

## Coalition for the Return of VIA Rail passenger train to hold public meetings

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – The Coalition of Gaspésians for the Return of VIA Rail’s Passenger Train will hold a series of public meetings starting on January 19 to provide updates on the latest developments regarding the train’s eventual return.

Micheline Saint-Onge, a volunteer for the Coalition, also wants to provide people with a means to take action and demand the return of the passenger train as quickly as possible.

“People are anxious to benefit from the train service. They express that need each and every time that I meet people in public,” explains Ms. Saint-Onge, a Saint-Omer native who came back to her hometown after a career as a nurse outside the Gaspé Peninsula.

She is deeply dedicated to her volunteerism for the Coalition, spending countless hours reading the organization’s press review in order to provide solid information during the upcoming public meetings.

“I have read the whole press review of the Coalition to make sure that I have a good picture of the situation, and also to communicate the right information to the people who will attend the meetings,” states Micheline Saint-Onge.

The press gallery contains



Micheline Saint-Onge is compiling notes and drawing historical and statistical charts in preparation for the upcoming round of public meetings.

Photos: G. Gagné

hundreds of articles about the Gaspé Peninsula railway file, with archives that date back two decades.

The Matapedia to Gaspé train service was suspended gradually between December 2011 and September 2013, due to the state of the infrastructure. The first service cut was applied in December 2011, two weeks before Christmas, when VIA Rail suspended service between New Carlisle and Gaspé because a bridge located in Chandler required upgrading work.

At the beginning of August

2013, the use of a saline solution as a defoliant by the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, prompted Transports Québec, since the line is operated under provincial jurisdiction, and VIA Rail to suspend the passenger train service between Matapedia and New Carlisle. The suspension was at first temporary. Then a September decision was made to suspend the service until additional and satisfactory infrastructure work is carried out.

Eleven years later, and the tumultuous chapters that punctuated that period, VIA Rail, a

public corporation belonging to the federal government, is still communicating the message to the effect that its train service in the Gaspé Peninsula will only resume once the line is open to Gaspé, a message Ms. Saint-Onge hardly accepts.

“They left in steps; they can come back in steps. The only thing we hear from VIA Rail authorities is that they will come back once the line is safe. Soon, the line will be open to New Carlisle. Transports Québec is investing close to \$1 billion on the line between Matapedia and Gaspé. It will be the safest line in Canada! As far as safety is concerned, VIA Rail forgets that our safety as citizens forced to drive if we want to travel is also at stake, like in the winter. Not everybody can travel between our region and Montreal by bus. It is exhausting and not comfortable,” she points out.

Micheline Saint-Onge, a train user since her early childhood, is encouraged by the reactions of people she has met over the last two years of volunteer work.

“People tell me how useful it has always been to them and how they miss it,” she says.

### Close to 19,000 names on petition

So far, the Coalition of

Gaspésians for the return of VIA Rail’s passenger train has gathered 18,800 signatures on a petition asking the public transporter and the federal government to make the appropriate efforts to come back gradually east of Matapedia.

“We are entitled to that service as soon as possible. Since 2013, VIA has received the money earmarked for the Gaspé Peninsula service without offering it. It must have reached \$40 million by now. It would be normal to bring it back as soon as the train can reach New Carlisle, which is coming soon,” affirms Ms. Saint-Onge.

The tri-weekly Matapedia-Gaspé train’s ridership reached nearly 29,000 passengers between 2000 and 2010, despite subpar service during busier periods, as the transporter was not taking the appropriate measures to reach Gaspé and was frequently short-turning the train in New Carlisle.

Ms. Saint-Onge is very disappointed by the fact that the president of VIA Rail, Mario Péloquin, who had committed to coming to the Gaspé Peninsula over the first two months of 2024, has not shown up yet.

“He has travelled to Vancouver, Winnipeg and Halifax, among other places, during the year. He could have found the time to come here,” she says.

### Public Meeting Schedule

	Date	Time	Location
<b>Nouvelle</b>	February 9	1:30 p.m.	3e LIEU, 183, route 132 East
<b>Carleton</b>	January 19	1:30 p.m.	Riotel (Baie Bleue) Honda room
<b>Maria</b>	February 16	1:30 p.m.	Pavillon communautaire, 65, rue Des Voltigeurs
<b>New Richmond</b>	February 23	10 a.m. to noon (English) 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. (French)	Notre-Dame-des-Saints-Anges church basement, 129, boul. Perron Ouest
<b>Bonaventure</b>	February 2	1:30 p.m.	Centre Bonne Aventure, 105, av. de Grand-Pré
<b>Paspebiac</b>	January 26	10 a.m. and noon (French) 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. (English)	Collectif Aliment-terre, 8A, boul. Gérard-D.-Lévesque



Since September 2013, Gaspésians have to either go to Matapedia (photo) or Campbellton in order to take the Ocean, the train linking Halifax to Montreal, and its return counterpart.

## NEW RICHMOND BUDGET:

# Stability is the “name of the game” says mayor

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND - Citizens in New Richmond will benefit from a stable tax bill in 2025. In most cases, the tax bill will show only a slight change, ranging from a \$3 reduction to an increase of almost \$18, according to examples provided by Mayor Éric Dubé.

The reduction will apply to the average residential property, valued at \$219,750 in New Richmond, representing a drop of 0.13%. For a residence with a higher value, \$338,000, being the example provided by the municipal administration, the hike will be \$117.86. Meanwhile, a house valued at \$184,500 will see a \$5.43 decrease in its municipal bill compared to 2024.

“It has certainly been a long time since New Richmond was able to plan for a financial year that results in a downward impact for the average home and I am very proud that we were able to do so. Many residences with an assessment close to or under the average evaluation will benefit from a reduction in taxes,” states Mayor Dubé.

During the December 16 presentation of the municipal budget, the mayor highlighted several factors contributing to the stability of the tax bill.

“Firstly, the transformation of the recycling system in Quebec will lower the tariff for the management of residual and recyclable materials by \$33.43 per residence for a total of \$255.72 or a decrease of 12%. All properties in our town will benefit from this decrease of 12%, in line with the associated expenditure,” explained Mayor Dubé.

Stability is also visible in another budgetary item, as tariffs for water and sewerage, as well as the special tax, which is applied to larger buildings which have a higher water consumption and that are linked to the water and sewerage networks, will not be increased. They remain at the same amount as 2024, specifically \$110 per residence having water and sewerage services and the applicable special tax is \$0.1125 per \$100 of assessment.

Another factor that helped maintain the tax bill at a rea-



Photos: G. Gagné

*The New Richmond municipal council adopted the 2025 budget on December 16.*

sonable level for the coming year was the addition of wealth deriving from new constructions and renovation permits, added Éric Dubé.

“The new duplexes added on Des Érables Street added \$2 million to our municipal value. It is almost impossible to build a house for less than \$450,000. We (at the town hall) say that we need \$5 million of added wealth annually and we are at \$6.4 million in 2024,” he explains.

In 2023, the new three-year assessment roll generated a 29% municipal value increase. The tax rate applicable in 2024 was reduced as a result, so to avoid a huge tax bill hike. A year ago, the total municipal value jumped from \$376,471,000 in 2020 to \$486,134,000 applicable in 2024, a 29% hike. It is now \$492.7 million.

### Revenues

The total budget will increase from \$9,815,036 in 2024 to \$9,890,667 in 2025, a slight increase of \$75,631.

Changes in several budgetary items explain the increase. On the plus side, the culture budget received better support from both levels of governments.

The revenues from the Salle de spectacles Desjardins are also stable regarding ticket sales. The current winter-spring season is well underway in that regard. The basic subsidy granted by the Government of Quebec for the operation of the concert hall operations has increased from \$87,000 to \$95,000 annually, for a total of \$18,000 in grant improvements. The previous Quebec grant had

been frozen for close to 20 years. The federal government will also increase its contribution from \$40,000 to \$50,000 for the next two years. The 2025 projected revenues for the Salle amount to \$505,958. The expenses will reach \$750,699, an increase of less than \$10,000.

The revenues expected from leisure and sports activities, including the pool and the arena, are expected to reach \$421,375. The municipal council has decided to freeze the rates paid by the users of the town’s facilities. The wind energy royalties will bring in less revenue in 2025 than initially planned, said Mayor Dubé.

“There is a decrease in wind power royalties in the upcoming year, from \$265,000 to \$229,686. The TransAlta wind power farm, partially situated in New Richmond, will generate \$99,641, which is in line with the progression of the CPI (consumption price index), as stated in our agreement. However, revenues from the Régie de l’Énergie (the regional energy board, which owns shares in other wind-farms) will decrease to \$130,045. This loss is linked to a decrease in electrical production in 2024, and the corresponding decreased financial returns. Decreased wind in certain wind farms, combined with other factors have resulted in diminished royalties. However, we still anticipate an increase in these revenues in upcoming years, considering the eventual multiplication of wind parks to meet the energy requirements of our province and our neighbours,” said Éric Dubé

during his speech.

During the question period, he added that “investing in wind energy was one of the best decisions we made, years ago. Originally, New Richmond was not part of the Energy Board. We had to pay a low entry fee, and it is good money that comes in year after year without us having to invest.”

Two budgetary items tied to the agreement concluded between municipalities and the Government of Quebec in December 2023 will have positive effects on the New Richmond budget.

The 50% provincial sales tax (PST) reimbursement, compensation programs in lieu of taxes for public property, equalization payments and above all, the perpetuation of the return of an amount equivalent to the growth of one point of PST tax. In this regard, this distribution of a point of PST will bring in an amount of \$351,839 in 2025, an increase of close to \$145,000. This annual amount should increase at an interesting rate in the future.

The equalization program, which supports municipalities with relatively low tax potential so that they can offer basic services to their taxpayers without imposing an excessive tax rate, and a better in lieu of taxes, the tax applicable to government buildings, will increase by \$60,000 in 2025 for New Richmond.

### Expenses

In the expenses category, the largest increases were in the administration budgetary

item, where the amount will go from \$1,634,765 to \$1,706,664, a \$71,899 hike essentially due the New Richmond’s obligation regarding its employees and costs that cannot be compressed, like the November municipal election, which prompted the budget planners to earmark \$30,000 for it.

The money going to recreation, culture and the Salle de spectacle will increase from \$1,754,325 in 2024 to \$1,792,765, a \$38,440 hike.

There is a significant drop in the solid waste-recyclable materials, as the budgetary item will go from \$677,414 to \$594,140, a drop of \$83,274.

Another fall, this time around of \$16,280, will be applied to the town planning, economic development and tourism item.

The debt fee paid by the Town of New Richmond will only increase slightly, from \$1,924,949 in 2024 to \$1,939,693 this year, which represents a hike of \$14,744. The debt subsidized by the Quebec government increases slightly, from \$583,742 to \$589,918. It means that altogether, the amount earmarked for debt payments in 2025 will total \$2,529,611

A larger part of the money reserved for debt reimbursement will go to pay interest, warned mayor Dubé.

“We went from loans with an interest rate of 2% to rates close to 5% over the past year. We also considered loans to come next January: a portion of the municipal garage, the most recent purchase of a snowplow, as well as several lesser elements. Our interest costs will be \$775,289, as compared to \$719,372 in 2024. Capital reimbursement will be slightly lower, going from \$1,690,400 to \$1,673,800,” he says.

The recent interest rate drop will start yielding results as 2025 progresses, he says.

“It is not automatic for all loans because they are mostly negotiated for a fixed rate that stands for several years. However, for a municipality, the recent drops in interest rate mean that instead of paying 5.45%, like early in 2024, we will pay 3.85%. A 1.5% reduction applicable to a \$3 million loan reduces by \$30,000 the annual interest payment,” explains Mr. Dubé.

# Police report

A man in his sixties died around 5 p.m. on December 19 at a place of work when he fell on a saw that was in operation. The business was not identified by the Sûreté du Québec communication officer, Béatrice Dorsainville, who said that it was located on Route Jones. A small sawmill is operated along that road. According to her they are not permitted to divulge the name of the business or of the victim. "It is the duty of the Coroner's Office." The man was rushed to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead," she says. The investigation is being conducted by the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité au travail (CNESST), which deals with workplace health and safety. Officer Dorsainville adds that more details will eventually be made available by the CNESST.

The Sûreté du Québec (SQ) communications department confirmed on December 30 that the body found on December 12 at the Penouille beach in Gaspé was that of Yan Francoeur, a local man who had been missing since October 14. He was last seen walking on De la Reine Street. Out of respect for the family of Mr. Francoeur, the SQ mentioned that the police would not divulge more details about the incident.

Three people were arrested following two searches on December 18 in Gaspé. Vincent Lamontagne, 22, was arrested following an initial search at a l'Anse-à-Valleau property and faces potential charges related to possession and trafficking of narcotics. He will eventually be summoned for his next court appearance. Police seized approximately 100 grams of cocaine, 150 grams of cannabis, several bladed weapons and more than \$3,000 in cash.

In Saint-Maurice-de-l'Échouerie, Simon Mathurin-Bonenfant, 42, was arrested and faces various charges related to possession of prohibited weapons. Joanie Élément-Curadeau, 38, also from Saint-Maurice-de-l'Échouerie, appeared in court regarding the storage of firearms. The man and the woman were released pending further proceedings.

In the other search, the police seized a certain quantity of mushrooms and "Crystal Meth", approximately 60 grams of cocaine, electric shock weapons and a telescopic baton, three firearms and three cannabis plants. These interventions were carried out simultaneously as part of several others conducted throughout Quebec as part of Operation Centaur. Other charges could be filed against individuals who may have connections to criminal groups. The investigation is still ongoing.

Arrested on December 16 by police officers in New Richmond, Réjean Couturier, 49, suspected of an armed assault on November 24 in Port-Daniel-Gascons, was remanded in custody. The individual is looking for a lawyer and will return to court on January 13. During that intervention, two searches were conducted in a vehicle and a property in New Richmond. Sûreté du Québec officers seized three firearms, high-capacity magazines, prohibited weapons, 500 methamphetamine pills, illicit tobacco and equipment used for selling. Following appearances at the New Carlisle Courthouse on December 17 and 18, the accused faces numerous charges including discharging a firearm, breaking and entering a property, possession of a prohibited firearm without a permit and drug trafficking.

The suspect, well known to the police, could face additional charges on January 13. He was also charged with wearing a disguise with an intent to commit a criminal act, breach of condition and breach of probation. Jessica Forest, 39, was also arrested during the operation and charged with possession of narcotics for the purpose of trafficking and possession of prohibited weapons. She was released following her court appearance pending further proceedings. According to Sûreté du Québec communication officer Frédéric Deshaies, "The investigation into the shootings in Port-Daniel-Gascons is ongoing."

Sabrina Dufort, 28, from Gaspé recently appeared at the Percé Courthouse in another fraud case, this time for less than \$5,000. The accused was arrested on December 11 for this case that occurred on December 1, resulting in an additional charge of breach of conditions. According to CHNC, she was released and will return to the Percé Courthouse on January 8. Sabrina Dufort already faces charges of theft of more than \$5,000 from her former employer, the Caisse Desjardins de la pointe de la Gaspésie. The woman is also suspected of fraud of more than \$5,000 against three people in connection with Desjardins. She is also accused of breaching a court order for being at the SAQ store in Gaspé on June 7, when she was prohibited from doing so. All other charges allegedly took place from September to November 2022.

On January 9, Quebec Court Judge Denis Paradis will render a decision in the case of Michael McInnis-Desbois, aged 33. The man has pleaded guilty to numerous charges related to a home invasion that occurred in August 2023 in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé. During that incident, he seriously injured the victim with, among other things, the use of a prohibited weapon. On December 13, the defence suggested a nine-month suspended sentence with two years of follow-up. A moderate risk of recidivism, sincere regrets and successful therapy for his addiction problems explain the request made by Michael McInnis-Desbois' lawyer. The Criminal Prosecutor is instead asking for a nine-month prison sentence and three years of follow-up. The judge will likely take into account the individual's criminal record, the seriousness of the crime and his difficulty managing emotions. His alleged accomplice Félicia Leclerc, 26, will likely settle her cases on the same date. This case has no connection with drugs.

# Average tax increase of 2.4% in Chandler

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER - Chandler had to review its entire taxation due to a marked increase of 45.6% in its real estate wealth, which increased from \$515 million to \$750 million with the new assessment role in effect as of 2025.

Considering the new real estate wealth, the base tax rate will go from \$0.87 per \$100 of assessment to \$0.595 per \$100. The budget consists of a slight increase of \$500,000, for a total of \$14 million. All service rates remain the same as the 2024 rates.

"This is a prudent budget and one that was done with the analysis of increases in the real estate assessment. The houses have increased a lot and if we had not worked on the rate, the increases would have been explosive. I think people will be happy with the work we did," says Mayor Gilles Daraïche.

The average tax bill increase is 2.4% for an average house valued at \$205,000. However, the variation is not the same from one neighbourhood to another. The largest increase is in the Chandler neighbourhood, where a house that was valued at \$146,000 is now worth \$251,300, an increase of 72%. However, the tax bill will only increase by 12.8%, which is about \$296,

bringing the total tax bill to \$2,607.

The Saint-François neighbourhood is also experiencing a large increase in its value with rates between 64% and 67%. However, depending on the value of the home, the tax bill will only increase by \$52 or 4.46% for a home where the value increases from \$42,600 to \$70,100 and by \$221 or 10.2% for one that increases from \$142,400 to \$238,500.

Some Pabos Mills residents are winning, with the value of a home increasing from \$49,700 to \$62,200, but will have a reduction in taxes of 6.8%, equivalent to \$86. A home that increases from \$393,300 to \$553,000 will have a reduction of 3.73%, equivalent to \$185.

The three-year capital plan projects \$4.2 million in investments, mainly infrastructure maintenance work. The Newport water treatment project that was on the horizon for several years at a cost of \$12 million has been removed from the program. "We removed it because the project is stagnating. When there is progress on the project, we will put it back. It will not be in the next year. We were able to delay it," explains the mayor.

The Town of Chandler's accumulated surplus stands at \$170,000.

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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

## Justin Trudeau is missing out on his exit

It might sound odd to say this at the present time, but the Liberal Party of Canada owes a lot to Justin Trudeau. One would have to go back 12 years to try and understand the relevance of this statement.

In April 2013, Justin Trudeau won the leadership race of the party he was to be at the helm of for the next 12 years. At the time, the party was barely recovering from its worst electoral loss since the 1867 Confederation. Under the leadership of Michael Ignatieff, the Liberal Party had only saved 34 seats as a result of the May 2, 2011, election, won by Stephen Harper's Conservative Party, which prevailed in 166 ridings of the country's then 308 seats, securing a majority.

That year, the Liberal Party not only lost the election but also lost its position as Official opposition at the House of Commons, finishing way behind the New Democratic Party's 103 seats, as Jack Layton was able to win 59 seats in Quebec. Mr. Layton's passing a little less than four months later undoubtedly changed history, but this is another story.

When Stephen Harper launched an endless 78-day electoral campaign in the middle of the 2015 summer, the Liberal Party was third in polls. The leader of the New Democratic Party at the time, Thomas Mulcair, made a right turn and committed to running balanced budgets, should he win the election. After all, that recipe had been successful for Stephen Harper.

Justin Trudeau adopted another approach. He and his supporting cast made the bet that Canadians were tired of austerity and that the country needed some breathing room. After all, Stephen Harper was considered the most conservative prime minister in the history of Canada. He had promoted and assured the adoption of mammoth bills, including one encompassing 440 paragraphs covering numerous and unrelated subjects. He forced scientists and most Conservative Party Members of Parliament to refuse interviews and he had changed the electoral law to favour his party.

Mr. Trudeau advanced the idea that Canadians were ready for budgetary deficits, considering that the country had the lowest per capita debt of the world's most industrialized countries.

The Liberal Party won 184 of the now 338 House of Commons seats on October 19, 2015. It was the second-highest total in the party's history. The 32 ridings of Atlantic Canada voted liberal. It was the first time in the 148-year-old history of the country that a party had gone from third to first place at the House of Commons in terms of the number of seats.

Days after the election, Mr. Trudeau gave permission to scientists working for the federal government to speak publicly again, including to journalists, without having to ask permission from the Prime Minister's Office, as had been the case under Stephen Harper.

It was "sunny" times. They yielded social results by providing better measures for women, children, and, at times, for Indigenous people. However, at the other end of the spectrum, the Liberal Party

government's failure in housing and inflation control regularly nullified the positive effects of its social policies on the middle-class and low-income families.

### A useless election in 2021

Those mild results played a role in the 2019 election, during which Justin Trudeau only won a minority government.

Despite criticism for repetitive deficits between 2016 and 2020, Justin Trudeau's first term was still characterized by a reduction of the long-term-debt-to-gross domestic product ratio, a rarity in the industrialized countries.

Thinking that his pandemic stimulus measures were enough to bring his government back to a majority, he triggered an election two years after the 2019 election, a useless exercise in the mind of a lot of Canadians. The September 2021 results were almost identical to those of 2019.

The 2021-2024 years were often marred by the Trudeau government's lack of spring, or its capacity to solve problems that reduce the country's social and economic efficiency.

The delivery of federal services is often marked by slowness and apathy. There seems to be no captain at the helm of Canada's ship. While Justin Trudeau repeatedly committed to represent his party in an attempt to win a fourth straight electoral win, this time around, against Pierre Poilievre, a bully worse than Stephen Harper, he forgot that after 10 years, it is time to relay that leadership to another person.

Like Brian Mulroney, for the Progressive Conservative Party in 1993, and to a lesser extent, Jean Chrétien in 2003, Justin Trudeau failed to prepare his succession.

He also failed to read the clear messages coming from his caucus and from Canadians. It was time to move on to something else. He should have carried that out at the end of 2023 or during the spring of 2024.

### Who advises Justin Trudeau?

People are now wondering who advises Mr. Trudeau. Who in the world thought that on December 13, it was a good idea to ask then Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland to table three days later a fall economic statement she didn't approve? Justin

Trudeau and his supporting cast were also expecting her to leave her Finance position and accept a ministry without a portfolio two days later.

She resigned on December 16, hours before the scheduled budgetary statement, blaming the prime minister for pushing economic orientations that were essentially electorally influenced, instead of measures that made management sense. She notably targeted his intention to send \$250 cheques to the Canadians who earned \$150,000 or less in 2023, a proposal she called a "costly political gimmick."

Referring to the possible battle that could pit Canada and the United States with the January 20 arrival of Donald Trump at the helm of the American government, as he intends to impose 25% tariffs on imports coming from Canada, Ms. Freeland pointed that the government should keep "our fiscal powder dry today, so we have the reserves we may need for a coming tariff war."

She declared that "to be effective, a Minister must speak on behalf of the Prime Minister and with his full confidence. In making your decision, you made clear that I no longer credibly enjoy that confidence."

The Liberal Party government lost four ministers for various reason in the last two months of the fall.

In Chrystia Freeland, the government lost the person Donald Trump described as "completely toxic".

Why? Because she renegotiated the free-trade agreement in 2018 to some advantages for Canada, notably for workers' rights and the environment. If we take a forgivable shortcut and consider most of the president-elect statements regarding Canada since the November 5 United States election, and if she was toxic for Donald Trump, it means that she represented an asset for Canada.

Losing her amidst Justin Trudeau's hesitations is a blow for Canada.

Justin Trudeau doesn't seem to know whether he is staying just long enough to be in office for the January 20 arrival of Donald Trump and the potential mess of the ensuing weeks, or leaving in early January, or after a spring, summer or fall election he can't win.

The end result is that he lost a major opportunity to quit while his Liberal Party would have benefited from enough time to find another leader without haste, and without leaving Canada in a vulnerable position. Hence, Justin Trudeau will have flunked his exit.



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# Pozzolan mine in Dalhousie: Tensions rise a notch

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON — In recent weeks, tensions have mounted between supporters and opponents of the pozzolan mining project in Dalhousie. Supporters of the mine took up almost the entire space on December 16 prior and during a short meeting that resulted in a zoning change in favour of the project.

The Town of Herons Bay, which includes the Dalhousie borough, now holds its municipal meetings in a room with a capacity of 45 to 50 people, compared to an auditorium with a few hundred seats, as was the case a few times until the end of September.

On December 16, supporters of the project converged on the town hall a few hours before the start of the meeting on the third reading of the new zoning bylaw on resource exploitation within the limits of Heron Bay. Their intention was clear: to occupy as many seats as possible in the town council room.

This project is generating opposition in Heron Bay, but also on the Gaspé Peninsula side of the Chaleur Bay, particularly in Miguasha, a sector of Nouvelle, and in Escuminac, due to the close geographical proximity of the two shores, separated by four to five kilometres from the mining site.

An alliance between these opponents took shape over the summer, as New Brunswick and Quebec citizens are concerned about the consequences of a possible mine operation on their health, with the dust, noise and pollution resulting from a possible dredging of the Port of Dalhousie, not to mention the impact on the landscape.

“We were going to the meeting on Monday (December 16) but we received a call from members of the group we working closely with. They told us not to show up, for our safety. We did cancel things and decided not to go at all, ruling out a bus and carpooling,” says Lisa Mosher, from Miguasha.

Ms. Mosher and her partner Jean-Marc Beaulieu followed the meeting through images transmitted by the handful of opponents of the project who managed to enter the council room, which was overwhelmingly occupied by supporters of the mine, according to Radio-Canada Atlantique.

“We had attended all the meetings in the last six



Photo: G. Gagné

*Since the summer, Jean-Marc Beaulieu and Lisa Mosher have been vigorously opposed to the open-pit pozzolan mine project, since the deposit and above all the port are located practically opposite to their Miguasha property.*

months. It is now a totally different atmosphere. It (the tension) gets increasingly worse. There were six people against the mine and 45 people for the mine. The supporters are terribly loud. They are mostly men, they are huge guys and they are deliberately intimidating,” notes Lisa Mosher.

“The supporters are not from Dalhousie, but from surrounding communities, like Balmoral and Kedgwick,” adds Jean-Marc Beaulieu. “The mayor actually calls them ‘fans’ of the project. They are not citizens of the town. They do not vote there, compared to the opponents living in Heron Bay,” continues Ms. Mosher.

“It looks more like an anti-Quebec movement than a pro-mine movement. When you look at the comments on social media from the ‘yes camp’, it’s very threatening. They really have a dislike for us. They say

we steal all their jobs. And yet they’re Francophones. They also seem to forget that it’s a Québécois company that wants to open the mine,” say Lisa Mosher and Jean-Marc Beaulieu.

## What’s next?

In this tense environment, opponents of pozzolan mining are emphasizing the regulatory aspects of the project, trying to find loopholes, in support of their New Brunswick allies.

“We think that the zoning change process may have skipped three rules in proceedings. It’s the New Brunswick government that will decide. We fear that it will be accepted as is. Susan Holt’s new government has not spoken out on the project,” emphasizes Lisa Mosher.

She and her partner are preparing for the environmen-

tal impact study that will take place in New Brunswick, which will be held in 2025 and 2026, as well as for the federal government assessment expected due to the dredging of sediment from the channel leading to the port of Dalhousie.

This port has been inactive for 10 years and the Restigouche River, fed by several tributaries, has clogged this channel.

“There are places where the promoter wants to remove 15 to 20 feet of sediment. This is sediment contaminated by the past industrial activities of Dalhousie,” says Jean-Marc Beaulieu, with supporting documents.

“This is our main hope because these are interprovincial waters. There are salmon rivers upstream, and there is a commercial lobster fishery in these waters,” adds Lisa Mosher.

The couple would like to see more support from the elected officials of the Avignon MRC and their prefect, Mathieu Lapointe. Until now, the main institutional support has come from a proposal tabled by the Parti Québécois and unanimously adopted by the National Assembly on November 29.

This proposal asks the New Brunswick government to consider the impact of the project on the Quebec side of Chaleur Bay. The National Assembly also supports the Public Health Department, which will conduct its own study on the potential impact of the mine on the Gaspesian population.

“We can’t get the municipalities of Avignon to sign our

document against the project, except for Escuminac. The elected officials are showing a lack of leadership in the Avignon MRC. They (the elected officials) are waiting for the New Brunswick Environmental Impact Study before proceeding. In our opinion, it will be too late at that point,” criticizes Lisa Mosher and Jean-Marc Beaulieu.

Mathieu Lapointe indicated earlier this fall that he was waiting for more information before making a decision about the pozzolan mine.

The project promoter, EcoRock Dalhousie, intends to expand an existing quarry to mine pozzolan, a volcanic stone used in the composition of certain cement powders.

It has the advantage of having already been heated, unlike limestone, the main element of cement. EcoRock management sees this as an environmental advantage in terms of reducing greenhouse gases (GHGs). However, its extraction generates GHGs, like limestone, the main input for cement.

EcoRock Dalhousie notes that the target deposit contains approximately 200 million tonnes of pozzolan and hopes to extract a volume of 3 million tonnes annually. Dredging the Port of Dalhousie would be necessary to export the material to Europe in 70,000-tonne ships.

The project, which could create 168 jobs, represents an investment of \$300 million. Dalhousie lost its three main industrial plants between 2008 and 2012: a pulp and paper mill, a chemical production plant and a fossil fuel-powered thermopower plant.



## Two records were broken at Percé Polar Dip

Nelson Sergerie

PERCÉ - The 13th edition of the Percé Polar Dip for Opération Enfant Soleil set a new record, raising \$176,000, surpassing the \$150,000 goal set by the organizers. On December 14, at the Percé wharf, 236 participants ran into the harbour for the annual Polar Dip, beating the 2015 record of 182 participants. The weather was practically ideal, with a slightly overcast sky at times and a light west wind. The water temperature averaged around 4°C. In total, over the past 12 years, the Percé Polar Dip has raised \$810,000. Last year, \$133,300 was collected.

# Gaspé budget increases 5.5% to \$38.2M

**NELSON SERGERIE**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

**GASPÉ** – During a special meeting on December 16, the Town of Gaspé tabled a budget of \$38.2 million for the 2025 fiscal year, reflecting a 5.5% increase over 2024. However, taxpayers will face an additional average burden of 2.39%.

For an average property valued at \$240,100, the increase will be 2.39%, which is below the annualized inflation rate of 2.7%.

“Municipal expenses often increase faster than inflation. For example, the Sûreté du Québec bill is increasing by 3.6%, and Hydro-Québec’s by 6.1%. Bills are increasing, which explains the increase in the budget. On the other hand, the increase in the average tax bill is 2.3%, below inflation. This is a political commitment that I made 12 years



Photo: N. Sergerie

*Gaspé Mayor, Daniel Côté presents the 2025 Budget.*

ago. We are meeting the objective,” says Mr. Daniel Côté.

The total surplus is \$10 million and the Town of Gaspé is drawing \$1.2 million from its accumulated surplus

to balance the budget.

The surplus is down by \$3M. Other amounts taken from the surplus consist of \$867,000 used for unexpected expenses, \$1M to balance the 2024 budget, and \$160,000 to replenish certain reserve funds.

“It’s still a good cushion, but a good cushion where we can’t go crazy. We have to be reasonable in our approach. Having such a cushion gives us free rein to deal with several unforeseen events,” says the mayor. The town’s overall debt is \$48 million, representing a little over \$2 per \$100 of assessment. “Our finances are very healthy,” says the mayor. Among the new revenues, the growth in the QST generates an additional \$546,000, and compensation in lieu of Quebec taxes increased by \$301,000, notably with the addition of the Maison des aînés de Rivière-au-Renard

last year.

The residual materials rate will be frozen at \$260.

The rate for the water supply and sewer will increase from \$595 to \$615 and the rate for emptying and treating septic tank sludge will increase from \$175 to \$200.

Housing construction continues with nearly 300 rental units since 2020, including 176 private units, 66 social or affordable units and 56 units built by the CISSS via the Maison des aînés and modular homes near the CHSLD Mgr Ross.

At the same time, 238 single-family homes or cottages have been built. The vacancy rate has increased from 0% to 1%, but there is still a long way to go to achieve a balanced market, which is considered a rate of 3% according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Several other projects are

underway, including the Habitations de la Montagne, where 84 affordable units are under construction in Sandy Beach, as well as the second phase of Han-Logements for a possibility of 16 to 32 additional units in Sandy Beach as well. Other discussions are ongoing with developers, including Gestion Bourgade near Ruisseau Dean Street, near downtown, which represents the creation of an entirely new neighbourhood.

The three-year capital expenditure program includes \$152 million in projects, with the largest being the Rivière-au-Renard aqueduct and sewers, estimated at \$58.9 million, which has been a recurring item over several years.

“It is moving through phases. It is a fairly complicated file with the various ministries. In wastewater, several resolutions have been adopted for future aerated ponds. All that is missing are a few final studies. We have a good idea of the site. The file continues. As for drinking water, the search for groundwater is proving inconclusive. We are heading towards a water filtration plant, probably near Lac d’Amour where the current water intake is located. It takes the financial aid that comes with it to absorb that,” notes the mayor.

The other main issue is the sports complex near the C.-E. Pouliot High School, estimated at \$34 million. This project initially suffered a refusal of funding from the Quebec government.

## Provincial cutbacks: Rail budget secured, according to the Minister of Transport

*Nelson Sergerie*

**GASPÉ** - The \$871 million set aside to refurbish the rail between Matapédia and Gaspé are protected despite the budget cuts underway with the Quebec government to address the \$11 billion deficit in government coffers.

This is what assured the Minister of Transport, Geneviève Guilbault, who was in Gaspé on December 10 as part of the announcement of the new version of the Regional Air Access Program (PAAR).

“The money is there. The announcements have been made. We are working on it,” replied the minister (of Transport) when asked about the potential impact the tightening of public finances could have on the railway refurbishment.

“We are currently working on the last section between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé. There have been calls for tenders that were made recently, that are much higher than what we thought. We will have to redo the process, but yes, things are moving forward,” says Ms. Guilbault.

The minister is referring to two of the four calls for tenders for the last section, which are still being analyzed despite the envelopes being opened at the end of the summer.

The firm Pomerleau is asking for \$258 million, and Partenariat Ferroviaire Gaspésie is suggesting \$286 million to carry out the projects within the estimate.

The work involves repairing two bridges in Gascons, one between Gascons and Newport, another in Newport, as well as one in Douglastown. In addition, one of the two bridges between Grande-Rivière and Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé must be replaced.

A retaining wall in Pabos Mills is also part of the bid. The contract for the other revised call for tenders to repair various railway structures has still not been awarded either, even though the tender envelopes were opened on September 18.

The sites targeted are a small bridge in Pabos Mills, the Grand Pabos River bridge, the Pabos River bridge, the Barachois bridge and the Route 132 road bridge in Barachois.

The ministry indicated that the contract was estimated at more than \$50 million. Pomerleau submitted the lowest proposal on August 28, in the amount of \$79 million. Hamel Construction, the only other bidder, is asking for \$83.8 million instead.

Section two, between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons, is expected to be put into service in the spring.

## New police station for Gesgapegiag



*Gilles Gagné*

**GESGAPEGIAG** – The community of Gesgapegiag will benefit from a new police station later this year. The construction site has been active for three months, but the steel structure only began to become visible at the beginning of December, despite snowflakes and at least two strong bouts of rain. The cooler fall weather forced the contractor, New Richmond’s Construction LFG, to wait for the concrete, laid in November, to dry. The building will be significantly larger than the current police station. More details about the delivery of the project will be available before the end of January.

# CLSC EMERGENCY DEPARTMENTS: A reassuring meeting for elected officials

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-VALLÉE - The mayor of Grande-Vallée came away from a meeting with the president and CEO of the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre is somewhat relieved regarding the fate of the CLSC emergency department in his town.

Noël Richard had the opportunity to discuss the situation of the CLSC in his town with Martin Pelletier on December 11. "We met with Mr. Pelletier and asked him directly what this restructuring meant for us, in the Estran sector. We were very reassured. There is no question of a service disruption at our emergency department 24 hours a day, seven days a week," says Mayor Richard.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Even though measures were taken, the mayor was assured that the service would remain. "Our population will continue to have the services. This is very good news," continued Mr. Richard.

A communication channel was established after the mayor

learned of ongoing discussions about how services might be delivered. The emergency room in Grande-Vallée serves the population between Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and Gaspé. From Grande-Vallée, the closest hospitals are 100 kilometres away.

"At the CISSS level, they are aware of this. If different options were available, we asked to work in collaboration with them," says the mayor.

This clarification made to elected officials follows a hypothesis launched by Mr. Pelletier following the Integrated Health and Social Services (CISSS) board of directors meeting of November 28 in the wake of the requested budgetary adjustments of \$40 million to fit into the budget allocated by the Quebec government.

The CEO had clearly stated that he was not considering reviewing the 24/7 emergency services in Grande-Vallée, Paspébiac and Murdochville.

Instead, he had mentioned as a possible solution the use of nursing assistants attached to teleconsultation nurses to provide care. The mayor of Grande-Vallée had stated that if

a nurse had to leave by ambulance for Gaspé, this would be equivalent to a breakdown in service.

The prefect of the MRC de la Côte-de-Gaspé also attended the meeting. "It's good news that there are no cuts in small emergencies and services to the population," says Daniel Côté, who is also mayor of Gaspé.

However, the Mr. Côté expressed disappointment over delayed infrastructure projects, such as the birthing room at the Maison de la famille Parenfant in Gaspé.

"If the CISSS's share is not there, the project must be postponed. It's really a shame to see these projects from the community being postponed. There are other infrastructure projects directly in the hospital environment that must be postponed. This is a big downside.

## Protestors push for EI reform

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - In a symbolic gesture, approximately 25 protesters braved the freezing rain and dropped off a Christmas tree decorated with black holes at the Service Canada office in Chandler on December 17 to denounce the persistent problems with the Employment Insurance program.

This was another gesture by the Mouvement action chômage Pabok as part of an awareness week by the Interprovincial Alliance that was being held throughout Eastern Quebec and Atlantic Canada.

"Nothing has been resolved. We're doing this because we hope it can be resolved. We're hoping for measures that will extend the

Employment Insurance pilot project from five to 15 weeks," explains the Movement's coordinator, Nadia Mongeon.

The arrival of Ginette Petipas-Taylor as minister responsible for the plan and Member of Parliament for Moncton-Riverview-Dieppe (New Brunswick), who is familiar with the issue of seasonal work, raised hope for the unemployed.

However, with the possibility of a federal election as early as this spring, this hope could be short-lived. "We must not give up. We must force the parties to commit to Employment Insurance," says Ms. Mongeon, who fears the election of a Conservative government. "I think it will be quite difficult to move a reform or measures to ease Employment Insurance.

There is no gain in fact," she says.

The relatively low unemployment rate in the Gaspé Peninsula will result in a long black hole this winter. "We are going to have a lot of people who will find themselves in the black hole. It is not only in the fishing sector. It is also in tourism. There are many who tell us that they will finish their benefits in February. It is a long time from February to June. It's a black hole that's getting bigger every year," says Ms. Mongeon.

The Liberals have repeatedly promised reform since 2015, holding various consultations that have amounted to nothing. "The Liberals have taken certain measures but mostly lightened some of Stephen Harper's Conservative

government's measures. Apart from the five-week pilot project, the Liberals haven't done anything very interesting. Apart from increasing health insurance to 26 weeks, but that hasn't solved the black hole and the number of hours for accessibility," she says.

The fight will continue in the coming months. "We're going to keep protesting. If we give up, it's like telling the Conservatives - if they're the ones who come in - that they can do whatever they want... We have no choice," explains the coordinator.

For the Pabok Unemploy-

ment Action Movement and the Interprovincial Alliance, the calculation that establishes the amount of benefits according to the unemployment rate in effect by region must be eliminated.

The calculation must be replaced by the adoption of a universal standard of 420 hours of work or 12 weeks of 15 hours.

In addition, the rate should be 70% on the 12 best weeks, for a duration of 35 weeks.

They are also asking for an additional 15 weeks of protection for workers in the seasonal industry, as long as the minimum floor of 35 weeks is not established.



Protesters in the street in front of the Service Canada office in Chandler.

Photo: Mouvement action chômage Pabok

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# Percé budgets for its Tourist Information Office for 2025

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - The Town of Percé is putting funding for the Tourist Information Office back into its budget in 2025. Funding for the Tourist Information Office was removed when the 2024 budget was tabled, a position that council had revised to keep it open thereafter.

"Last year, funds were taken from the unallocated surplus to maintain the service. Council learned its lesson and put the budget back into a new operating mode with an additional person and a little less promotional budget. We are continuing discussions with merchants to transfer part of the management of tourist information to them. It targets their customers, but it's not over yet," explains Mayor Daniel Leboeuf, who emphasizes that this is a transition year.



Photo: N. Sergerie

*Percé Mayor Daniel Leboeuf presenting his first budget.*

The town adopted a budget that increased by 6%, bringing the total to \$8 million.

Percé is seeing its equalization and QST transfers increase by 166%, reaching \$519,000. This helps save taxpayers despite the filing of a new assessment roll that in-

creases the municipality's real estate wealth by 52% for residential properties.

For example, the average home has had an increase in value from \$117,000 to \$178,000, but the overall increase in the tax bill is only 2%, since the tax rate was lowered from \$1.34 to \$0.90

per \$100 of assessment.

"It's good for someone who wants to sell their home, but not for paying taxes. That's why we adjusted the rate," explains the elected official.

Only the rates for wastewater treatment are increasing from \$295 to \$350, while the citizens of Cap-d'Espoir see the bill increase from \$350 to \$400.

A reserve of \$300,000 has been created for personnel management. "Also for recruitment. There is a shortage of managers in key positions. Our clerk is going to retire. We need to recruit a new one. There are resources that will come to help us with recruitment. It is better to plan for more than less," notes the mayor.

The town must also renew the collective agreement of its unionized employees and conduct an organizational diagnosis as requested by the

Quebec Municipal Commission in its devastating report on municipal management.

The unallocated surplus is \$750,000, but the town would like to see that surplus increased. "Ideally, it should be increased by about \$300,000 or \$400,000. Last year, we used it several times for some \$360,000. It made us fall below the waterline. We have to go back above the waterline," says Mr. Leboeuf.

The three-year capital plan includes expenses totalling \$8.4 million, including \$4.2 million allocated for road network maintenance and \$1.5 million for the renewal of the pipes on Biard and Mont-Joli streets, starting in 2025.

"The council presented its resolutions last year, and some projects were abandoned. We are focusing on preserving our infrastructure while improving others," justifies the mayor.

## \$3 million from the Fisheries Fund, mainly for redfish

NELSON SERGERIE  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Quebec Fisheries Fund (QFF) has approved nearly \$3 million for three innovative projects.

A large portion of this amount will go to ACPG Innovation, a non-profit organization affiliated with the Association des Capitaines Propriétaires de la Gaspésie. The contribution will help fishing companies in Quebec's marine sectors adapt to the redfish fishery in a sustainable manner.

ACPG Innovation will act as a third-party redistributor of QFF funds to companies that will benefit from this contribution for the acquisition of innovative equipment and boat adaptations.

The project will help fish harvesters access funds quickly through one of the following components: acquisition of fishing gear, increased fishing efficiency, vessel modification, and fish handling/preservation.

The contribution will enable fleets in Quebec's maritime regions to acquire innovative equipment and adapt their boats for the redfish fishery.

A sum of \$1.9 million comes from the federal gov-



Photo: G. Gagné

*Although the bulk of the funding will go exclusively to red fish, one of the projects will consist of developing high-end products made from several species, including halibut, lobster and redfish from the Gaspé Peninsula, as well as salmon.*

ernment, and \$825,000 from the Quebec government for a total project cost of \$3 million, including the fishermen or plant owners' share.

The ACPG Innovation project is the first major redfish project following DFO's announcement in January 2024 of the resumption of the redfish fishery.

Funds will also be allocated to Atkins et Frères of Mont-Louis to help the company market a new product, fish sausages. The federal government is providing

\$70,000 and the Quebec government is providing \$30,000 for the acquisition of manufacturing equipment. High-end sausages will be launched in Quebec, Ontario and the Maritimes. The sausages will be made from halibut, redfish and lobster from the Gaspé Peninsula, as well as salmon. The total investment is valued at \$111,000.

Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan Limitée of Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé will receive \$70,000 from the fed-

eral government and \$30,000 from the Quebec government to improve its lobster tanks. The funds will be used for the acquisition of state-of-the-art water filtration and recirculation equipment for a breeding tank (water basin) to respond to the increase in lobster landings and the labour shortage. To ensure a more efficient overall system, the existing tanks will be modified to incorporate the same technolo-

gies. This project is valued at \$160,000.

The Member of Parliament for the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands and Minister of Fisheries, Diane Lebouthillier, was scheduled to make the announcement on December 13 in Gaspé. However, the press conference was cancelled at the last minute "due to unforeseen circumstances related to the minister's travel," said the ministry, which made the announcement in a press release.

Launched in 2019, the Fisheries Fund is funded 70% by the federal government and 30% by the Quebec government. It supports projects focused on innovation in the areas of commercial fisheries, aquaculture, harvesting and processing of seafood, and scientific partnerships.

According to both levels of government, the funding will help create opportunities and improve the market value of sustainably harvested, high-quality fish and seafood in Quebec.

To date, the fund has supported 179 projects, allocating 29.5 million of its \$40 million budget.

THEGASPESPEC.COM



# Announcements



## Obituary



### BIARD: Edna Muriel

The passing of Edna Muriel Biard occurred on Tuesday, December 10, 2024, at Windsor Court, Fredericton, New Brunswick. Born on January 3, 1926, in Percé, Quebec, she was the daughter of the late Ernest and Muriel (Bisson) Biard.

Besides her parents, Edna was predeceased by her two sons, Bob King (Carol) and David King; her first husband, Eric King; and her second husband, Orley Bisson.

Edna is survived by her friend and sister-in-law Claudette Biard, her daughter-in-law Carol King, and her Bisson step-children: Sandra (Terry Delaney), Barry (Mary Ann Long), Donna (the late Dale Ball), Robert (Joy Arseneau), Margie (Mike Bonang) and Kim (Piet-Hein Heersche).

Edna was proud of her heritage, growing up in Percé with the love and guidance of her parents and brothers. She often spoke about being inspired by the strength, courage and entrepreneurial skills of her mother who had to make a living and raise young chil-

dren as a single parent after the sudden death of her husband Ernest at a young age.

Edna enjoyed many happy years in Pointe Claire, Quebec with her husband Eric King, a school principal, raising their two sons David and Bob while also pursuing her career as a Registered Nurse. Her family developed close friendships with their Pointe Claire neighbours.

Later in life after Eric's passing, Edna married Orley Bisson, a childhood acquaintance from Port Daniel, Quebec. She enjoyed several years of companionship living in the same house and developing a close friendship with Orley's daughter Donna, and her husband Dale, until Orley's death in 2015. The Bisson family will be forever indebted to Edna for the love, care and happiness she provided for their father. Edna cherished her close relationship with her two sons, and Bob's wife Carol. She was deeply saddened by David's and Bob's untimely deaths not long after she moved to Woodstock, Ontario to be closer to them.

She also loved her Bisson family and accepted their invitation to move to Fredericton, New Brunswick in July 2024 after Bob's passing. She moved into the Windsor Court Retirement Residence where she enjoyed support and frequent visits from Bisson family members and exceptional care from Windsor Court staff for the remaining months of her life. Her longtime Percé friend, Raymond Furlong, arranged to send to Fredericton the stuffed crocodile that had been in her Percé home (The Haven) since she was a little girl. She adored her crocodile and proudly showed it to everyone who visited her, including Windsor Court staff who affectionately gave her the nickname "Crocodile lady."

Everyone who knew Edna will remember her as a genuine, kind and caring person with a charming personality and positive attitude. Edna lit up a room with her smile and her compassion. Many were touched by her care and professional skill in her capacity as a Registered Nurse, working in hospitals in New York City and for years in Montreal.

She had a keen interest in world events and politics and enjoyed discussing the issues of the day. In recent

months her television was on the news channel 24 hours a day. And we all loved her cooking and her baking, especially her pecan pie.

According to Edna's wishes, there will be no visitation or service held. Interment will take place in New Richmond, Quebec at a later date. For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to the charity of your choice.





## In Memory

### COOMBS:

To Mum and Dad, Fawn, Carl, Arlene and Margie  
*May the winds of love blow softly,  
 And whisper for you to hear.  
 That we still love you dearly,  
 And wish that you were here.  
 We hold you close within our hearts,  
 And there you will remain.  
 To walk beside us all our lives,  
 Until we meet again.*

From Hazel and Mary.





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**Hope Baptist Church**  
**Sundays:** Sunday School starting at 10 a.m. Worship service beginning at 11 a.m.

**NEW CARLISLE:**  
**Bible Chapel Meetings**  
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**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 into play pool, shuffleboard, etc.

**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

**CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:**  
**50+ Club**  
**Tuesdays:** Weekly bingo every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. \$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each

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**January 12**  
10 a.m. Service

**UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND**  
**January 12**  
10 a.m. Service

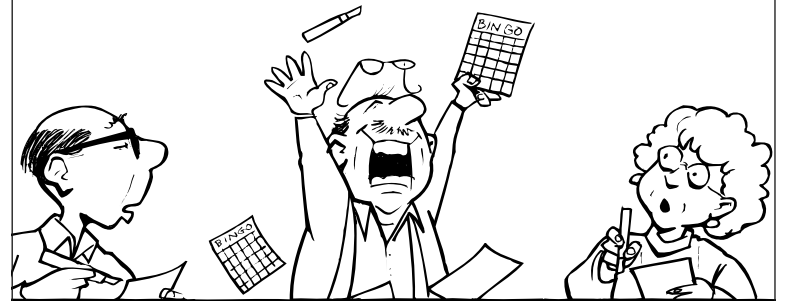
**PARISH OF GASPÉ**  
**Sunday, January 12**  
**St. Paul's - Gaspé**  
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist  
**Worship Wednesday**  
10 a.m. St Paul's

**ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA**  
**Sunday, January 12**  
**New Carlisle**  
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**Port Daniel**  
10 a.m. Morning Prayer

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# HOROSCOPES

## ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, watch out because you are hot stuff this week. Coming off the excitement of the holidays, you're still in the mood to socialize. The invitations to various social events will still flow.

## TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Hopefully you've made progress on the various organizational projects that you have had in mind, Taurus. Now is the time to get those resolutions moving.

## GEMINI – May 22/June 21

Gemini, how is your to-do list coming along? If you haven't yet gotten moving, a coming slowdown could make the perfect time to get cracking.

## CANCER – June 22/July 22

Cancer, right now you may be feeling like hibernating, especially if the weather is changing. Don't burrow under the covers just yet. Find a way to stay busy and socialize.

## LEO – July 23/Aug 23

Leo, even if it seems the way to be the most produc-

tive, burning the candle at both ends is only going to make you tired and less efficient. Ask for help if you need it.

## VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, your innate humility means you're often content with being behind the scenes and not in the limelight. However, this week you may want a little extra fanfare.

## LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, after a season of partying and letting other tasks fall by the wayside, it is time to get back to focus. You must take out your financial account records and track spending right now.

## SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Take an inventory of the things you want to change about yourself, Scorpio. There is always room for improvement, especially if you feel you have not been your best self lately.

## SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Hopefully you have met your quota of parties and social events because now is the time to take a break, Sagittarius. The invitations will cease, but that can be a good thing for you.

## CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

It's often business as usual for you to burn the midnight oil, Capricorn. But scale back on those late-night interludes. That's a recipe for burnout that can derail your bigger plans.

## AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, you are the zodiac's team player, so you may have to give the troops a pep talk to get everyone working together this week. Smooth down any ruffled feathers as needed.

## PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

If you have any unfinished business that needs to get wrapped up, Pisces, the clock is ticking. Make a strong attempt to finish by Wednesday or Thursday.

## FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

### JANUARY 7

Jeremy Renner, Actor (53)

### JANUARY 8

Damiano David, Singer (25)

### JANUARY 9

Nina Dobrev, Actress (35)

### JANUARY 10

Renee Rapp, Singer (24)

### JANUARY 11

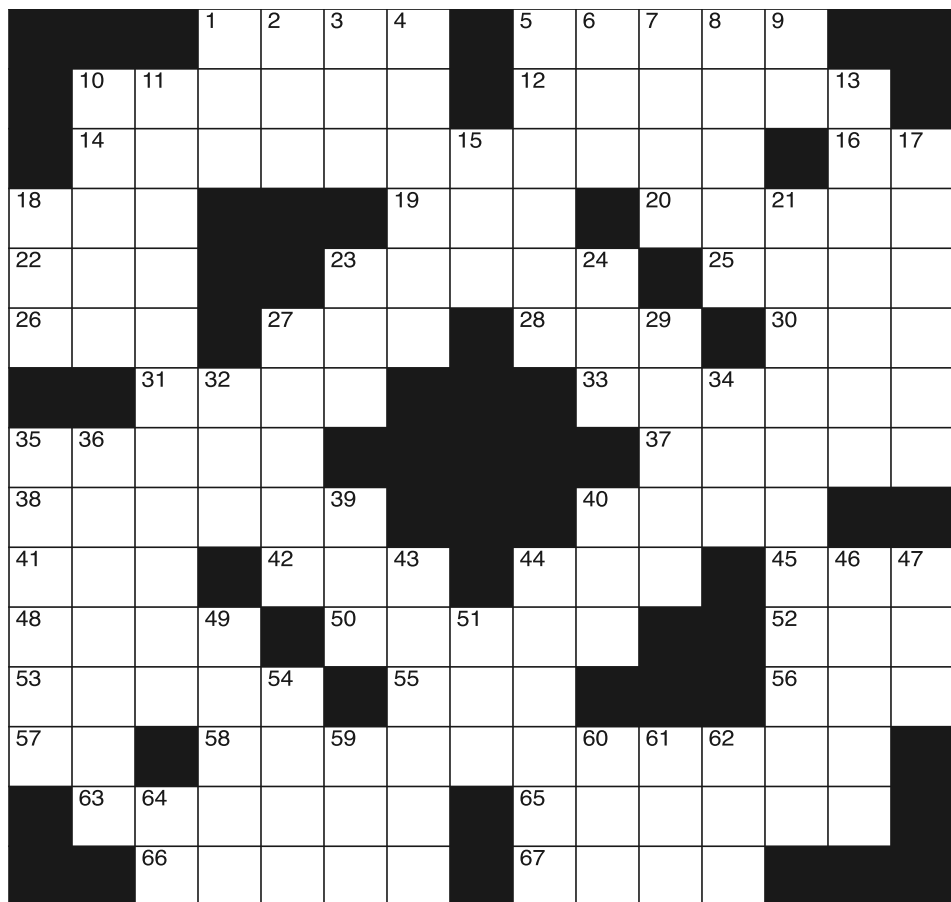
Kyle Richards, Reality Star (55)

### JANUARY 12

Jeff Bezos, Entrepreneur (60)

### JANUARY 13

Orlando Bloom, Actor (47)



### CLUES ACROSS

1. Hand (Spanish)
5. Siskel and \_\_, critics
10. Seaman
12. Chemical weapon
14. One who eliminates
16. They precede C
18. Baseball stat
19. Americans' "uncle"
20. Cassia tree
22. Surround
23. Crisp and Pebbles are two
25. A sudden very loud sound
26. Affirmative
27. Disadvantage
28. Corpuscule count (abbr.)
30. OJ trial judge
31. New York art district
33. Become more bleak
35. Upstate NY city
37. Clarified butters
38. One who witnesses
40. Condemn
41. \_\_ juris
42. Natural
44. Prohibit
45. Swiss river
48. Greek war god
50. 5 iron
52. New Zealand mountain parrot
53. Scandinavian sur-

### CLUES DOWN

1. Variety of Chinese
2. Boxing's GOAT
3. Japanese classical theater
4. Prayer
5. Inspire with love
6. Ballplayers' accessory
7. Retailer payment system
8. More raw
9. Atomic #81
10. Fencing sword
11. Hostilities
13. Sea dweller
15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain insects
17. Businessmen
18. Rest here please (abbr.)
21. Loud devices
23. Make a soft murmur-

### CLUES ACROSS

24. One point west of due south
27. Trout
29. Type of grass
32. South American plant
34. Letter of the Greek alphabet
35. Not secure
36. Traveler
39. Sweet potato
40. Period after sunrise and before sunset
43. Some are choppy
44. Asian country
46. Genus of mosquitoes
47. Cool!
49. Shriill, wailing sound
51. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
54. Within
59. Unhappy
60. Decorate a cake with frosting
61. Videocassette recorder
62. Largest English dictionary (abbr.)
64. It cools a home

Answers in next week's paper.



## Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

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