivière-à-Claude to Forillon. We don't know where (DFO Minister) Diane Lebouthillier will issue permits. She said Gaspé-Nord and Anticosti," says O'Neil Cloutier.

He is concerned about the impact that new permits could have on prices, as a downward trend has been in place for three years.

"The average price in the Gaspé Peninsula was \$7.09 per pound. That's a decrease of 63 cents compared to the average price in 2023. In the Gaspé Peninsula, the price was \$7.99 in 2022 and \$8.34 in 2021," he adds.

"It's a strong trend. The more permits we give out, the more we increase the probability that we'll increase the quantities on the markets. Fish processors will use that. The average price was \$7 per pound almost everywhere this year except in New Brunswick, where it reached \$7.35, plus a 10-cent adjustment. It reached \$7.75 during the first week (of fall fishing) in Northumberland. We were talking about \$8.30 in this sector (for the second week of September), even though the lobster is of lower quality because it is moulting. Historically, fishermen (from southern New Brunswick) have always had a lower price. That means that the market for flesh is extremely strong. Gulf lobster has more meat in the spring than in the fall," analyzes O'Neil Cloutier.

"Something is happening, probably too much supply. That's why it's hard to understand that there will be a consultation on this subject and that she (Minister Lebouthillier) has already announced the issuance of permits. We (the lobster fishermen) are going to pay for the DFO's total inertia in managing other stocks. We are going to pay for a mistake by the department. She could have helped the shrimp fishermen with redfish and she didn't. We are having a crisis, we are sacrificing lobster fishermen to resolve a useless crisis," he says.

He sees that several sectors, including snow crab fishermen in Zones 12A and 12B, turbot fishermen and shrimp fishermen, are waiting for lobster permits.

"Financial instability is looming. There are currently no transactions because quantities and prices are falling. If we issue eight exploratory permits in a zone that has eight in Zone 19, the banker will knock on the door," provides O'Neil Cloutier as an example, worried on the eve of consultations that he believes were prearranged.

Striped bass are not a threat, according to the Department of Wildlife

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The striped bass is not considered one of the main threats to salmon in the Gaspé Peninsula according to the Department of the Environment, Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks.

While some anglers cite striped bass as a reason for the declining salmon runs, the department explains that the fear expressed by some stakeholders associated with the salmon fishing industry is linked to a scientific article published in 2018. This study assessed, using telemetry data, the consumption of smolts by striped bass in the Miramichi system in New Brunswick.

"However, the main conclusion of this study is that predation rates by bass vary considerably from one year to the next and that the spatial and temporal overlap of the two species is a determining factor in this annual variation," explains the department by email.

"In addition, the situation is very different in Quebec, because the level of interaction between smolts and striped bass is much lower than that of the Miramichi. Indeed, studies show that the majority of smolts have already left the rivers when striped bass arrive at their mouths in the spring in the Gaspésie," adds the min-



Salmon fishermen are under the impression that striped bass eat a lot of salmon.

Photo: G. Gagné

istry.

Striped bass are opportunistic predators that feed on a wide variety of prey. Between 2014 and 2019, the ministry carried out several projects examining the diet of striped bass in Quebec.

As observed across its range, the diet of striped bass consists of a wide variety of forage fish and crustaceans, as well as worms, insects and other invertebrates.

A 2022 report confirms that striped bass in freshwater can consume a certain number of juvenile salmon in freshwater.

"However, the presence of striped bass in the freshwater portion of the salmon rivers of the Gaspé is relatively limited and highly variable from year to year, thus minimizing the impact on salmon popula-

tions," maintains the ministry, which adds that another study carried out in the Miramichi system and on the diet of striped bass, published in 2020, concludes that the narrow window of spatio-temporal overlap of the two species means that juvenile salmon represent an insignificant contribution to the striped bass diet.

The report includes findings from a project carried out in 2016 and specifically focused on the diet of striped bass in areas conducive to the presence of juvenile American lobsters.

This species was observed in the stomach contents of 16% of striped bass that had consumed prey. It represented 1.2% of the number of prey ingested and 13% of the total volume. However, the relevance of these findings is limited since the sampling targeted areas identified as "nurseries" for lobster, and lobsters were not found in the stomachs of striped bass caught elsewhere

in the Gaspé Peninsula.

As for crab, some were found in the stomach contents of striped bass analyzed as part of the department's projects.

However, they could not be identified as the species. Given their marine habitat preferences, it is unlikely that they are snow crabs, as they prefer deep and cold waters, while striped bass are more commonly found in coastal waters.

"With regard to the low salmon runs observed in 2023 and 2024 in Quebec rivers, predation by striped bass is not one of the potential causes.

The impact of significant predation, if any, would likely be felt locally on one or a few rivers concerned and not in a generalized manner throughout the species' distribution area, as has been observed for two summers in Quebec," explains the ministry.

The striped bass observed in the Gaspé Peninsula mainly belongs to the southern Gulf of

St. Lawrence population, whose main spawning ground is located in the Northwest Miramichi River.

Their migration has been monitored via telemetrically since 2013, which allowed for an updated knowledge about the distribution of the two striped bass populations in Quebec as of 2018, leading to updates in recreational fishing areas.

Monitoring of the abundance of adult striped bass is conducted by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Gulf Region, particularly in the Miramichi River. Additionally, the ministry has implemented a monitoring program in recent years to assess the presence and relative abundance of this population in Quebec. Other projects are also underway, including the annual monitoring of recreational fishing in Quebec through a survey of fishermen.

These projects provide information on the distribution of striped bass in the Gaspé Peninsula as well as their frequentation of the territory.

The ministry emphasizes its commitment to maintaining favourable conditions for the stock of striped bass that visit the Gaspé Peninsula, which supports the recreational fishery valued by fishermen in the region and elsewhere.

On this subject, the annual fishing survey shows that about 80% of the recreational fishermen surveyed come from other sectors of Gaspésie, contributing significant economic spinoffs to the region, according to the ministry.

COMMENTARY:

Cont'd from page 4

the progression of the file. Like in the Bennett Environmental file in Belledune though, it is always easier to conduct a fight in another province, when most of the economic impact is located elsewhere.

However, moving the polluted sediments of Dalhousie, due to the dredging required to load larger ships, will also impact the water on the Gaspesian side of the Bay of Chaleur. The lobster and smelt stocks, for example, could be affected.

There is also the impact the mine could have on the Miguasha Park's classification as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. In that regard, the owner of the park, government-controlled Société des établissements de plein air du Québec (SÉPAQ)

must take a stand as soon as possible.

The worldwide market of pozzolan amounted to \$11.5 billion dollars in 2023. It is a fairly big business and because it is tied to cement production, it is increasing.

We know that EcoRock Dalhousie's new director general Francis Forlini had until June strong business ties with Saint Mary's Cement, the majority owner of the Port Daniel cement plant.

We don't know who directly finances EcoRock Dalhousie but it can be assumed that the firm counts on several means of funding.

Opponents to the project have so far relied on a lot of research, because updated documents are hard to find, and on sheer energy and emotions.

388 illegal camps on public land

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - As of March 31, there were 388 illegal camps located on public land in the Gaspé Peninsula, according to a survey conducted by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests.

The term "illegal occupancy" includes all types of structures, regardless of the intended use of the land, whether recreational or otherwise, according to the ministry.

The MRC of Haute-Gaspésie had the highest number with 151 illegal camps. The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC had 116, the MRC of

Avignon 45, the Rocher-Percé MRC 41, and there were 35 in the Bonaventure MRC.

In the last fiscal year, from April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, there were 122 notices of possession posted by the ministry. Of these, 85 were voluntarily relinquished.

The ministry conducted

19 burnings and 28 dismantlings of structures.

These figures compare to 22 burns, two dismantlings and 60 voluntary relinquishments from a total of 86 notices of possession over the previous year.

Data for the current fiscal year is not yet available from the ministry.



The UMQ sets its sights on the federal contribution of the gas tax program

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Union of Québec Municipalities (UMQ) is asking the Government of Canada to substantially increase its contribution to the Gas Tax and Quebec Contribution Program (TECQ).

The UMQ is drawing attention to the nearly 30% per region in the federal envelope compared to the previous period.

"We have the Quebec government, which has increased its contribution in contrast to the old program. Unfortunately, what we're denouncing today is that the federal government's contribution has been reduced by \$338 million. We're calling on the federal government to accede to and respect its commitments to increase its contributions in a context of adaptation to climate change, which is the challenge of the hour," noted UMQ President Martin Damphousse, following the organization's Board of Directors meeting in Gaspé on September 20, a first in its 103-year history.



UMQ President Martin Damphousse visited Gaspé on September 20

Photo: N. Sergerie

The total contribution from provincial and federal governments is \$3.2 billion.

"It is the most appreciated program in the municipal sector because it affects underground infrastructure and, in the context of climate change, it is the most important and necessary program," adds the UMQ President.

For the Gaspé Peninsula, the reduction will have an impact of \$4.9 million, with \$2.5 million for the Town of

Gaspé alone, according to the UMQ.

The federal government's view differs. Recently, Member of Parliament (MP) Diane Lebouthillier sent a communication to the media confirming that for the five-year cycle that started in 2024, the federal government is transferring \$2.81 billion to Quebec.

"This is an increase of almost 10% compared to the previous cycle (\$2.57 bil-

lion)," she wrote.

"On the one hand, it seems that the difference of \$600 million (between the \$2.8 billion I am talking about and the \$2.2 billion announced by the Quebec government) is intended for a program for public transit infrastructure, as was the case in the previous cycle. In terms of percentage, the federal government's contribution (\$2.2 billion: 70%) remains at the same level compared to that of the Quebec government (\$1 billion: 30%)," says Ms. Lebouthillier.

"What is fascinating is that we see that the MPs are trying to convince us that they are right." But the reality is that we have a report that clearly states the amount we will receive individually: the Quebec portion and the federal portion. And each time, everyone unanimously says that we are in deficit compared to the old program. I am certain that the UMQ's data is correct," replies Mr. Damphousse.

The MP for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands adds that to address the challenges associated with

the pandemic, the federal government transferred additional funds to municipalities, namely \$504 million in 2019-20 and \$495 million in 2020-21, for a total of nearly one billion dollars.

"Although the TECQ administrative vehicle was used to facilitate the transfer from Ottawa to the municipalities, it was not a recurring increase in the program envelope," the minister explained.

"The federal government added amounts, but we are not talking about these amounts. There

is no reference to these amounts. These are amounts that were granted in a specific context. They are not considered when comparing the two former programs. They are removed. Despite everything, by removing them, we arrive at a deficit of \$338 million," explains Mr. Damphousse.

In 2023, the deficit for water infrastructure reached \$45 billion, compared to \$38 billion in 2022, according to the municipal union.

The battle is being waged at all levels in hopes that the federal government will listen to reason.

Midwifery service celebrates fifth anniversary

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Accès Sage-femmes Baie-des-Chaleurs highlights the progress made in developing the midwifery service, which was established five years ago.

"There was a citizen mobilization 10 years before the service took shape. A first midwife was hired to develop the service, which was set up in 2019 to provide pregnancy follow-ups," recalls the organization's spokesperson, Caroline Hamelin.

The service has caught-on, with around thirty follow-ups each year, representing approximately 10% of births in the Bay of Chaleur area, quite high compared to the Quebec average of 4%. "The service is very popular. The objective in Quebec was 10% while it is at 4%," notes Ms. Hamelin.

"People are very satisfied with the service. Sometimes,

there is a waiting list because the demand is high," illustrates the spokesperson.

According to the organization, a stabilization phase is necessary to maintain the service. "There's a certain amount of turnover due to hiring conditions, which is also the case across Quebec, and there's also the distance from major centres. There's also a minimum number of midwives needed to avoid a break in service so that people can choose where they want to give birth. Two midwives are required to have a home birth. On-call midwives are needed for that," says Ms. Hamelin.

There's a strong possibility of offering a place to give birth outside of a hospital centre, but the volume of births in the Gaspésie does not allow the creation of a Birthing Centre. "It's the number one choice for families where it's available as a

place to give birth. In the Gaspésie, 70% of families say it would be their first choice if there was a place outside of a hospital," says the spokesperson.

Accès Sage-femmes is monitoring the development of a birthing room in Gaspé with interest. "There are different regions that are working on developing a birthing room outside of a hospital. It has to be a model that takes into account the regional reality. We're looking at what's happening elsewhere to try to find a model that could work in our situation," says Ms. Hamelin.

Currently, the service has two midwives and a midwife who coordinates the service. At one point, there were four midwives in the Bay of Chaleur area. "The goal is to have enough midwives to be able to offer the service (to everyone who wants it)," concludes the spokesperson.



Photo : Courtesy of Vanessa Plusquellec

The Bay of Chaleur midwife service has been available for five years.



Photo: Cynthia Dow

Mayor Ashley Milligan, right, explains the results of the survey on the development plan to participants on September 25.

Cascapedia-St-Jules consults citizens on development plan

CYNTHIA DOW

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: - For the third time this year, Cascapedia-St-Jules residents had the chance to provide input on the town's new development plan. Fifteen people joined Mayor Ashley Milligan at the community centre on Wednesday, September 25, to discuss various aspects of municipal life, including public works and safety, events and recreation, nonprofit organizations, seniors and housing, youth and middle age, and communications.

In March, the municipality had sent out a survey to households and the results from 58 responses were tabulated in May. The largest group of respondents were

those 65 years of age and older, and 70% had lived in the town for more than 10 years.

The features of the community most appreciated by the respondents were the outdoor scenery (93%), the sense of community belonging (71%) and the level of community activity (69%).

The top areas of improvement were activities for youth (46%), activities for elders (36%), infrastructure (36%), and parks and playgrounds (34%).

Then on April 27, a consultation was held with the town council and municipal staff. Recommendations from both the survey and the April consultation included walking trails and a dog park, affordable housing for sen-

iors, more activities for the middle-aged, information about people available to help with chores, and transportation for seniors.

After sharing these details, the mayor asked attendees to choose three of the six themes as their top priorities and to suggest activities the municipality could undertake to improve the issues. The results will be added to the final development plan.

Regarding housing, there were considerable concerns about the number of empty and seasonal houses. A committee is being established to explore the possibility of building a residence for autonomous seniors on land acquired by the town, located behind the Catholic Church.

A study for a new service for seniors

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The Table régionale de concertation des aînés Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine wants to set up a handyman service for seniors still living in their own homes.

"We noticed that there was a shortage. Manual work, small repairs around the house.

There's a huge demand throughout the Gaspé, and we wanted to find a solution to try and keep them at home as long as possible," explains Sylviane Pilon, coordinator of the Table régionale de concertation des aînés Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

Many seniors are forced to leave their homes because they can no longer maintain them. While companies exist to provide home help, care or house-keeping services, minor home repairs are often unavailable.

This proposed service would fill the gap between traditional home help and contractor services.

"Touching up paint or plaster doesn't necessarily require the services of a contractor. Assembling or repairing furniture, solidifying a stair tread, all that to make a home safe for the elderly," gives Ms. Pilon as an example.

The work involved would typically take less than two hours and would not require a building licence. A feasibility study is currently underway on the Côte-de-Gaspé.

"In collaboration with the Pôle d'économie sociale, we are conducting a study to assess the viability of the project,



which would take the form of a social economy enterprise that could have a team of volunteers and/or salaried employees, but our main focus is on retired workers," explains Ms. Pilon.

The results of the study are expected in mid-October to determine which model would be feasible.

The project also includes two additional components.

"For people with low incomes, the cost will be lower than in the private sector. We've also included a value-added component for the company," she says.

Various training courses will be offered in workshops covering different aspects of maintenance, with a registration fee. This would be part of a development in phase 2 of the project.

"We also want to offer a meeting place, like a community woodworking shop, where people can break out of their isolation and do small jobs in a workshop. That's something we'd like to offer," adds Ms. Pilon.

The business established under this project would issue tax receipts for the home support tax credit.

Incredible experience at Panam in Brazil

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ- Lycia Coulombe learned a lot at the Panam Karate Championship held at the end of August in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

"It was fun. I learned a lot despite my defeat," she says, even though she was defeated in her first match.

Lycia spent the summer training with Maïka Grenier, who participated in the Panam in Mexico two years ago. Lycia also trained with her coach and her brother.

"They gave me a lot of tips. I felt ready to go," she said.

"I didn't have the chance to do another fight," the young athlete laments.

"Despite my defeat, I learned a lot about not getting discouraged because I still got there. If I hadn't been there, I wouldn't have trained as much. I wouldn't have learned as much," Lycia explains. Maïka was a valuable ally in her preparation.

"It's mainly about not worrying too much because when you get there, it's a different language. There aren't many people who speak French. It was hard mentally. In my year, I didn't have anyone else who spoke French. That's the

main thing I advised her on," declared Maïka, who narrowly missed qualifying for the Canadian finals in July.

"I had a lot of people helping me translate to speak English. There were a lot of people who spoke Portuguese, but who could also speak English," adds Lycia.

Participating in competitions requires a lot of money.

A crowdfunding campaign was launched and many sponsors supported the athlete. "It was really nice to see that everyone supported me so much," says Lycia.

Both Maïka and Lycia dream of the next Panams, as



Lycia Coulombe and Maïka Grenier.

Photo: N. Sergerie

well as the Olympic Games. They think it would be fun, but also mention that as Gaspe-

sians they don't have the same resources as the athletes in Montreal.



To my favourite father-in-law
 Cheers Poppie!
 Have a great Birthday
 Love, Charlie



Happy Birthday Poppie
 Hope you have an awesome Birthday!
 Love - Emilie and Brady



*A dad is someone to guard you.
 A dad is someone to love you.
 A dad is someone to hold.
 A dad is a heart of gold.
 A dad is a laugh.
 A dad is a tickle.
 A dad is a joke.
 A dad is a giggle.*

Love you dad, hope you have a great birthday! Big hugs - Tanya



Happy Birthday Daddy

You've taught me the value of hard work and integrity, the importance of loyalty and family bonds. I don't say it nearly enough but today on your 89th birthday please know I love you very much. Enjoy your day and eat lots & lots of cake!
 Sandra & Robert Denison



Peter Almond our dear POPPIE!

We are sending you lots of hugs and our love on your birthday - and every day of the year!
 Love, Debbie and Barry



Poppy, we wish you the all the best on your 89th year birthday celebration!
 We will see you again in 2025.

Happy Birthday and much love
 from Dave, Gina, Jessica, Kyle, Abigail,
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BARACHOIS:

Mountain View Golden Age 50+
October 12: The Mountain View Golden Age 50+ Club is holding a Thanksgiving Supper at 857 Route 132 East. Adults are \$15, children under 12 are \$10. Take-outs are from 4 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., the first sitting is at 5 p.m. and the second sitting is at 6:30 p.m. Pre-purchased tickets only, also for take-outs. Contact Janet Harvey at 418-355-4899 for tickets. Everyone is welcome.

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, sandwiches, hotdogs, desserts, tea and coffee will be available. Donations at the door.

YORK:

York River Senior Citizens Club
October 27: The York River

Senior Citizens Club will be holding their Annual Harvest Supper at York River Community Hall, 702 York Blvd. West. The cost is \$15 per person. Takeouts will be available between 4 p.m. and 4:45 p.m. The first sitting is at 5 p.m., with a second sitting at 6 p.m. Everyone welcome.

HOPE TOWN:

Sports Club
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 CARLISLE:

New Carlisle Legion
Mondays: Mini bingo beginning at 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Line Dancing beginning at 7:30 p.m.
Every Friday: Open at 7:30 p.m. drop in to play pool, shuffleboard, etc.
October 26: Halloween dance with DJ Ash at 9 p.m.

NEW RICHMOND:

St. Andrew's United Church
October 19: "Teaspoon night" at 4 p.m. 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.
October 26: Turkey Supper, cost \$18 per adult and \$10 for children under 12. You can order take-out with pick-up from 4 to 5 p.m. (with a delivery option for shut-ins). Two seatings at the church hall available by reservation: one at 5 p.m. and a second at 6 p.m. To order your take-out or reserve your seating time, contact the church office as soon as possible by emailing: st.andrewsuc@telus.net or mompies@hotmail.com, you call: 418-392-4274.
November 30: Come join

us between 2 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 partners who helped us throughout the years are invited to the service, which will be followed by a luncheon in the hall.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: 50+ Club

Tuesdays: Grocery bingo every Tuesday at 7 p.m. \$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each.

**UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND
October 6
10 a.m. Service**

**UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN
October 6
10 a.m. Service**


PARISH OF GASPÉ
October 6
St. Andrew's - York
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Worship Wednesday
10 a.m. St Paul's

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
Sunday, October 6
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Hope Town
3 p.m. Holy Eucharist
Port Daniel
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist



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5.30 p.m.	Archetype Trad	Marquee stage MRC Avignon	Free
8 p.m.	Réveillons with Jean-François Berthiaume : câll Traditional dance evening	Congress Center	\$ 15 standing \$ 20 sitting
11 p.m.	The Swindlers	Microbrewery Le Naufrageur	\$ 15

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12

10-5 p.m.	Public market	Cégep Court	\$ 5 (admission fee to access the site)
12 p.m.	Various shows MRC Avignon stage, activities for children held by Satourne Circus School.	Cégep Court	\$ 5 (admission fee to access the site)
1 p.m.	Henri Godon — Children entertainment	Studio at the Quai des arts	\$ 15
8 p.m.	Còig and Yves Lambert	Studio at the Quai des arts	\$ 35
10.30 p.m.	Les Tireux d’Roches	Marquee stage MRC Avignon	\$ 15

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 13

10-5 p.m.	Public market	Cégep Court	\$ 5 (admission fee to access the site)
12 p.m.	Various shows MRC Avignon stage, activities for children held by Satourne Circus School	Cégep Court	\$ 5 (admission fee to access the site)
1 p.m.	Folkloric gathering	Studio at the Quai des arts	\$ 15
7 p.m.	Bigico — Jigged Improv Match	Studio at the Quai des arts	\$ 25
8 p.m.	La Veillée de La Virée Trad with the artists participating in this 23 th edition. Jam Session. Welcome to all trad musicians.	Foyer at the Quai des arts	Free

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