

Hilltop Creations wins best small business in the service category

PENNY MACWHIRTER
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

HOPE TOWN: On November 26 the Avignon and Bonaventure MRCs presented the Baïdes-Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce and Industry's 15th Gala of Appreciation in Carleton. Hilltop Creations won the Best Small Business in the service category.

The Gala reflects the economic vitality and talent in the Bay of Chaleur area, highlighting businesses and organizations that have distinguished themselves over the past year.

Hilltop Creations was founded by Trevor Buttle of New Carlisle in 2011. Much of Trevor's success has to do with his amicable personality. This was apparent when SPEC asked Trevor to talk about his company's growth over the years.

"Well, it all started when I was sent to town with my cow to trade it for bread and along the way I met up with a guy who said he would trade my cow for three magic beans," Trevor joked.

He then went on to explain that in April 2011, he purchased his first machine for cutting because he was always changing his vehicle and liked them to be different from the others.

"It was for my personal use and was never intended to become my living. It was just always a passion and a way to be creative. A way I could express myself in art," explained Trevor.

However, when his friends



Hilltop Creations staff Melissa Belanger, Trevor Buttle and Patrick Benoit accept Best Small Service Business award.

Photo: Courtesy CCIBDC

found out he could make custom stickers, they started asking him to make some for them. He quickly realized there was a market and a need for custom material. "As a child, our first reward for doing something good is we all get a sticker. So, who doesn't like a sticker? It's embedded in us that a sticker equals good and brings happiness," says Trevor.

As time went on Trevor purchased more equipment to be able to do more things beyond just stickers, thus opening more doors. At first, Trevor had other employment, in addition to Hilltop Creations. However, he has since made his business a full-time career. "I knew that the business was working well but how well we could do I had no idea until I jumped both feet in to see what its true potential could be," explains Trevor.

Currently, Hilltop Creations employs Trevor and two part-

time employees: Trevor's girlfriend, Melissa Belanger, and Patrick Benoit.

The company recently acquired a \$25,000 printer, which has upped their game significantly. Trevor has big goals for his business. Together with his girlfriend, they purchased a new property in Hope, where they will be building a much larger workshop. With a 50' by 80' workshop, they will be able to install graphics on much larger vehicles. "And have more comfortable working conditions. I'll be living my dream every day. To wake up and be creative, seeing the mark I leave on this big planet," says Trevor.

SPEC asked Trevor for a rundown of the products offered by Hilltop Creations. "We are the Vistaprint of New Carlisle with service!" was his quick response.

More specifically the com-

pany offers paper and vinyl products and services, such as banner roll-ups, window tinting on homes and buses, clothing designs and custom mugs. "Ba-

sically, anything you can imagine seeing your vision or logo on, we can do it. That includes plexiglass and aluminum. There's no limit," Trevor adds.

The company has a growing clientele reaching as far as India and relies heavily on word of mouth. Trevor wants his clients to know how much he appreciates their support. Adding "Behind every good man, there's a better woman... Because it's true Melissa is my rock on good and bad days."

You can reach Trevor by visiting the Lettrage Hilltop Creations page on facebook or visiting the shop at 206 Church Street in New Carlisle. But it's not unusual for future clients to approach him in unexpected places. "Pulling me by the ear at IGA," smirks Trevor.

Gala winners

- Retail:** Agenda Fleuriste, AudioStop disquaire, Materiaux Jacques.
- Expansion, growth and productivity:** AD Solutions, Habitations Mont-Carleton and SoluWin Inc.
- Employers Choice:** ARPO Groupe-conseil, SoluWin Inc. and Subaru New Richmond.
- Young business (1-3):** Chapiteaux Signature, Nixtem Technologies and Safire Conseils RH.
- Non-profit organization:** Festival international of journalism, l'Emergence, Nouveau Regard Gaspesie.
- Small service business:** AD Solutions, Hilltop Creations and Le 3e lieu.
- Medium and large service business:** Menuiseries d'interieur, Clinique de physiotherapie amplitude.
- Restaurants and accommodations:** Bistro Cerf Cuit Court, Chapiteaux Signature and Pub St. Joseph.
- Transfer and relief:** ARPO Groupe Conseil, Maxifor, Soudure Jones.
- Self employment and micro business:** Joanie Robichaud, Dessins MB and MEV.
- Sustainable development:** Agenda Fleuriste, PEC and Rail GD.



Examples of the type of graphic work done by Hilltop Creations.



Photos: Courtesy of Trevor Buttle

A petition for new elections was presented in Gespeg

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - A petition with 314 signatures, collected by Gespeg elders, was presented at a press conference on November 21, calling on the Gespeg band council to resume the electoral process due to problems that occurred during the election on September 8.

The petition notes that communications, including the notice of nomination and polling relating to the September 2024 election, were transmitted only by email, and that by not mailing the communications by the post deprived several voters of their right to vote. According to the petition, this inadequate communication resulted in a lack of candidates for the positions to be filled.

"This irregularity in the way electoral information is communicated renders the electoral process invalid and its result revocable," the document states.

In a press briefing, Gespeg elders, including two former chiefs and Mark Sinnett, a candidate in the last election, called for the September 2024 election to be invalidated and to mandate an electoral officer to hold a new election as soon as possible.

"We have nothing against anyone or the council in place. What we are saying is that our elections have not been going well since the beginning and this has caused all the problems we see today and especially community members who did not have their right to vote," notes Mr. Sinnett. According to organizers, some employees thought about signing the petition but feared reprisals if



Photos: N. Sergerie

Gespeg members signed the petition during the press briefing.

they did.

"I have great confidence that most employees would have pointed it out. All we want is a fair election," insists Mr. Sinnett.

"A lot of former members who don't have internet didn't hear that there was an election. They found out how to vote, receive a ballot by mail and return it. There were some who received their ballot after the election. They weren't able to vote. That caused a major problem. Normally, in all municipal elections in Quebec or Canada, all voters receive a notice before the election. Here, that didn't happen," adds Francis Mainville, especially for members who live outside Gaspé.

Of the 1,800 eligible voters, only 420 participated in the September election, compared to approximately 600 votes in the previous election, where mail-in ballots were also counted.

However, everything would have been done ac-

ording to the Electoral Code. "It depends on the interpretation. Our code is not 100% clear. There has been a lot of interpretation. Our code does not contain all the possibilities. There is a shortcoming: you can contest, but we do not know what to do after the contestation. That is what has led to where we are today," explains Mr. Sinnett.

"According to our customs and traditions, everyone was notified by mail," adds Mr. Mainville.

"In the Electoral Code, we must find all possible means to reach all members. That is the mandate of the president," emphasizes Linda Jean, another of the initiators of the petition.

The petition was filed during Gespeg's annual general meeting on November 24 (see other text).

For the time being, recourse to the courts is excluded. "Anything is possible, but we are not there yet. We want the council to understand that their community is speaking out and that we want new elections. That's all there is to it for now. If there is anything else, we will see in the future. We are asking the council to take this very seriously," says Mr. Sinnett.

"We don't want to make threats. We don't want to go there. We want to protect our community. We have suffered enough recently. We want to do good for our community. We will follow our customs

and traditions and that is the right we want to exercise at Sunday's meeting," continues Mr. Sinnett.

"We have never seen Gespeg so united both internally and externally on one point," he says.

The Electoral Code allows a petition to be submitted to the council if it garners signatures from at least 10% of voting members.

"We are within our rights," calculates Ms. Jean.

Having been a candidate for the position of chief, Mr. Sinnett denies having any apparent conflict of interest.

"Absolutely not. If you remember, my point of view was to say that the election was not done well. I said it from the beginning. I continued until I withdrew for personal reasons. The election was not done well. We did not join our members. This is not revenge. It did not work. We have to do it again so that it works like a world," Mr. Sinnett responds.

The elders believe they have the support of the majority of Gespeg members.



Gespeg elders called for a new election by presenting a petition on November 21.

No election, says Gespeg council

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The petition asking the Micmac Nation of Gespeg band council to call a new election has close to 400 signatures. However, the band council refuses to resign, according to one of the petition's initiators.

The petition was presented on November 24 at the Gespeg's annual general assembly.

"The current council could

not accept the petition. They indicated that it should be filed with the president. There was an hour and a half of discussion and now we have to go to the election of the president," says one of the community elders, Mark Sinnett.

"The council is taking it personally and our petition does not target any specific individual. We are asking the council to be a little serious and understand that we have 379 members of the commu-

nity who are asking for a new election," says Mr. Sinnett, who repeats that the electoral process was not done well.

"Out of 2,200 members, 1,300 do not have an email address. This proves once again that the community was not informed of the election," maintains Mr. Sinnett.

"We will continue. We will not give up. This is a community that speaks," he added.

"Unfortunately, there are many flaws in the Electoral

Code and it has become a code where the president will have to make decisions that are outside the framework because there is nothing written in the code to follow up. It will be his interpretation that will tell us where we are going with the petition and what happens next," Mr. Sinnett analyzes.

If an election were to be called, it would be done under the current code.

"The real problem is that people were not respectfully

informed that there was an election in Gespeg. What is urgent is that we go back to the election and we will see to correcting the Electoral Code," concludes Mr. Sinnett.

The petition calls for the electoral process to be restarted due to problems that arose during the election of September 8.

Given the potential conflict of interest, the council has opted not to make a public statement.

Petro-Canada in Paspebiac destroyed by fire

NELSON SERGERIE

PASPEBIAC - During the early hours of November 25, the Sprint convenience store and the Petro-Canada gas station in Paspebiac were destroyed by a violent fire. Approximately 25 firefighters from Paspebiac, New Carlisle, Bonaventure and Saint-Elzéar responded to the 2:45 a.m. emergency call. Although the convenience store was burned completely, the firefighters were able to secure the propane and gas pumps, avoiding any possible explosions. Any criminal act has been ruled out to explain this fire.

"It's a shock for the company and the employees on-site," says Gabriel Bérubé Pelletier, communications and marketing manager for Groupe F. Dufresne. It is the first time that one of the company's corporate sites has been destroyed by flames.

Reconstruction is already underway. "We met Tuesday morning (November 26). It's too early to confirm 100%. There are still a few things to check with our insurance, but we are already in reconstruction mode for this site, which is very important for the



Photo: CHNC

The convenience store was destroyed by the fire.

group," says Mr. Bérubé Pelletier.

The service station was in a strategic location, in the heart of the municipality and very close to the Banc de pêche site in Paspebiac.

"What we want is to completely improve the offer with a construction that meets the new Sprint standards. It is a much larger convenience store with more offers. If all goes well, we hope to have it next spring," says the manager.

The permanent employees have been deployed to other convenience stores located nearby. "That's why we are

working very hard to rebuild as quickly as possible," he says. Rebuilding the convenience store to modern standards is estimated to cost around \$3 million.

"Between \$2 million and \$5 million." We are in site security mode and, already, a survey is planned once the site is secure and work on the plans and see how we want to occupy the space. We want to move quickly to see if we don't already have a model plan that would go for the site. Our energies are focused on this project," mentions Mr. Bérubé Pelletier.

Violence against women hasn't taken a break

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Despite numerous campaigns aimed at stopping violence against women, the issue persists and is even on the rise.

"As long as the issues of violence against women remain unresolved, we will continue to mobilize," said Nastassia Williams, coordinator of the Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands Feminist Round Table, during the 12 Days of Action to End Violence against Women, which takes place each year from November 25 to December 6.

2024 has been particularly deadly for women with 25 feminicides already recorded including 13 in the context of domestic violence, and the year is not over yet.

"Domestic violence is increasing, as are the number of offences for crimes of a sexual nature. We must double our efforts," continues Ms. Williams.



Women are seeing more violence against them in 2024.

Photo: Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands Feminist Round Table

"We are concerned about the rise in violence associated with a certain polarization of discussions or hate speech, in general. Women are not the only victims. We are thinking of racialized people or people who come from sexual minorities," she says.

According to the table, with the massive rise of digital technology, this violence is multiplying and taking on more varied forms, manifesting itself

in virtual spaces such as social networks, online games and forums, and private exchanges where technology is used for controlling purposes.

"The rise in popularity of masculinist influencers like Andrew Tate or Julien Bour-nival through social media represents, in our eyes, a significant danger of trivializing violence against women and coercive control mechanisms," she notes.

Police report

Sûreté du Québec (SQ) located Sarah Trudel, 27, from Gaspé, on November 26, after her family had not heard from her for four days. The young woman was last seen on November 22 at around 11 a.m. in a wooded area of Chandler.

She was found with Marc-André Leblanc Sévigny, 26, from Gaspé, in the woods in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC, between Chandler and Gaspé. The two people were taken to the hospital to undergo medical examinations and were interviewed by SQ investigators. The police officers searched the area with the assistance of an SQ helicopter. The young woman's relatives feared for her health and safety. On social media, her friends had appealed to her to come forward.

In another case, the investigation is still active to locate Yan Francoeur, 46, who has been missing since October 14 in Gaspé. He was last seen around 4 p.m. heading west on Jacques-Cartier Street in downtown Gaspé. His relatives fear for his health and safety. Mr. Francoeur is described as six feet tall, weighing 225 pounds, with brown hair and green eyes. At the time of his disappearance, he was wearing a brown leather coat.

Two people appeared in court on November 26 at the Percé Courthouse in connection with incidents that occurred in the Port-Daniel-Gascons sector in the previous days.

Frank Bédard, 45, of Saint-Raymond, and Éric Laflamme, 45, of Saint-Alban, are facing charges of inducing or attempting to involve a victim in drug trafficking through threats, accusations or violence, following an event that occurred on November 21. The two men from the Portneuf region, near Quebec City, were remanded in custody and are scheduled to return to court on November 29. They are two of four individuals arrested on November 25 in a series of events that recently occurred in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The other two individuals were released for further proceedings. The investigation is ongoing, particularly a gunshot incident that occurred on the night of November 25 in Port-Daniel-Gascons.

According to sources, the two individuals facing justice have ties to organized crime and were already known to the police.

As far as we know, the investigation is attempting to show that the locations targeted by the individuals were not random and are part of a territorial battle between criminal groups to seize the drug resale market.

The individuals arrested could also face other charges in connection with incidents that occurred over the last few days.

Furthermore, similarly to the situation in Haute-Gaspésie, the Sûreté du Québec is deploying impact mitigation measures, by going door-to-door to meet with citizens, visiting businesses and meeting with municipal elected officials to ensure public safety. Increased surveillance is being deployed in various targeted sectors, particularly in the Rocher-Percé MRC.

"This is a significant step backwards because what we realize is that violence in digital spaces creates fear of speaking out publicly and of denouncing problematic situations. We see it in our lives as women," says Ms. Williams.

Feminist groups are also concerned about the anticipated cuts from the government. "When the social safety net weakens, and that's where we're headed, it has a direct impact on the most marginalized people. Think of victims of sexual or domestic violence. We have a social safety net that allows us to react but also to do prevention," mentions the coordinator.

"Will raising awareness in

the judicial or police sectors be a priority for the government?" she asks in relation to violence in cyberspace that is marginalized.

Between now and December 6, various awareness-raising activities will be held across the territory.

Vigils will be held on December 6 to mark the tragedy at the École Polytechnique de Montréal, which claimed 14 victims in 1989 and has since become a symbol of violence against women.

"The first step in taking action against violence is to become aware of it, to know its different forms and to be able to talk about it together," concludes Ms. Williams.

Municipal services in English: “We are forced to apply a law conceived for Montreal,” says New Richmond mayor

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The Town of New Richmond will continue to provide services in English to the citizens requiring it, despite the recent tightening of certain provisions of Law 96, which forces towns and villages without a bilingual status to reduce services provided in English.

The mayor of New Richmond, Éric Dubé, points out that his administration intends to follow the rules, however, common sense will prevail. Law 96 allows some communications to take place in English, notably for public safety and health.

“Our office managers, Céline Leblanc and Holly McColm, are perfectly bilingual. They will keep giving services in both languages. We are able to go according to



Photo: G. Gagné

Mayor Éric Dubé says that the Town of New Richmond will respect the new rules while still serving the English-speaking population.

people’s needs and that will stay. There is no stake that poses a daily problem. We are forced to apply regulations that were designed for Montreal and it is too bad,” reacts Mayor Dubé.

“Our municipal website

has not been bilingual since 2014 or 2015, in conformity with the law. Our tax bill has not been bilingual since 2016. The number is neither in English nor in French. Numbers talk and people understand them. The current changes that are making people across Quebec talk these days have very little effect in New Richmond,” he adds.

“When Lawrence Cochrane (a 4th Range citizen) comes to the municipal meetings and asks questions about the roads in English, I understand, despite not being fully bilingual, and I reply in French and he understands me. In an office (of the town hall), people will use the language they want. English-speaking citizens represent about 12% of New Richmond’s population and 90% of them are bilingual but they can use the language of their

choice at the town hall. Our town planning director Jean-Sébastien Bourque is also bilingual. I get by and so does our director general Stéphane Cyr,” specifies Mayor Dubé. “Our motions and regulations have not been translated into English over the last 45 or 50 years but if someone needs an explanation, we will provide it. It is sad that the Quebec government forces us to play in that movie (part),” stresses Éric Dubé.

He points out that at the beginning of the 1990s, the proportion of New Richmond English-speaking citizens was around 20%.

“We have been able to maintain the overall population but not the proportion of anglophones. Some of them have moved to Cascapédia-St-Jules and some youth go outside to study and don’t come back. It is a well-inte-

grated community but we always see challenges. We try to make them come to the Salle de spectacles and organize activities with them and for them. There is no communication challenge. If the roads are bad and if garbage collection is not carried out, we will know about it and that’s fine. We held the Christmas illumination ceremony on Saturday (November 16) and drinking a coffee with Bailey’s in it is good, either in French or in English. People were happy and some anglophones came to say thanks for that activity. That’s how people do it here,” concludes Mayor Dubé.

According to 2021 data, 3,683 people resided in New Richmond, which is 17 fewer than in 2016. However, some towns on the Gaspé Peninsula have gained population during the pandemic.

Bill 96 brings new challenges for anglophones

HOLLY SMITH
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPE - The winds of change are sweeping through Quebec and, for anglophones in the Gaspé Peninsula. Those winds have never felt so strong. The recent decision by the Town of Gaspé to stop providing written material in English feels like a big change for many anglophones and serves as a strong reminder of the challenges that Bill 96 brings.



Photo: Courtesy of Daniel Côté

The Mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, and the Executive Director of Vision Gaspé-Percé Now, Jessica Synnott, discussed solutions to provide anglophones with translated materials from the Town of Gaspé.

be available to those who qualify as members of Quebec’s recognized English-speaking minority.

Certain groups are exempt from Bill 96, such as historic Anglophones, so Quebec residents have the right to receive education in English. These are generally people who attended English schools in Canada or whose parents did. Exemptions also apply to Indigenous people. Immigrants can access services in English for up to six months after they arrive in Quebec. After these six months, they are expected to use French services.

People who ask for English services must “attest in

good faith” that they qualify as one of the three exceptions.

When the Town of Gaspé shared that it would no longer provide public materials in English, the news rippled through the community, hitting close to home for many anglophones not only in the Town of Gaspé but also in other municipalities along the coast. For decades, English-speaking residents have balanced life in a bilingual region, relying on municipal updates, public notices, and services to stay informed and connected.

For many, this issue isn’t just about language, it’s about feeling included, heard, val-

ued and informed in a place they’ve called home for generations. When reached by SPEC, Jessica Synnott, Executive Director of Vision Gaspé-Percé Now, wanted to reassure the community that her organization is stepping up. “Vision Gaspé-Percé Now will work closely with the Town (of Gaspé) to ensure communications to the public are translated regularly. We are going to try to translate what we can and prioritize documents, and mainly publish them on our (Vision Gaspé-Perce Now) Facebook page and possibly distribute them during some activities,” explains Ms. Synnott.

The Mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, shared a message on his Facebook, thanking Vision Gaspé-Percé Now for stepping up to help, “Jes-

sica offered to share municipal information, translated by their services, with our English-speaking citizens and organizations. I immediately accepted this helping hand from our partner organization. The Town of Gaspé has lost the right to communicate in English with its residents (except in specific cases) and cannot do so indirectly either... But an organization can, of its own accord, translate our public information! This will undoubtedly provide some relief to our English-speaking community, who deserve to be kept informed, as one of the three founding peoples of our town.” Mr. Côté wrote.

Ms. Synnott tells SPEC that accessing important services and information in English

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What is Bill 96?

In June 2022, the Quebec government passed a new law, Bill 96, essentially an amendment to the Charter of French Language, to promote the use of the French language in Quebec and to affirm that French is the common language of Quebec.

The Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) government’s latest attempt was to increase French in Quebecers’ everyday lives. It builds on Bill 101, Quebec’s original language charter, but with stricter rules. Under Bill 96, businesses with 25 or more employees must operate mainly in French. Public documents, municipal communications, and signs must prioritize French, limiting the use of English. Government services in English will only

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CMC AUDITE

Paspebiac National Historic Site is looking for a new director general

GILLES GAGNÉ

PASPEBIAC - The members of the Paspebiac National Historic Site have noted with sadness Louise Cyr's decision to terminate her contract as director.

This decision on her part will be effective in the coming months and is the result of much reflection. Ms. Cyr wishes to return to retirement and cites personal reasons. She was hired four years ago as a development officer and last year as director following the retirement of Thomas Martens.

"It is tough for us but we understand at the same time. She wants to retire. When Thomas retired, he recommended her hiring to replace him. She was hired directly, without us trying to hire someone from outside the organization. We will miss her," explains Nicole Grenier, chairperson of the Historic Site board of directors.

Ms. Grenier and her board members point out that over the past four years Ms. Cyr has put in place all the tools necessary for the main files of the Historic Site, namely the

restoration of the buildings underway since last June and the development plan that includes the construction of a reception pavilion in order to relocate the services outside the listed buildings and the restoration of the latter to their original state.

This work is essential for applying to be on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The board of directors indicate that all Louise Cyr's duties were carried out with competence, diligence and dedication and that she leaves an organization in excellent health. All important upcoming files are already being activated, which will facilitate the task of the new management.

Louise Cyr intends to remain in her position until a new management is appointed and put in place.

"Her knowledge and management skills have allowed the Site to progress and distinguish itself in the public arena. It is a real pleasure to work with her. She is not ruling out coming back for short mandates if we have the money to hire her. We are running on a very tight budget. We always

have to be careful," stresses Nicole Grenier.

Fundraiser progressing well

Since 2022, the Paspebiac National Historic Site has been raising funds to meet the community share needed for the \$8.5 million reception pavilion project that should be carried out in two phases.

"We have to secure our share of the funds from the community. It is our third year and it is going well. We have passed the two-thirds mark of a \$300,000 goal, including a \$30,000 donation from the Caisses Desjardins du Centre-Sud gaspésien. Along with donations coming from big firms and organizations, we have to raise money. Once we get the government grants, we will have to borrow the balance if we haven't reached our community goal," explains Ms. Grenier.

The Historic Site board expects news from a Quebec government grant before the end of December regarding the first phase of the project, valued at \$4 million.

In the meantime, the



Photo: G. Gagné

The BB was one of the buildings upgraded over the last months.

restoration of the historic buildings is well underway. "The current reception pavilion is upgraded and some work has already been carried out on the BB building and the building facing the latter, the Lebouthillier warehouse. That first phase should end at the conclusion of the spring or at the beginning of the summer. It is a little behind schedule because one of BB's main wooden beams was rotten and

had to be replaced. It required consulting an engineer in order to establish a plan that wouldn't affect the structure of the building during the replacement," says Nicole Grenier.

That first phase required an investment of \$1.57 million, including a \$320,000 contribution from Parks Canada. Most of the funding came from Quebec's Department of Culture and Communications.

13th edition of the Polar Dip aims to raise \$150,000 for Opération enfant soleil

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ - The 13th edition of the Polar Dip in Percé, benefitting Opération Enfant Soleil, will take place on December 14, with a record number of registrations.

As of November 28, \$100,000 has been raised toward the \$150,000 goal. So far, 22 teams have registered, consisting of 230 dippers. This surpasses the previous record set in 2015 when 182 participants braved the icy waters.

"It's really great. All donations are important. All participants are important. There are no small commitments. It's encouraging," notes co-organizer Marie-Ève Trudel-Vibert.

"Half of the teams are rookies. We can't wait to meet them. We can't wait to find out why the faithful are still there and how the recruits heard about the dip. We've re-



Photo: N. Sergerie

On December 14, brave individuals will once again take the polar bear plunge.

ally doubled the number of registrations since last year and we really believe in our goal," notes Ms. Trudel-Vibert.

Safety remains paramount for the organization. "We don't know what the weather will be. We don't know if it'll be bright sunshine like last

year or bitter cold. A lifeguard in the water is there if someone trips in the water. The entire care team is there to secure the site. It's a significant number. We'll make more waves with fewer dippers," she mentions.

"We don't neglect any factors," adds Ms. Trudel-Vibert. Over the past 12 years, \$634,000 has been raised. "We launched the initiative to have fun at first, to promote our village in winter, to help the cause. We were young, we didn't have children and we just wanted to do what we felt like doing. We didn't have a specific goal. We are more supervised now and we are in contact with Opération enfant soleil. As long as the dippers and donors are there, we will continue," she says.

If this year's goal is achieved, the total raised will surpass three-quarters of a million dollars.

"I think we will reach the million dollars. Not in one edition. It's like a personal goal that I've had for two years. I would really like that. As much as we didn't have a plan at the beginning, now, why not!" says the co-organizer who was also a co-founder at the start.

If the current trend continues, the million-dollar milestone could be reached by the 15th edition.

She also confirms her commitment to remaining involved until the goal is achieved.

"I think so, and I think that the girls on the committee and everyone will make it that far. I think the dip could continue for years. We will adapt to continue as long as possible," hopes Ms. Trudel-Vibert.

A new generation is preparing to continue the event. Last year, \$133,300 was raised

SIA calls for a regular trail maintenance program

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The managers of the International Appalachian Trail (SIA) on the Côte-de-Gaspé would like to obtain a recurring program for its maintenance after spending \$30,000 over the last two years to clear the trail following severe wind events.

Jean-Marc Hardy, a member of the SIA board of directors, would like the Quebec government to create a program like the one set up to maintain the Route verte for cyclists.

The December 2023 storm cost the local committee \$10,000, thanks in part to volunteer contributions. Without this support, expenses might have reached nearly \$20,000. This figure excludes other Gaspé sectors of the trail.

Fortunately, the MRC de la Côte-de-Gaspé, the Town of Gaspé and Desjardins assisted due to the storm's exceptional impact.

"Usually, for regular trail maintenance, there is never anyone who wants to help us," notes Mr. Hardy.

A similar storm in December 2022 cost \$20,000. "The

fact that it happens two years in a row when the recurrence is perhaps two to three times in 100 years, that it happens two years in a row, we can be tempted to link it with climate change and the future does not look any rosier," says Mr. Hardy.

After two large storms in two years, the trail managers hope that the forest around the trail has been adequately cleared. "With climate change and the spruce budworm, and what doesn't help us, logging changes the dynamics of the winds around the trail. All that put together, we're not sure we'll get a break, but we still hope so," he says.

To address these challenges, trail managers have requested recurring funding from the Ministry of Transportation.

"Based on the principle of the Route verte, long hikes are one of the sustainable means of transportation that should be encouraged but, to encourage them, we still have to support the organizations that manage the trails. We are asking to try to have a budget that could work like the Route verte. We would be sure to get a helping hand every year," says Mr. Hardy.



Photo: Archives

Haute-Gaspésie saw 5,408 hectares ravaged by windfall in December 2023.

Such recurring funding would allow for preventive measures along the trails.

Following last December's windstorms, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests reported that 5,408 hectares of forest were devastated in Haute-Gaspésie, the only place where windthrow was observed.

This summer the ministry recalculated these figures using satellite images.

Of the total, 3,186 hectares of forest on public lands and 582 hectares on private lands

were devastated by more than 75%.

Additionally, 1,329 hectares of public lands and 311 hectares of private land experi-

enced partial windthrow, where 25 to 75% of trees were affected. Areas with less than 25% tree loss were not counted.

No snow yet in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - According to Environment Canada, there has been no measurable snow in Gaspé so far this year which is an exceptional situation. Measurable snow is defined as an accumulation of 0.2 centimetres or more.

A trace of snow was noted a few times as of November 28 in Gaspé, with more abundant snow amounts in the mountains, particularly in Murdochville.

"No snow measured. It wouldn't be unheard of because it's happened before. We'd be in seventh place if we assumed that there would be measurable snow on Tuesday (26 and 27) night," says meteorologist Jean-Philippe Bégin.

The last time snow was this late in arriving was November 27, 2016, when six centimetres fell. Other notable late snow falls occurred on November 29, 1947, December 2, 1930; December 6, 1954; and December 10, 1923.

The latest arrival date for snowfall was on December 12, 1948, with 7.6 centimetres. Last year, Gaspé experienced a green Christmas. "The odds are on our side. Winter is setting in and we aren't seeing a thaw. It won't be a roller coaster like last year. Will we have measurable snow on the morning of December 25? It's too far away. The statistical guides indicate that there is a 95% chance of a white Christmas," says the meteorologist.



Photo: N. Sergerie

The modular units in Gaspé, near the CHSLD Mgr Ross.

Modular units for healthcare workers are ready in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Eight modular housing units designed for healthcare workers, including international nurses, are ready in Gaspé, but remain unoccupied.

The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre is currently exploring options to use the units before the arrival of a new cohort of international nurses in March.

A total of twenty candidates are set to arrive in the region: Ten in Maria and ten in Gaspé. Some of whom could occupy these units.

The units are available to rent at \$1,200 per month until the applicants find permanent accommodations. The eight units in Maria were inaugurated last August.

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La Gaspésienne No. 20 has been repaired

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - One year after suffering significant damage, the restoration work on Gaspésienne No. 20 was completed on November 15.

“It looks like nothing happened! We really got our Gaspésienne back to the way it was before the fire, and maybe even better than before the fire,” says Martin Roussy, director general of the Musée de la Gaspésie.

The restoration was carried out according to the rules of the craft thanks to two rare craftsmen who specialize in this type of restoration.

“It’s a job that takes time and, by doing the operation, we gave it a little youthfulness, made it stronger and more able to last over time,” mentions the director. Finding these kinds of people was a blessing.

‘It’s a dying profession. We had a hard time finding them because you only find them through networks. We eventually found some, and the ones we did find were young people who had taken over an existing business. It’s doubly interesting because they’ve been given a great contract and they’re a team that now knows La Gaspésienne,’ explains Mr. Roussy.

The museum also took advantage of their visit and their expertise to create a sort



Photo: Musée de la Gaspésie

La Gaspésienne No. 20 has regained its proud appearance.

of health record to plan repairs over the next few years. “This will allow us to plan what we’ll do next year, in two years or in five years to continue to preserve it until we manage to protect it permanently, that is, find shelter to prevent it from being exposed to bad weather,” says the director.

A \$10,000 fundraising campaign was launched in the spring to raise funds to begin the process of developing the protection project.

“We will keep these amounts in the bank and when we start the process that will allow us to analyze what we should do and then the funding application process.

These funds will be used to start this project with the initial knowledge of what needs to be done to protect it,” explains Mr. Roussy.

So far, more than \$11,000 has been raised.

Since winter is just around the corner and workers to rebuild the footbridge that also suffered significant damage were not available, this work will be done in the spring.

“All this work will be done and we are very, very eager for next summer to restore access to the Gaspésienne, to visit this beautiful artifact that seems to have come straight from its construction site in the 1950s,” says the director.

A major game plan will be launched in 2026 to prepare for the overall protection of the legendary ship. “It’s a long-term project,” says Mr. Roussy.

The Gaspésienne should be accessible next summer, once the footbridge has been rebuilt. “However, we may have to avoid certain sections of the bridge that are part of the small adjustments to be made to complete the craftsmen’s work,” Mr. Roussy is careful to point out.

Additional measures have been taken to prevent such a situation from happening again. “On the ground where the fire broke out, there were accelerants contained in all

the products used: the plants, the flower boxes. We got rid of all that. There are more surveillance cameras and the lighting has been adjusted. We have done everything that can be done to prevent an accident because it was an accidental fire. We have put additional measures in place to avoid such an event happening again,” Mr. Roussy explains. The fire, of electrical origin, started around 8 p.m. on November 24, 2023, and broke out slowly at the beginning of the gangway leading to the boat. The boat didn’t catch fire right away. At approximately 1:30 a.m., the Sûreté du Québec and the firefighters were alerted.

The 45-foot vessel had been the subject of a vast mobilization for its restoration in 2016 when about thirty volunteers stripped and repainted it.

It was the only one of the 50 produced in the second half of the 1950s that could be refurbished. The boat had originally belonged to Thomas Boucher, a fisherman from Newport.

Once restored, the Gaspésienne No. 20 became an integral part of the museum starting in 2017. At the time, a virtual experience allowed visitors to see life on board the boat in 1963. The museum also won an award for this documentation that contributed to the advancement of Quebec museology.

New wintry book arrives as the first snow falls!

CYNTHIA DOW

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES - Local writer and artist Mary Robertson has come out with a new winter’s tale just in time for the Christmas season. SPEC caught up with her in her home in Cascapedia-St-Jules just as the first meagre snowfall blanketed the town.

Called Last Winter’s Snowman the book is “...not just a children’s story, but a family story. People of all ages will enjoy this. Everyone has memories of snowmen they made when they were young” Ms. Robertson explained.

The little tome is lavishly decorated with Ms Robertson’s colourful art as well as

illustrations created with the help of Canva and Chatgpt.

The book is dedicated to the author’s daughter Erin, whose return home for Christmas in 2013 after a serious operation inspired her mother. “I painted a bunch of snowmen for my daughter to welcome her home for Christmas, as she was still recovering from some challenging health issues,” declared Ms. Robertson.

The description reads: “Snowmen may not last forever, but they leave us with memories that can last forever.” It’s a heart-warming winter adventure about a snowman called Snow Storm who survives not only the worst winter on the Coast but, with the help of a little girl

called Maggie, a very tall fir tree, and a magical night in the forest, survives through the summer as well.

Ms. Robertson has copies of the book for sale at home, or it can be ordered through Amazon. It retails for \$16.

Ms. Robertson is well-known as a local storyteller who has captured on paper dozens of stories relating to Gaspesian history and myth, and salmon fishing along the Cascapedia River. You can check out more of her offerings at her website gaspécoaststories.ca.

When this reporter referred to the charming illustration at the end of the book which includes Percé Rock, the author said, “Of course, this is a Gaspesian story!”



Photo: C. Dow

Mary Robertson poses with the original artwork created in 2013 which inspired her latest book.

10,000 signatures to demand a nephrologist in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - A petition with more than 10,000 signatures is calling on the Quebec government to establish a nephrologist position at the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre.

The Gaspé Peninsula is one of the only regions in Quebec, alongside Northern Quebec, without a dedicated specialist. Jean Lapointe, the driving force behind the petition, has been fighting for a decade for the development of such a service in the Gaspé Peninsula. On November 15, he submitted the petition to Gaspé riding Member of the National Assembly (MNA), Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

After successfully forcing the Quebec government to set up hemodialysis rooms in all hospitals in the region, Mr. Lapointe is putting pressure on the government again to have kidney disease specialists located in the Gaspé Peninsula. It would be better than having to travel to Rimouski to meet them.

Currently, Gaspésians must go to the Centre Hospitalier in



Photo: N. Sergerie

Rimouski to be seen by a nephrologist.

"I have to go to Rimouski twice a year. It takes me 9 hours to get there for 30 minutes in the office," says Jean Lapointe, who lives in Gaspé, to justify his request.

"I might have had more signatures, but the CISSS removed them from the institutions," he says.

"I will never be happy. I could have had 500,000. I would have been happy. But I have more than 10% of the region's citizens," he says.

"I will fight until I die. I think of the people that need it. I have had kidney disease for 27 years. I am at stage 4. I do not stop there," he mentions.

Although Mr. Lapointe does not yet need the hemodialysis service, he points out that there are about fifty patients receiving treatment in the Gaspé Peninsula.

"I think there is something strong as a message. We are starting with the petition. We will submit it in due form to the National Assembly. It will make its way to the Ministry of

Health and its parliamentary committee," indicates the MNA.

The 15-day process will still be launched to see if the parliamentary work will move forward on the subject.

"I think that 10,000 citizens taking the time to sign a petition at the health service level is a strong message. With the status of an aging population, the oldest in Quebec, two orphan regions, I think we have interesting arguments and especially very real needs to move forward with the project," says Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Quebec currently has 211 nephrologist positions in Quebec, with about 15 vacant positions.

"What I learned is that there is a need within the aging population and for patient mobility," concludes the elected official.

The wording of the bilingual document states that "whereas the region covered by the CISSS de la Gaspésie is the only one in Quebec not to have a nephrologist assigned to its territory by the Medical Staffing Plan (PEM); whereas patients requiring follow-up by a nephrologist must travel to

Rimouski to obtain an in-person meeting, forcing them to travel long hours; we, the signatories, ask the Quebec government to add at least one nephrologist position for the Gaspésie territory in the PEM."

Mr. Lapointe has been gathering signatures since June, travelling all over the region to collect these signatures.

In April, the CISSS of Gaspé Peninsula indicated that it was considering the possibility of serving the four centres located in Maria, Chandler, Gaspé and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

The President and CEO, Martin Pelletier, indicated at the time that the volume of activity did not justify the presence of such a full-time specialist, adding that telemedicine was well-developed.

However, the number of people who have needs is increasing and there may come a time when demand will justify it.

There are currently around 40 hemodialysis treatment seats available throughout the Gaspé Peninsula.

Three major directions for the future of Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - Gaspé now has all the tools to implement its Strategic Planning for the next 10 years following the end of the public information sessions on the component.

Housing, commercial offerings, and transportation are the main priorities identified by the mayor who is pleased to see that throughout the process, including targeted consultations, an online survey and public meetings. Approximately 1,500 people gave their point of view on the future of the Town of Gaspé.

"I remember the good enthusiasm of the population who participated in the exercise. It's a huge turnout," Mr. Côté emphasized from the outset. Several other themes emerged, such as the revitalization of village centres, the densification of urban environments, and the need for sports and recreation.

"Our professionals will compile the results to end up with the drafting of a strategic plan. We wanted it by the end

of 2024, but more realistically, it will be early 2025 for adoption and implementation," says the mayor.

Several of the themes were already known, such as housing and commercial offerings. "From the moment it is a widespread observation among the population, it seems to me that it gives us free rein to act more firmly. In housing, I believe we have already acted more firmly, but if we can add these elements of strategic planning to our portfolio to encourage housing development, so much the better," he says.

Some changes to urban planning rules have been suggested to facilitate construction. Several elements of transportation are private, such as air or intercity bus transportation.

"We are in a market dynamic. It's more complicated. Rail transportation, the pressure has been developed where it should be restored by the end of 2026 or the beginning of 2027. For VIA Rail, there is a political commit-

ment to say that they are interested, but they have issues with the cars. There are many elements of mobility where we are under pressure," mentions Mr. Côté.

"We will sort out everything we have heard, put it in order of priority and that is why I can draw conclusions quickly because there are things that stand out a lot," indicates the mayor.

The way of transmitting municipal information will

also be the subject of reflection in a world where technological evolution is happening very quickly. For the 500th anniversary of Gaspé in 2034, the mayor indicates that people expect historical commemorations.

"They expect the commemorations to be in reconciliation mode with the First Nations. There's a landmark event in 1534, but we have to put ourselves in the First Nations' perspective. That's what

I'm getting. That's the kind of thing that speaks to me," he says.

A cultural component will be in place and trying to attract major sports competitions is also suggested; mentioning, for example, hosting a final of the Quebec Games.

"We must already start, within a year or two, to plan these celebrations if we want them to live up to what we deserve," suggests the mayor.

Unemployment groups meet with federal officials

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - As the reform of the Employment Insurance (EI) system remains pending, groups representing unemployed workers are calling for changes to the rules to facilitate access to the system.

On November 26, Nadia Mongeon, coordinator for Mouvement action chômage Pabok, met with federal officials in Rimouski. During the meeting, the groups were asked what could be done while awaiting real reform. "We suggested restoring the 420-hour qualifying requirement, 26 weeks of Employment Insurance and a divisor to calculate benefits at 14 rather than 17," was suggested by the coordinator.

Unemployed workers are wondering why it takes 630 hours to qualify for EI in the Gaspé Peninsula, compared to only 595 hours in Toronto.

"The officials who were there said that they realized that something wasn't working. What can influence the statistics? Because it doesn't make sense!"

The reform of Employment Insurance is expected to be a key issue in the upcoming election.

Three major directions for the future of Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ - The operating budget of the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Intermunicipal Transportation Board (RéGÎM) will be reduced by 15% in 2025 due to a significant decrease in expenses and revenues in development projects.

The budget for next year will be \$4.8 million. "It's a relatively similar budget. The total budget is down 15%, mainly related to development envelopes. We have less revenue associated with development projects and less expenses at the same level," says RéGÎM President Daniel Côté.

Projected revenues from the gasoline tax will be down \$100,000 next year. The region imposes a tax of \$0.01 on each litre sold to finance public transit.

"We're scratching our

heads about the revenue prospects to operate the service," says the president.

The board has been asking for months for an increase of 1 to 2 cents per litre of gasoline to maintain revenue, but the Quebec government appears reluctant, favouring a vehicle registration tax instead.

"We are analyzing it and if we ever come to the conclusion that we should go in that direction, one thing is certain: we will have to maintain the tax on gasoline so that we can minimize the impact. We already have preliminary analyses. We won't see the same impact as in urban centres where registration taxes have increased by \$90 or \$150, assuming that the government allows us to maintain the tax of one cent per litre of gasoline. The user rate will never be enough to support transportation costs," says Mr.

Côté.

The challenge of financing public transit remains across Quebec.

The president of the RéGÎM notes that the Lower Saint Lawrence wants to establish a public transit network across the entire territory by requesting a \$0.02 per litre gasoline tax, which the Quebec government has refused.

"This is causing quite a debate in the Lower Saint Lawrence, which cannot set up its network. The tax on gasoline and registration are the only two means other than user fees. If we want a public transit system to achieve its goals, we cannot pass it all on to users," says the president.

It is difficult for the government to justify a new tax increase when it has commissioned studies on high gas prices.

"We can make a cause and effect link. The tax on public

transit does not have a major impact on the price of gasoline. Between the price paid in Gaspé and the one paid in Rimouski, as of today, there is a difference of 12 cents. That is not what makes the difference. I understand the government's reluctance to go in this direction, but we have to pass the

bill on in another way. One way or another, it is the motorists who will receive the bill," the mayor repeats.

Meanwhile, ridership continues to increase. Last year, more than 85,000 passengers were transported, a number expected to approach 90,000 this year.

Carl Sinnett is no longer Gaspé's fire chief

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Gaspé no longer has a fire protection service director. In a memo sent to firefighters on November 21 and obtained by SPEC, management stated that Carl Sinnett is no longer employed by the town. To maintain confidentiality, the memo didn't contain any further details.

The Town of Gaspé expressed its gratitude to Mr. Sinnett, who served as fire chief for more than 35 years and served for more than half a century as a firefighter.

Interim management has been assigned to Éric Fugère, the chief of the Percé fire department.

The memo also notes that a diagnosis of the work environment within the department is still underway and that the town will be able to specify certain findings and areas for improvement soon.

Winter Tires: A must-have for safe driving

HOLLY SMITH

PORT DANIEL - Winter is just around the corner and with it comes icy roads, heavy snow, and slippery conditions. For drivers, staying safe during these winter months means having the right equipment and that means a good set of winter tires.

Winter tires aren't just regular tires. They're designed for cold weather and tough Canadian conditions. They have deeper treads that grip onto snow and ice, which provides better control. They are made from rubber that stays soft and flexible even in freezing temperatures. Unlike all-season tires, which can harden in the cold, winter tires allow drivers to stop faster and steer better during the winter.

The province of Quebec has taken the lead in promoting winter safety on the

roads. In 2008, the province made winter tires mandatory from December 1 to March 15 every year. Since the law was introduced, winter-related collisions have dropped by 5% according to studies conducted by Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ), and there have also been fewer injuries and fatalities.

Although Quebec is the only province with a mandatory winter tire law, other parts of Canada have their own rules. In British Columbia, drivers are required to use winter tires or chains on certain highways between October 1 and April 30. In Ontario and Manitoba, while there are no laws, drivers are encouraged to use winter tires and may even qualify for insurance discounts if they do. According to the Tire and Rubber Association of Canada (TRAC), across Canada, about 76% of drivers

use winter tires.

Some drivers hesitate to purchase winter tires. They are worried about the cost. However, the benefits far outweigh the expense. Winter tires reduce the risk of accidents by improving grip and control, especially on snowy or icy roads. They also help prolong the lifespan of all-

season tires. Most importantly, winter tires provide peace of mind, knowing you're prepared for whatever winter throws at you.

For residents of the coast, snowstorms and icy roads are part of life. Whether driving to work, the kids to school, or heading to the grocery store, the added safety winter tires

provide is invaluable. Even though it's the law in Quebec, think of winter tires as more than just a rule, they're a way to protect yourself, your family, and everyone else on the road.

Remember, even with winter tires, always adjust your speed and driving habits to match road conditions.



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was already a challenge, and now those challenges are growing. "One area of concern is navigating government services. The biggest impacts are with government services, RAMQ (Régie de l'assurance maladie du Québec) being the one we are hearing the most frequently. Although there is service in English, it is extremely hard to navigate," explains Ms. Synnott.

Vision Gaspé-Percé Now is working to help anglophones affected, adding to initiatives they've worked on in the past, such as the "Mellow Yellow" initiative, launched in 2006 in partnership with the health system. "With this program, health workers who can serve users in English are identified with a yellow stripe on their name tag," Ms. Synnott shared, "To navigate the current obstacles, Vision can offer individual support to community members to help them with accessing services in English."

The organization also collaborates with government agencies to advocate for English speakers. "Vision works closely with various levels of government, such as the Secretariat for Relations with English-speaking Quebecers, to identify obstacles for the English-speaking community and work towards solutions," Ms. Synnott explained.

Vision Gaspé-Percé Now remains committed to ensuring the anglophone community retains access to resources and opportunities. "We will continue working with our partners to support them in their offer to the English-speaking community as well as offering our own programs," states Ms. Synnott.

Bill 96 brings changes that affect anglophones, businesses, and community organizations in Quebec. To learn more about Bill 96, visit the Government of Quebec's website: https://www.publicationsduquebec.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/Fichiers_client/lois_et_reglements/LoisAnnuelles/en/2022/2022C14A.PDF or consult the various language-related articles on Educaloi.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, your energy is impressive and contagious this week. You can put it to use tackling tasks that you have been putting off. A surprise message could brighten your weekend.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, review your budget and consider a new investment opportunity. This week brings a chance to reconnect with someone special. Don't avoid vulnerability, as it could enhance things.

GEMINI – May 22/June 21

You might find yourself in discussions that lead to exciting new projects, Gemini. Be open to collaboration and work on improving your communication skills. Time for fun comes later.

CANCER – June 22/July 22

This week is all about self-care, Cancer. Take some time to focus on your emotional well-being and nurture it as much as you can. A midweek work opportunity could arise.

LEO – July 23/Aug 23

Leo, dive into artistic pursuits or share ideas with others this week, as your creativity will be shining brightly. A social engagement may bring new connections that lead to exciting prospects.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Get down to business and organize your workspace or tackle a project that has been pushed aside, Virgo. If you feel overwhelmed, be sure to ask for some help from those you trust.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, it's all about balance this week, some-

thing you know a lot about as the scales sign. Make time for both work and play so you can make the most of every opportunity.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Intensity and passion might define your week, Scorpio. Delve into a project that excites you. By the middle of the week, news reaches your ears and it could be very exciting.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

This is the week for exploring new ideas or planning a trip, Sagittarius. It's only a matter of time before you realize that adventure awaits. Get started on what awaits.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, try focusing on your long-term goals this week. Strategic planning will pay off in the long run. If you need help, seek a mentor who can offer advice.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

A surprise opportunity might arise for you mid-week, Aquarius. Don't hesitate to snatch it up quickly, as others also might be interested. Leave weekend plans open for now.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, if you feel your emotions are running high this week, try to channel your feelings into a creative project that will use them in a smart way. A friend may call asking for advice.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

DECEMBER 4

Blake Snell, Athlete (32)

DECEMBER 5

Shalom Harlow, Model (51)

DECEMBER 6

Judd Apatow, Producer (57)

DECEMBER 7

Nicholas Hoult, Actor (35)



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Announcements



Acknowledgement



FINLEY: Carolina (Carol)

Carolina died in May 2024 in England, shortly after leaving Barachois.

She was one of the first women traders on the New York Stock Exchange and the author of numerous books.

Carolina was an elegant lady whose mind and heart were adorned with elaborate beauty. A lady who cared for art and literature—embodying that which she discovered there. Her reflections of how culture is expressed in art was a theme throughout

her published works.

She accepted little with much grace. Thankful for any sincere kindness extended to her. She was deserving of more than she received.

She was a faithful soul. She was able to keep the clarity of “good”—steady and intact—throughout her life. She was discouraged with what she described as the loss of authenticity within the church and “the business of worship.”



I am so appreciative of knowing her. I am thankful for the time we shared when the sun was setting orange on those autumn afternoons. She associated our time there to Whistler’s painting “Symphony in White, No 3.”

I just assumed I would see her again... Maybe in the summer when she promised to return. I just assumed we were meant to be the best of friends... And had all the time in the world to make it so.

*“Last night you were in my dream
I dreamt I was following you
You dived like a seal
Because you were being followed
That’s how I want to see you
As you were in my dream about you.”*

Modified passage from a poem in “Art of the Far North” by Carol Finley.



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Sundays: Sunday School starting at 10 a.m. Worship service beginning at 11 a.m.

SHIGAWAKE:
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December 14: Christmas Market from 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Crafts, baked goods and yard sale items. To reserve a table please contact a member.

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.
December 6: Music night with John Gedeon and friends beginning 8:30 p.m. \$10 entry fee.
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December 14: Christmas dance with Tammy Adams beginning at 9 p.m. \$15 entry fee, for tickets please contact Kathy at 418-752-0854 or Agnes at 418-751-4042.
December 15: Santa Claus is coming and bringing the grinch from 1-3 p.m. There will be hot chocolate and cookies, crafts with Kayla and a

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December 27: Live music with John Gedeon beginning at 9 p.m. \$10 entry fee.
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.
CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
50+ Club
December 18: The annual AGM meeting for the 50+

club will be held at 1 p.m. followed by the general meeting at 1:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome.
Tuesdays: Grocery bingo every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. \$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
Book Room
Please be advised that the book room is open. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

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December 8
2 p.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND
December 8
10 a.m. Service

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7 p.m. Advent lessons and carols

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