

CASA holds 5th Women's Day Event

SHANNON DAY
CASA COMM. AGENT

NEW CARLISLE: - CASA hosted its largest-ever International Women's Day event, welcoming close to 200 women from across the region at the Centre Culturel in Paspebiac on Sunday March 9. The event highlighted and celebrated women and their contributions in our communities.

The first speaker of the night, Stella Briand Kennedy, CASA's Vice-President, delivered an inspiring speech about the history of CASA (celebrating its 50th anniversary this year) and how the organization has shaped English-speaking communities of the Gaspé over time. She left many in the audience with goosebumps, reinforcing the message that "We speak English, because we can."

Also speaking at the event, local comedian Amy Day entertained everyone with relatable, laugh-out-loud content about womanhood. She ended her performance with a touching dedication to her grandmother, reminding everyone the importance of honouring the women in our lives.

Communicator,

mentor, and lifelong learner, Marjorie McRae, spoke about the power and resilience of women and the importance of uplifting one another.

As part of CASA's 50th anniversary, a highlight of the evening was the performance by the Homegrown Women's Day Band—an impressive group of talented female artists from across the region, brought together for this occasion.

The Shine Your Light Volunteer award was presented to Stella Briand Kennedy in recognition of her years of dedicated volunteer work in the Gaspé/Douglstown area and 25 years as a member of CASA's Board of Directors.

The entire evening was full of fun, laughter, music, and inspirational stories and messages. Kelly Imhoff, a participant of the evening said, "I don't know if you realize just

how important this annual event has become for the women of the region, and we thank you." CASA's Senior's Wellness Coordinator Kathy Gallon said, "I am so delighted that 190 beautiful Gaspesian English-speaking women from across the region came out to celebrate with us. Being in one room with such strong, motivated and inspiring women was breathtaking and humbling."

During the event a delicious meal prepared by Treva Assels was served by the New Carlisle Fire Department.

The event was made possible with funding from Canadian Heritage and the Community Health and Social Services Network.

CASA is already looking forward to next year's event!



Senior's Wellness Coordinator, Kathy Gallon presents Stella Briand Kennedy with the Shine Your Light award.

Photos: S. Day



Participants were made to feel exceptionally special with beautiful decorations and a mimosa bar.



For the "Find it & Flee" game, the participants were tasked with finding a high heel shoe, running in the audience to find it. During their search a chair was removed and the last person back was eliminated.

#TogetherForOurDaughters

PENNY MACWHIRTER

CHANDLER: - On March 8, the community was invited to the Chandler marina in recognition of International Day of Women's Rights. The 43 participants were encouraged to reflect on the day with 8 minutes of silence.

The event was organized by Annie-Michèle Babin and co-organizer Jenny Tardif. "It was an invitation to not remain silent in the face of injustice," says Ms. Tardif. At the event she told participants "Today's silence is full of meaning, not lost to words, but is rather a powerful declaration of our common engagement to do battle against injustices. This gathering is a battle against the injustice of disinformation carried out against the people of the United States and the world, lies that wash like waves from the corrupt and arrogant Trump-Musk administration. Each second of our time of silence will help us reflect on the injustices, suffering and disappearances that all too often are the fate of women. Our silence will not be empty; each second will be full of hope and collective energy."

Ms. Tardif's role at the

Cont'd on page 2



Forty-three people gathered in Chandler in recognition of International Day of Women's Rights.

Photo: Courtesy of Jenny Tardif

Fun-filled Women’s Day event in St Jules

CYNTHIA DOW

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: - Women of all ages came together at the Saint-Jules Community Hall on Saturday, March 8, to celebrate International Women’s Day with a series of fun-filled activities that highlighted the essence of womanhood. The event was organized by Miranda Willett, leisure activities coordinator for the Municipality of Cascapedia-Saint-Jules. In addition to the activities there was a lovely meal, lots of door prizes, and a range of activities to appeal to differ-

ent tastes. Activity number one, located near the door, provided participants with the opportunity to take some serious and not-so-serious photographs with Darlene Dimock’s new Photo Booth. This was a real hit with everyone, as short videos with all kinds of adjustments are offered as part of the experience. To say the laughter was deafening is an understatement! Lyne Sexton then gave a presentation about the health and beauty products available from Arbonne, a company devoted to sustainable practices

and products. After supper, Mary Robertson gave a well-researched presentation on the evolution of women’s rights from before the Suffragette movement to modern times. This was followed by an explanation of mindfulness meditation by Cynthia Dow. Finally, participants enjoyed a “sip and paint” experience with talented local artist Thérèse Gallant, who was available to answer questions and give advice. Many were heard saying they hope similar events will be held in the future.



Miranda Willett is busy organizing a variety of leisure activities for the Municipality of Cascapedia-St-Jules.

Photo: Cynthia Dow

Lebouthillier loses her cabinet position

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPE - Diane Lebouthillier is losing her position as minister in the new cabinet, which was announced on March 14 by Prime Minister-designate Mark Carney. The Member of Parliament for the Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine made the announcement in a written statement released late on March 13. "I want to thank Prime Minister Trudeau for his confidence over the past 10 years. Serving alongside him as Minister of National Revenue, and then as the first Quebec woman to hold the position of Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, has been the honour of a lifetime," wrote Ms. Lebouthillier. The Liberal MP was appointed Minister of National Revenue a few days after her election in 2015 and was transferred after strongly urging outgoing Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to make

her Minister of Fisheries in July 2023. "I leave with my head held high and with a sense of accomplishment, as almost all of my mandate is now complete... I also want to congratulate my colleagues who will be part of Prime Minister Carney's next transitional cabinet," added the elected official. Ms. Lebouthillier will devote herself full-time to her role as the Member of Parliament for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine. She reiterated that she will be a candidate in the upcoming election. "I am more motivated than ever to seek the confidence of the people of Gaspésie and the Magdalen Islands for the fourth time in the next federal election. Faced with Trump's tariff war, which threatens our economy and our jobs, I remain determined to fight for our people and continue to deliver concrete results for our beautiful region," concluded the elected official in her statement.

Trump: Threats lead to uncertainty in the dairy industry

NELSON SERGERIE

MARIA - Tariff concerns weighed heavy on the minds of Gaspesian dairy producers as they gathered for their annual general meeting on March 11 in Maria. The U.S. government is threatening to impose 250% tariffs on Canadian dairy products because President Donald Trump believes that American products imported to Canada face similar tariffs. "There's nothing worse than living in uncertainty, in all sectors, and we're there right now. When we're sure what he wants to do, then we'll take action," said regional spokesperson Normand Barriault, adding that the U.S. president is ill-informed. According to him, Canadian dairy exports to the United States account for only

about 1%. "It's a drop in the bucket," illustrates the regional spokesperson, who argues that it is mainly the small processors who make niche cheeses imported by the Americans who will be most affected. "The impact this will have on supply management is very minimal because supply management is, first and foremost, about producing for Canadian consumers," Mr. Barriault points out. The dairy producers also say that supply management remains fundamental and they will readdress the issue with the candidates in the upcoming federal election. "They've already made a statement. We'll have to get them to commit again. I met with Ms. Lebouthillier (Diane, Liberal Member of Parliament for the Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine), and she is

aware that food self-sufficiency is the foundation of everything. Will she do it? At least she says she will," explains Mr. Barriault. Since 1989, the first international trade agreements such as the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) predicted the end of supply management within the next five years. "We're almost 40 years later, and it's still the same narrative. It's still a concern. The system has always held up. It also depends on consumers choosing Canadian products. We have a diversity of products. Between an American, European, or Canadian choice, if consumers feel it's important to be with Canada, they will help us meet this need, and supply management fits 100% with this need," comments Mr. Barriault.

Bad weather and mechanical failure results in VIA Rail train delays

Gilles Gagné The March 7-8 VIA Rail passenger train between Halifax and Montreal took almost 48 hours to travel between the two cities, instead of the 23 scheduled hours, due to a snowstorm and a mechanical failure that plagued one of its two locomotives. Instead of reaching Montreal around 10 a.m. on Saturday, March 8, it arrived at that time, but on Sunday morning, March 9. "Our son took that train in Campbellton, thinking that he would reach Montreal on time to catch his Amigo Express ride (to the Outaouais region) but he had to cancel this lift, and three more later on Saturday, as the train remained stuck in Rimouski for close to 12 hours because the track had to be plowed. An extra locomotive also had to be brought to Rimouski to replace the engine that had a mechanical problem," explained Rachel Leblanc, of Saint-Siméon. Up to 152 passengers were on the train when the mechanical problem slowed down and eventually stopped the train in Rimouski. VIA Rail did not offer refunds to the passengers who requested them, limiting its compensation to travel credits in the Quebec City-Windsor corridor.

WOMEN’S DAY:
Cont'd from cover

event was to represent the APTS (Alliance of Health and Social Services Professionals and Technicians). She hopes that collective power and determination will “build a future where each girl and each woman can live in safety, with dignity and respect.” The APTS represents over

65,000 members, who play an essential role in the smooth running of the network's establishments, offering a multitude of services in the fields of diagnosis, rehabilitation, nutrition, psychosocial intervention, clinical support and prevention. “We are a union made up of 86% women, so it was important for our organization to be present for the cause, but also as a union,” adds Ms. Tardiff.

NURSES' UNION: Poor management or malice on the part of Santé Québec?

GILLES GAGNÉ

MARIA – The Eastern Quebec Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Respiratory Therapists Union condemns the significant cuts to healthcare in the Gaspé Peninsula and is calling for the immediate reinstatement of affected professionals.

Santé Québec, the newly established government agency overseeing health services for the Ministry of Health, is attempting to cut \$1.5 billion province-wide to help reduce Quebec's \$11 billion deficit. The cuts are set to affect the current financial year, ending March 31.

"We are currently seeing on the ground that vulnerable patients in the Gaspé Peninsula are paying the price for the irresponsible decisions implemented by Santé Québec. It is nothing less than the quality of care for users that is at stake," emphasizes Pier-Luc Bujold, president of the Eastern Quebec Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses, and Respiratory Therapists Union, mostly referred to as the SIIIEQ-CSQ.

Cuts in the Gaspé Peninsula

The union president paints a bleak picture of the current



Photo: G. Gagné

Nurses' union leader Pier-Luc Bujold urges the health authorities to reinstate the positions cut over the last weeks.

situation.

"In recent weeks, in the surgery department at Maria Hospital, they have reduced the core team across all three shifts. We're talking about three nurses and three nursing assistants per 24-hour period. Care has been greatly affected. I'm choosing my words carefully, but according to what we're hearing, this decision would endanger both staff and patients. As proof, there have been more than 70 accident reports, some potentially serious, in the last three weeks due to this staff cut. For the teams, the workload is simply unbearable," deplores Pier-Luc Bujold.

The impact extends be-

yond Maria Hospital. "On floors 200 and 300 of Chandler Hospital, a daytime nursing assistant and another evening nursing assistant have also been cut. The current staff can't cope with that load anymore and doesn't know where to turn to ensure safety and good patient care. Staff have to stay several extra hours a week to ensure that patients receive comprehensive care. This creates an overload on top of what we were already experiencing. It creates more burnout, and we risk losing people," states the union leader.

Added to the list are two positions that have been cut at Info-Santé in Gaspé. The impact of this decision is already being felt. For example, two weeks ago, the wait time to speak to a nurse increased to seven hours. If an incident occurs, the healthcare management will be held accountable, emphasizes Mr. Bujold.

The SIIIEQ-CSQ urges the CISSS de la Gaspésie to respect the needs of the population and ensure it provides sufficient quality care. Therefore, it is essential to immediately address and reinstate the withdrawn nursing assistants to ensure that there are no incidents or deaths resulting from these cavalier and irresponsible decisions.

Police report

Raymond Junior Belley trial

Quebec Court Judge Éric Morin has taken the case of Raymond Junior Belley (age 40), under advisement. His three-day trial concluded on March 12 at the Percé Courthouse. The judge will render a decision on May 23. Three witnesses: two civilians, and one of the alleged victims, testified for the prosecution. The accused, who is from the village of Bégin, in Saguenay, was on the stand for more than five hours. He is accused of procuring, distributing non-consensual intimate images, advertising for sexual purposes, and receiving benefits from sexual services. The suspect was arrested in December 2023 before being released on several conditions in April 2024. The alleged incidents took place from December 2018 to June 2020 in Montreal, Saguenay, Quebec City, Laval, and Gaspé.

Rivière-au-Renard fraud case

On March 24, Diane Chrétien, 61, from Gaspé, is expected to settle the fraud and theft case against her. She is accused of stealing over \$5,000 from the Alban Aspirault grocery store in Rivière-au-Renard. She also faces two similar charges, but for amounts under \$5,000, involving employees of the company. The alleged offenses occurred between January 2016 and June 2022 for the grocery store and between December 2021 and June 2022 for the employees. The defence attorney confirmed that negotiations with the Crown are progressing well and should be concluded by that date.

Former Director of Urban Planning appears at Percé Courthouse

Former Director of Urban Planning for the Town of Percé, Ghislain Pitre, appeared for the first time at the Percé Courthouse to face charges of fraud and breach of trust. The investigation was conducted by UPAC, the anti-corruption squad.

Ghislain Pitre's prosecutor requested that the case be postponed until May 13, due to the voluminous evidence, according to the defence. The Permanent Anti-Corruption Unit alleges that between 2009 and 2023, Mr. Pitre allegedly used the services of municipal employees under his direction for his personal benefit. Additionally, between 2021 and 2023, the accused allegedly benefited from grants awarded under the financial assistance program for heritage restoration by the Ministry of Culture, for which he was responsible, for personal gain.

It is alleged that he benefited from more than \$5,000 of public funds for the renovation of his house, depriving other citizens of the allocation of subsidies.

Cathy Anglehart sentenced

Cathy Anglehart, the former director of the Chandler Housing Authority (OHM), was recently sentenced to two years less a day in prison, to be served in the community, for fraud of slightly over \$12,000. The 45-year-old woman, who pleaded guilty in November 2023, will also be subject to a curfew during this period and two years of probation once her sentence is completed. Appointed director in July 2021, Cathy Anglehart applied for a credit card in the organization's name and then used it for personal purposes for \$11,960, sometimes repaying the balance with OMH funds. She also purchased goods from a local business for \$585 and then had them billed to the OMH account. After being confronted by the organization's board of directors, she resigned and repaid the full amount.

RéGÎM could tax vehicle registrations

Nelson Sergerie

CARLETON-SUR-MER - To raise funds for its activities, the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Intermunicipal Transport Board is considering imposing a tax on vehicle registrations.

The Quebec government continues to refuse to allow the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region to increase the tax from \$0.01 to \$0.02 per litre of fuel.

The one-cent tax has been in effect since 2012, shortly after the board was created, at the request of the municipalities, and the government of Quebec accepted the principle.

Nearly 13 years later, the board needs additional funds. "There's regional thinking about whether this would be beneficial. We would have liked to increase the gas tax. Quebec isn't open to that. We're looking at the vehicle registration tax. Costs are only increasing. If we want to maintain or increase the level of service, we have to seek additional revenue," says Mathieu Lapointe, president of the Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefects.

Since January 1, the tax has been \$150 in Montreal, which is expected to generate \$320 million in revenue for the Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain. In Quebec City, the tax is \$60.

"We've seen that some cities have done this, with significant impacts. We want to assess the impacts here, both for the community and for vehicle registrations. It's an option that could be interesting for the viability of public transit in the region," says Mr. Lapointe. The gas tax raised funds from tourism.

"The issue we have with the gas tax is that the amounts are decreasing. Vehicles are consuming less fuel, and there are more and more electric vehicles. This is expected to decrease over the years, and the registration tax is becoming an attractive option," the president explains.

The RéGÎM generates between \$1.3 million and \$1.5 million per year from the gas tax.

The organization estimated that a one-cent increase would represent an additional \$1 million in revenue, reaching approximately \$2.5 million.

The RéGÎM predicted that projected revenues from the gas tax will be down \$100,000 in a 2025 budget of \$4.8 million.



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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Solidarity is the key to counter Donald Trump

Of all the bad moves Donald Trump has made since entering politics, and we could probably add since the beginning of his adult life, the contempt he has expressed and shown towards women is by far the most disturbing. The Stone age may have been better for women than the actions of the current American president.

Backward steps for women are visible all along his path. The nomination of highly conservative judges, their damaging decisions regarding abortion and women’s rights, along with other detrimental actions marked Donald Trump’s first term from 2017-2021.

That goes without saying the way he personally treated women, or advised “friends”, and, by extension, other easily influenced American citizens, on how to treat women. A prime example being when Trump said, “...You can do anything. Grab 'em by the pus**.”

The first two months of Trump’s second term have been even worse. He is now conspicuously surrounded by masculinists, like Dana White, Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk to name a few. His actions and those of his close entourage, target fields in which women are deeply involved.

The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) budget cuts target a majority of female employees, because they fill most positions in education, health and social services. That goes without counting other departments where women are employed by the government.

Who is going to suffer the most from those service cuts? Women will, again. Single-parent families are essentially the reality of women. In addition to job cuts and counsel services provided by human beings, operational slashes in aid programs, which provide money to individuals experiencing difficulties, will add a layer of misery mainly hitting women. The list of injustices goes on and on.

Past the shock, there is movement

Regressing generations in gender equality is a shock. Although some women held demonstrations repeatedly from “Day 1” following the November 5 election, March 8, the International Day for Women’s Rights, provided a perfect opportunity to demonstrate that these backward steps are unacceptable.

Past the shock of the election, and of the implementation of policies since Donald Trump’s January

20 inauguration, a protest movement had to erupt and it is, progressively.

It didn’t only happen in the United States. In Quebec, March 8 was a bitterly cold Saturday, either following a snow storm or still characterized but heavy snow falls. Despite the poor weather, demonstrations were held in 16 cities, towns and villages across the province, including Percé. The movement is notably sparked by Mères au front.

This group's mission is to mobilize and raise awareness on environmental issues. It has also been very vocal in advocating for improved access to childcare in some of Quebec’s regions.

On March 8, Mères au front, or Mothers at the Front, suggested that people gather in large numbers. In Montreal, the demonstration took place in front of the United States Consulate. In Percé, it was on the wharf, the brightest spot in town.

Neither the date nor the location was insignificant because since Trump's election, Google and Apple have deleted International Women's Day from their calendars!

It was therefore a matter of making people seen, of making women’s voices heard, of not bowing down to this insidious attempt to make half of humanity invisible and its struggle for respect for its fundamental rights.

Across Quebec like just about everywhere in North America where women and supportive men demonstrated, people were asked to wear red clothes. It was a way to reclaim this colour, which doesn't just belong to the Republican Party, Donald Trump's tie, or the “Make America Great Again” (MAGA) movement, whose supporters’ red caps are probably made in China, Pakistan or Bangladesh by children experiencing working conditions reminiscent of slavery.

Some invites to events read like "To this, and to the rise of fascism, we respond: we are here, together with and for our daughters, to engrave our rights in the collective imagination."

From a handful of individuals to several thousand in Montreal, people braved the icy wind to answer this call. Red tides of various sizes walked, reflected and talked during the demonstrations.

Red doesn’t belong to Donald Trump and his entourage. Red is also the colour of passion, the colour of our blood, the colour of love and also of rebellion. On March 8, red was primarily the colour of love, solidarity and, hopefully, the symbol of a quiet but stern spark of rebellion.

Where do we go from here?

The next months, and in all likelihood the couple of next years, will be tough for the majority of Canadians, both women and men, who are opposed to the American government’s cavemen manners, where intimidation attempts abound.

Reports on the March 8 demonstrations showed people leaving the scenes expressing sadness, rage, and hope all at once, sometimes with tears in their eyes.

As Le Devoir columnist Salomé Corbo wrote after the demonstration, “In 2025, not only are women's rights still not guaranteed on Earth, but they are also being regressed in countries considered among the most powerful. What an outrage!”

Such demonstrations and the lessons stemming from them will be vital over the upcoming stretch to counter masculinist intimidation tactics that characterize the American government and similar regimes.

Our society has grown increasingly individualistic over the last decades. This approach leaves more people in a state of vulnerability. That state is visible everywhere in our society and it leaves people thinking that it is close to impossible to change their individual reality, let alone the society’s.

That’s why the March 8 movement must be sustained. People who think that women’s rights must be protected and improved must keep standing up and refuse what is imposed by masculinists like Donald Trump, Facebook’s Mark Zuckerberg and Tesla’s and DOGE’s Elon Musk, whose business is plummeting while he tries to bring “efficiency” to the American government.

Solidarity actions induce “recharging the battery” for the people that have felt overwhelmed and weakened in their solitude by Donald Trump's intentions, including that of annexing Canada since his return to power.

People, and the country, are in a position to find new allies in the weeks and months to come.

It will require a touch of patience and a strong spine, because potential allies, like some European countries, are still tiptoeing on trade issues, trying to avoid American tariffs for example.

However, Donald Trump, in another stupid move that is becoming a strong habit, will likely think that he can impose his rule where he wants. With some resolve, opponents will make him fail. It will happen faster if a bigger number of men show the same courage that women displayed on March 8.

St. Patrick’s Day Quiz Answers

1 (Britain), 2 (canonized), 3 (snakes), 4 (fairies), 5 (shamrock), 6 (parade), 7 (died), 8 (dry), 9 (political), 10 (Guinness), 11 (sheep), 12 (dream), 13 (four), 14 (fermented), and 15 (Danny Boy).

St. Paddy’s Day Scramble

1-Shamrock, 2-Ireland, 3-Harp, 4-Gold, 5-Green, and 6-Rainbow.

The Gaspé Spec

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Gaspé Firefighters: Hidden report includes 15 recommendations

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The organizational assessment commissioned by the Town of Gaspé on its Fire Protection Service contains 15 recommendations, but the Town refuses to release the report despite an access to information request.

The fire brigade has been plagued by allegations of a toxic climate that has poisoned the troops in recent months, leading to the suspension of Director Carl Sinnett and the announcement of his departure last November.

Two factions were at odds: those who wanted him to stay on and those who demanded his departure.

The assessment, conducted by the firm Layran Services Conseils, was submitted on November 16, and Mr. Sinnett's departure was announced on November 21. Director General of Gaspé Jocelyn Villeneuve indicates that upon his arrival two years ago, he initiated a major analysis of the various departments. However, given the more complex nature of the situation, a report was commissioned for the fire department.

"There were some elements reported previously, but what led us to conduct the assessment was to gain a good understanding of our department and be able to improve everything," says Mr. Villeneuve.

The 15 recommendations submitted were presented to the fire department at the end of February.

"There are a few that I can't share because they may affect groups of individuals or contain personal information, but the major recommendations shared with the fire department range from implementing expectation management processes, optimizing operational guidelines, reactivating the labour relations committee, and establishing an employee consultation committee," the Town Director quotes. Mr. Villeneuve refuses to make any connection between the filing of the report and Mr. Sinnett's departure.

"I couldn't confirm or deny that this is a logical next step. Since it concerns one person, I can't go into any more detail about the information I could provide," says the director.

The CNESST had opened a prevention-inspection intervention file for the Town of Gaspé fire station, and an intervention was carried out on July 23,



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

2024, to verify the implementation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the regulations applicable to psychosocial risks, the organization stated last summer.

According to Mr. Villeneuve, the climate has returned to normal within the brigade.

Refusal to share the report

Even though the director general agreed to share the document's conclusions, the Town refused to make it public, despite a request for access under the Access to Information Act. The Town indicates that, after analysis, the report contains personal information about the individuals interviewed and who testified as part of this process, pursuant to sections 53 and 59 of the Act respecting Access to Documents Held by Public Bodies and the Protection of Personal Information.

The Town also believes that the report contains opinions or recommendations made at the request of the Town of Gaspé, and that this information may be kept confidential for 10 years, as permitted by Section 37 of the Act.

Finally, since the report substantially consists of personal or confidential information that may be protected by Section 14 of the Access Act, the Town of Gaspé reserves the right to refuse to release the entire report in question.

Improvement of equipment

One of the criticisms heard during the period of tension within the brigade was the quality of the firefighters' equipment.

The director is aware of this and notes that the Town is investing to improve it. The

Town is considering equipping the department with a ladder truck since the town centre and its outskirts contain tall buildings such as the hospital and the Mgr Ross CHSLD.

"For the moment, we need a fire station to accommodate a ladder truck, and it's on the drawing board. It's not on the agenda. However, the station is included in the three-year capital plan. It's something we'll work on," Mr. Villeneuve maintains.

The investment will be significant

"Once the plans and specifications are completed, we'll need to find funding to be able to do something within the citizens' ability to pay," says the director general.

CNESST partially releases its investigation report on Gaspé firefighters

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - A request for intervention was made to the CNESST on June 7, 2024, regarding harassment and physical violence by a member of the Gaspé Fire Protection Service.

This is what we have learned from largely redacted documents transmitted by the CNESST under the Access to Information Act. In the report, the identities of all those involved in the incident are not visible, nor are the dates.

The CNESST reviewed the case on June 10, but the rest of the document was redacted.

Subsequently, an intervention was made on July 23, and a report was produced on August 5, in which the CNESST stated that the Town of Gaspé has obligations regarding psychosocial risks.

The Town has committed to training workers regarding these risks and a correction notice has been issued.

On November 27, the CNESST asked whether the correction notice had been implemented. The remainder of the letter, as well as the Town's response, were redacted.

December 19, a follow-up was conducted, confirming that the workers had been trained accordingly.

\$851,000 for seniors in Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia

Nelson Sergerie

AMQUI - Ottawa's New Horizons for Seniors program will support 43 projects in Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia for a value of \$851,000.

In what will likely be her last announcement before the election, Kristina Michaud notes that the amount received this year reflects the dynamism of organizations in her riding.

Among the selected projects are heritage enhancement projects, such as the Matapédia—Les Plateaux Economic Development Corporation's project, Our Fascinating History Served on a Platter.

Since the Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament was first elected in 2019, nearly \$5 million has been invested in the community through this program.



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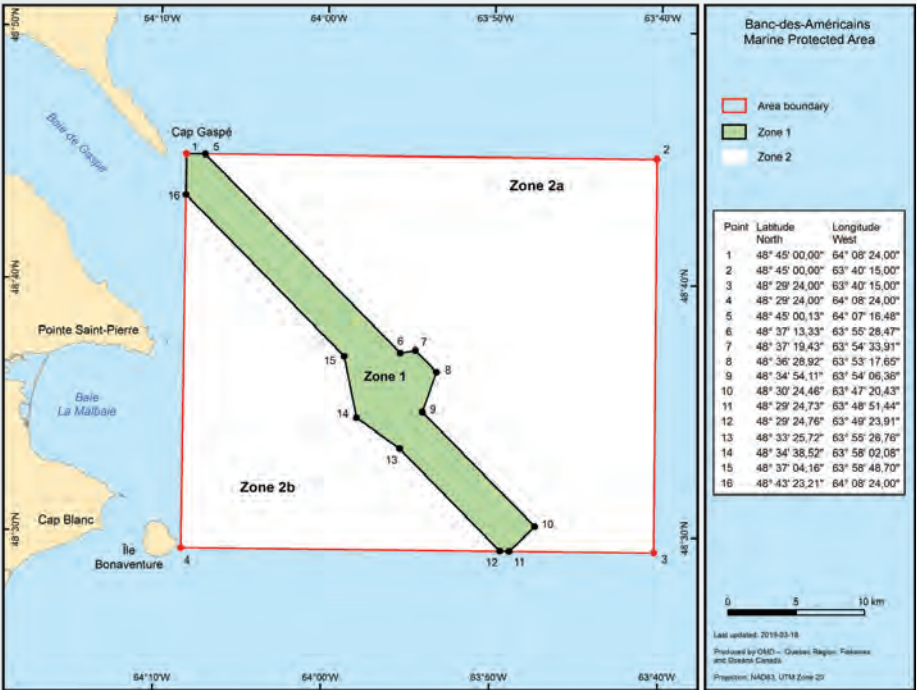
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Help protect the Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area, a unique jewel in the Gaspésie region!

The Banc-des-Américains Marine Protected Area (MPA), managed jointly by the government of Canada and the *Gouvernement du Québec*, is a rich natural environment stretching over 1,000 km² in the waters off the tip of the Forillon Peninsula, in the Gaspésie region. Bathed by the nutrient-rich Gaspé Current, the MPA lies on a major migration route that attracts a number of fish species, including some of commercial interest, as well as whales that come there to feed. Cod, capelin, rainbow smelt, herring, mackerel, blue whales and humpback whales are found within the MPA. It is also home to the Atlantic wolffish, a species at risk that is fond of the area's rocky crevices.

How can I help protect it?

To also do your part to help protect this unique area, familiarize yourself with the Banc-des-Américains MPA, and make sure to comply with regulations and follow marine mammal observation best practices. You can also participate in citizen science and community activities. For example, you can share your marine mammal sightings with the **Marine Mammal Observation Network** and report incidents involving them to the **Quebec Marine Mammal Emergency Response Network**.

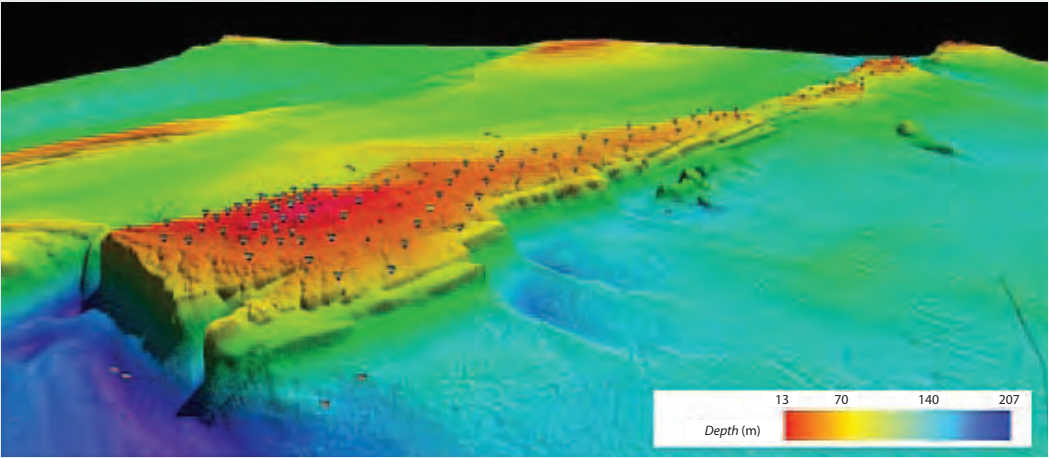


What activities are allowed or not within the MPA?

To protect this natural environment, all educational, scientific, touristic and habitat restoration activities that take place in the MPA require approval. The Banc-des-Américains MPA is divided in two zones to tailor conservation measures to the fragility of the environment.

Zone 1 encompasses the bank itself, which consists of a rocky underwater ridge. This zone is considered to be the richest in biodiversity, and also the most fragile. As a result, conservation measures are stricter in this area. Activities such as commercial and recreational fishing as well as vessel anchoring are prohibited.

Zone 2 encompasses the plains adjacent to the rocky ridge. It is less fragile and a wider range of activities can take place here, including some recreational and commercial fishing. However, fishing for "forage species" (small marine animals that serve as prey for larger fish), marine mammals and birds is prohibited.



Discover the Banc-des-Américains MPA in this video

www.youtube.com/watch?v=zYTHBID4t9Q



Quebec Atlantic Salmon Federation calls for quick action

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND - With the historically low returns of Atlantic salmon in 2024, the Quebec Atlantic Salmon Federation (QASF) states that it is necessary to take action this spring to ensure its sustainability and return to normal.

The QASF, is praising the leadership of the Ministry of the Environment, the Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, which coordinated an important meeting of the Salmon Technical Table, held on February 21.

This meeting brought together representatives of the National Wildlife Table, the Fédération des pourvoiries du Québec, Sépaq, the Sustainable Development Institute of the Quebec-Labrador First Nations, the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs and the QASF.

Other specialists from Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO), the Mi'gmaq and Wolastoqey Aboriginal Fisheries Management Association, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation and researchers from the academic community also participated in order to provide an overview of the issues of mortality at sea and actions to be implemented in the coming months.

A worrying decline

In 2023, a drastic decrease in the number of grilse, namely salmon less than 63 centimetres that have spent a year at sea, alerted biologists and fishermen. The situation worsened in 2024, with even fewer grilse and a 20 to 80% decline in large salmon, which typically spend at least two years at sea. These figures, based on preliminary data provided by river management, indicate a severe crisis.

The Ministry of the Environment, the Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks' operating report will be published in the spring and will provide more precise data on the extent of this decline.

Following the analysis of several research studies, including those from telemetry projects, the observation is clear: the cohorts of smolts that migrated in the summer of 2022 and 2023 experienced sudden and significant mortality, likely in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, probably a little before or near the Strait of Belle Isle. This also means that in 2025, everything suggests that

the return of large salmon will once again be well below normal.

It is still too early to know whether there will be many young salmon in 2025, since the survival rate of the young salmon that began their migration to sea in 2024 remains unknown.

A wrap up of the last few years

On February 21, several government and non-government experts were able to give presentations on the hypotheses currently being explored to explain salmon's scarcity.

Oceanographic changes in the Gulf and North Atlantic regions, primarily presented by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, particularly in terms of temperature and currents, as well as changes in the abundance of prey like capelin and herring, as well as predators, seals for example, were the subject of rich discussions, highlighting the numerous variations and anomalies of recent years.

For example, temperature variations in the Gulf region were presented, allowing the observation of regional variations that can present both warm and cold anomalies. In 2022 and 2023, some regions of the Gulf experienced warmer temperatures, but the Labrador coast and the Strait of Belle Isle had colder surface waters than in previous years. The next step will be to study the potential interaction of these factors on Atlantic salmon, with several experts collaborating. Upstream migration and migration paths will be some of the parameters those experts will try to assess.

The hypothesis of the presence of certain diseases, viral or otherwise, caused by the passage of smolts near aquaculture cages located in the Maritime provinces was also explored.

Despite varying perspectives on the potential importance of this factor on mortality in 2022 and 2023, it seems clear that there is insufficient data to definitively dispel this hypothesis.

Indeed, it is very difficult to sample smolts caught near the Strait of Belle Isle to validate the hypothesis. This represents a significant logistical and financial challenge, but not an insurmountable one.

Commercial fisheries and accidental catches

In addition, the hypothesis of an increase in incidental



Recreational fishing arrangements will likely be more geared toward full release, as consultations are underway at the Quebec government level.

Photo: G. Gagné

catches by forage species fisheries, such as herring and capelin, was explored from different angles in order to fully understand the reality and functioning of these fisheries and their monitoring within Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Preliminary analyses presented by the QASF suggest that migration conditions have led to greater potential overlap between certain fisheries and the passage of smolts.

Fisheries data, obtained following access to information requests, were cross-referenced with telemetry data. The latter showed that, under certain temperature conditions, particularly since 2022, smolts tend to use a migratory route closer to Quebec, which overlaps with the areas of certain commercial fisheries, notably zone 4SW.

The data provided do not indicate any incidental catches of salmon in the last 10 years. The QASF pointed out, however, that it appears very unlikely, if not impossible, that no smolts were caught accidentally. This situation could be explained by the fact that capelin and herring fishermen are not allowed to have incidental catches.

In this context, the QASF concludes that it is essential to place observers on herring and capelin fishing boats this year in order to document the situation and seize the opportunity to obtain specimens for analysis to answer the previous questions.

Furthermore, since it is possible to predict the period of smolt passage in the Gulf and the Strait of Belle-Isle with great precision, and since this migration period lasts between five and ten days, "fishing in these areas must be limited," says QASF president Normand Fiset.

"Only a few fishermen should be allowed to continue their collection during this period in order to document

whether there is indeed an interception of smolts and to collect them if necessary."

The rivers

During the last stretch of the February 21 meeting, the situation of the rivers was covered. Several data monitoring the health of smolts that migrate down the rivers were presented by the Ministry of the Environment, Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks.

This interesting data will also need to be cross-referenced with others, particularly to validate whether the temperature conditions in the river could lead to a decrease in the survival rate and physical condition of smolts when they begin their long migration.

Another important element that was highlighted is the lag in the downstream migration of smolts, which has led, in recent years, to a downstream migration that begins a few days earlier in certain rivers.

Additional analyses will be necessary to assess whether this leads to a desynchronization with other elements, such as the

presence of prey when smolts begin their migration to sea, or whether this could be a factor to consider in the set of variables that could increase the potential for interaction with commercial fisheries or other human activities.

Call to our decision-makers

Considering the magnitude of the issue and the consequences for Atlantic salmon, the QASF is asking Fisheries and Oceans Canada to act quickly to place observers on commercial fishing vessels likely to accidentally catch smolts in order to document the situation, in addition to severely limiting these fisheries during the few critical days when the vast majority of smolts spend in the Gulf as far east as the Strait of Belle-Isle.

The 2024 cohort will return to grilse this year. However, the QASF management affirms that there is still time to take action to consciously limit the pressure on the 2025 cohort. It must be realized that this is probably one of the only short-term measures that can be taken to increase marine survival.

The QASF also hopes that Fisheries and Oceans Canada will seize this opportunity to launch its Atlantic Salmon Conservation Strategy, in which there is hope to see both the aspects of river issues and those at sea, where Canada has a clear responsibility.

This Strategy would also be an opportunity to fund strategic research areas and accelerate collaboration at the level of sectoral tables such as the Quebec's Table Technique Saumon

Cont'd on page 8

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How climate change and human activity are reshaping fisheries in the Gaspé Peninsula

ARTHUR POIRIER-ROY
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

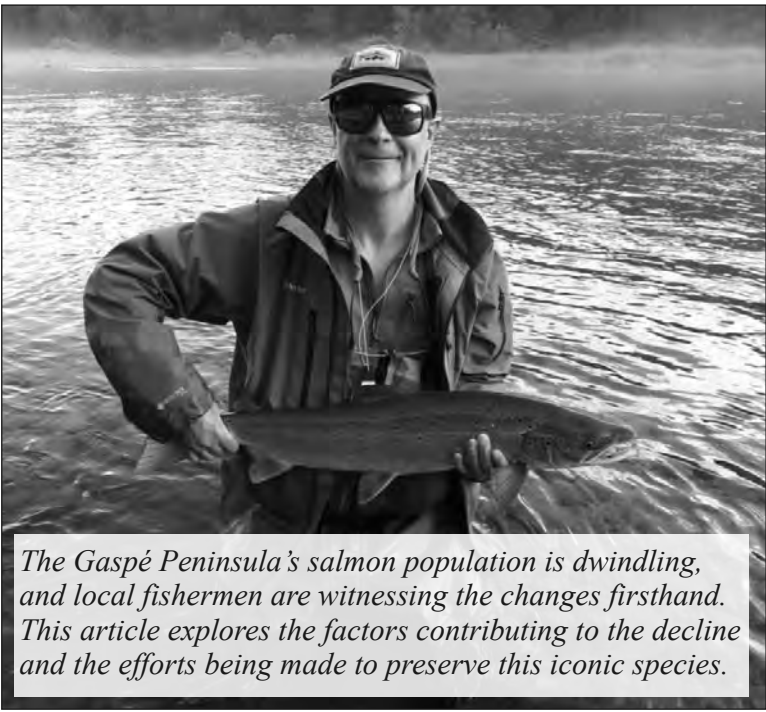
CASCAPEDIA - SAINT-JULES - The Gaspé Peninsula, a region celebrated for its natural beauty and abundant resources, faces a growing challenge: the dwindling wild salmon population. For those whose livelihoods and passions are intertwined with the rivers and the sea, the scarcity is a stark reminder of the changing times. Todd Cochrane, who has worked at Sexton & Sexton, a fishing shop in Cascapedia, for 33 years and has fished for over 50, has witnessed these changes firsthand.

"It's not just the salmon," Mr. Cochrane explains. "Everything's changing. The water's warmer, the ice isn't as thick, and the weather's unpredictable." Small fishing cabins that once dotted the water pools around New Richmond, Bonaventure, and Miguasha now stand empty, stark white patches against the snow. The ice, once reliable, is now too thin, making winter fishing a risky endeavor.

While Mr. Cochrane fishes for various species, his thoughts immediately turn to

salmon and trout. He points to the rise in predator populations, particularly striped bass and seals, as a significant factor in the salmon's decline. Both species prey on juvenile salmon, and their numbers have increased dramatically in the past 15 years. While striped bass are recreationally fished, demand remains low. Seals, though legally hunttable, are rarely targeted; there's little market for their meat or pelts anymore.

The way people fish has also changed dramatically. Fifty years ago, it was primarily an American pastime, with tourists traveling north for the region's renowned salmon. Now, Quebecers make up the majority of anglers. The sport, once elitist, has become more accessible. But the biggest shift, according to Mr. Cochrane, has occurred in the last 15 years. Fishing equipment has become incredibly efficient, and social media has revolutionized how skills and techniques are shared. He recounts the story of a man who, having never held a rod before, learned through YouTube and displayed better casting technique than seasoned fishermen.



The Gaspé Peninsula's salmon population is dwindling, and local fishermen are witnessing the changes firsthand. This article explores the factors contributing to the decline and the efforts being made to preserve this iconic species.

Photo: Todd Cochrane

Mr. Cochrane emphasizes that catch-and-release fishing, now the norm for salmon, is a necessity. With so many anglers and such effective equipment, without this practice, the rivers would be emptied in a single season. This adaptation has also spurred new ventures, like guided fishing trips and cabin rentals, creating a form of eco-tourism that helps maintain the infrastructure necessary to protect the salmon population. For Mr. Cochrane, fishing is a unique blend of

tranquility and excitement. "I'm releasing that fish," he says, "so that our children can go on and catch it. It's up to us."

Research supports Mr. Cochrane's observations. Fish-

eries and Oceans Canada has studied the impact of striped bass predation on juvenile salmon, finding it significant in some areas. Other studies have linked mining activity, particularly dewatering and associated contaminants like copper, to declining salmon populations. The increase in recreational activity around salmon habitats has also been suggested as a contributing factor.

The Quebec government has proposed restrictions for the 2025 salmon fishing season due to historically low salmon runs.

The Gaspé Spec invites readers to share their stories and information about the changes in the fishing sector, the impact of climate change on their lives, and what can be done to help. Let's explore these challenges and work towards a sustainable future for Gaspésie's fisheries.

Érablière Escuminac releases a collection of body care products

GILLES GAGNÉ

ESCUMINAC – Érablière Escuminac, a company renowned for its high-end organic maple products, has unveiled a brand new-line of limited-edition body care products. Just in time for maple and blueberry maple syrup season, this exclusive collection includes a body mist, a gentle body scrub, a lip exfoliator, as well as a chaga and maple soap. These products are designed to offer an original sensory experience.

This new product line embodies the spirit of collaboration and innovation thanks

to a partnership with Percé's Savonnerie Poussière d'Étoile. This project specifically promotes sugar stone, a byproduct of maple grove production, which finds a new life here with its exfoliating properties. By integrating this unique ingredient, Érablière Escuminac is continuing its commitment to zero waste and enriching its vision of sustainability.

"This project represents much more than a new product line for Érablière Escuminac. It demonstrates our desire to diversify while remaining true to our values of innovation and respect for the environ-

ment," says Pascale Malenfant, project manager at Érablière Escuminac. "Thanks to this collaboration with Savonnerie Poussière d'étoile, we are ensuring that we offer high-quality products from the outset, which will be appreciated by our customers in Quebec, Canada, and internationally."

Érablière Escuminac is a company committed to promoting maple syrup in all its forms. Over the years, it has developed its international markets and notably sells in Asia and Europe. The body care products are available at www.escuminac.com.



Photo: Courtesy of Érablière Escuminac

Polls put the PQ in the lead

Gilles Gagné

The results of a Québec 125 survey, made public on March 5, reveal that the Parti Québécois (PQ) would have received 53% of the electorate's votes in the riding of Bonaventure, had an election taken place over the first week of that month. The margin of error for the PQ result would have been 8%. The Coalition avenir Québec (CAQ) would have finished in second place with 20%, with a 6% margin of error. The Liberal Party would have received 13% of the ballots, with a margin or error of 5%. Québec solidaire and Quebec's Conservative Party would have each received 6% of the votes, with a margin of error of 3%. In the Gaspé riding, the PQ would have won as well, with 57% of the votes, compared to 20% for the CAQ, 10% for the Liberal Party, 6% for Québec solidaire and 5% for Quebec's Conservative Party. The margins of error were similar, on a party to party basis, to those of Bonaventure. In October 2022, the CAQ candidate, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, won the election with 41.4% of the ballots in Gaspé. In Bonaventure, Catherine Blouin won with 44.5% of electoral support in 2022.

SALMON:

Cont'd from page 7

and the Joint Plan for Atlantic Salmon Research in Canada, in addition to supporting academic institutions, such as the Interuniversity Centre for Atlantic Salmon Research, and non-governmental and Indigenous partners, essential to maintaining expertise and promoting local knowledge, rooted in communities.

In Quebec, despite concerns, it is too early to demand a closure of recreational and traditional fisheries, says the QASF.

Recreational fishing arrangements will likely be more geared toward full release, as consultations are underway at the Quebec

government level.

The QASF will encourage fishermen to follow the best release methods, particularly during heat waves, when fishermen may also decide to avoid this activity. River management organizations and outfitters participate in the implementation of the Atlantic Salmon Management Plan, in monitoring salmon populations and their protection, in particular, and must be supported for their actions on the ground.

The QASF has also submitted a pre-budget brief to renew sectoral funding during this pivotal period when everyone's efforts count to allow salmon populations to return to normal. (Information from a press release)

Kristina Michaud's final political miles

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament (MP) for Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia, Kristina Michaud, will leave her position with a sense of accomplishment.

The elected official and her team have begun the process of closing their riding offices as a federal election seems imminent.

"It's going well because I know it's not an end in itself. I'm sure I'll continue to be politically active. I'll follow the election campaign," says Ms. Michaud, who is preparing to welcome her first child in the coming weeks. She had previously announced her decision to step away from politics to fully embrace this new chapter of motherhood.

While she intends to remain connected to political life, Ms. Michaud is unde-

cided about a future return to elected office. "That's a good question. I don't think I can say for sure at this point. I know I'm going to enjoy spending time with my little one. Will I love it so much that I'll want to put politics aside for good? Or will I want to get back into it quickly because I'm going to find the time long, being used to a fast-paced life? I was elected at 26, I'm 32 today. If I want to go back to politics one day, I know it's possible because I'm at the beginning of my career," says Ms. Michaud, who hasn't considered a transitional career.

Ms. Michaud was first elected in 2019 and defeated Liberal MP Rémi Massé. She assures that the current files will be passed on to her successors, as her riding is disappearing and will be divided into the new ridings of

Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj and Rimouski-La Matapédia.

"No matter who is there, for me, it's important to have a smooth transition. I didn't have that opportunity in 2019. Everything was torn up when I arrived in the office, and I didn't have a meeting with the outgoing MP to discuss the files. I find that disappointing because it's the population who loses out," says Ms. Michaud.

In her riding, the outgoing MP says she is satisfied to have contributed to millions of dollars in investments.

She doesn't want to name a specific file, but notes one important element.

"It's hard to choose, but the thing that makes me most proud is the number of people we've been able to help on a daily basis." "We've helped nearly 2,000 people in the rid-

ing on various federal issues," comments the elected official.

Kristina Michaud was also presented as a rising star in Parliament in Ottawa and was highly regarded by her leader, Yves-François Blanchet, who entrusted her with important missions, including that of public safety critic.

"I also created my own opportunities a little. I was immediately given a great position, which I seized without hesitation. I found myself the first woman vice-chair of the National Public Safety Committee in Parliament. I was surrounded by experienced men who dealt with thorny issues like firearms. I can say that I contributed to improving public safety," says Ms. Michaud.

The environment remains close to her heart and she is concerned about the current situation where the United

States is defunding green investments.

What's happening in both Canada and the United States concerns her. "Priorities always take precedence. The climate crisis is here, omnipresent, but we feel like we don't have to talk about it all the time. It's a shame to see Mr. Carney backtrack on carbon pricing or support long-shelved projects. I'll be following this closely, and so will the Bloc Québécois MPs. We can't afford to put the climate crisis aside," notes the elected official.

"In Chaleur Bay, we're starting to feel the effects. We're no longer even talking about fighting climate change, but about mitigating its effects. We'll need people there to remind Mr. Carney or his successor how important this is and to take action," she adds.

FACING THE WINDS OF CHANGE:

Economic Uncertainty in Gaspésie's Timber Industry

ARTHUR POIRIER-ROY
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

ST-ELZEAR - The Gaspé Peninsula's timber industry, a cornerstone of the region's economy, finds itself navigating a period of significant economic uncertainty. With a heavy reliance on export markets, particularly the United States, the industry is acutely vulnerable to Trump's shifts in trade policies and global market fluctuations.

The volatile nature of the current U.S. administration, under President Trump, casts a long shadow over the timber sector in the Gaspé Peninsula. Past trade disputes and policy changes have demonstrated the profound impact that external decisions can have on local businesses. The unpredictability of these factors creates a climate of anxiety, making long-term planning and investment a risky proposition. As Alexandre Lepage, a seasoned forest engineer, observed, "You

just don't know what's coming next. One day, everything's fine, the next, a new tariff, and you're scrambling."

The region's timber industry's economic health is inextricably linked to exports, with a significant majority, 84%, destined for the United States. This heavy reliance underscores the vulnerability of the region to fluctuations in the American market. Any changes in U.S. trade policy, tariffs, or economic conditions can have immediate and substantial repercussions for Gaspésie's producers.

Adding to this external pressure are the internal challenges of modernization. Many of the region's sawmills and processing facilities are grappling with aging infrastructure. "It's a common sight," Lepage noted, "to see brand-new, state-of-the-art machines sitting right next to equipment that's decades old. That's the reality of this industry." The cost of upgrading these facilities, coupled with

the uncertainty of future market conditions, makes significant capital investments a daunting prospect. "We're living on tight margins," he explained. "Every dollar counts, and with the way things are, it's hard to justify taking on more debt."

The labour force also presents a complex set of uncertainties. Skills gaps within the workforce, particularly in relation to new technologies, are a growing concern. There are also disparities in compensation, which can create instability and affect workforce morale. The lack of unionization in specific sectors further contributes to a sense of uncertainty among workers, who may feel they have limited recourse in the face of changing industry dynamics.

Furthermore, the significant financial burden of acquiring and maintaining modern machinery is a primary source of anxiety for many in the sector. "We're not like the big companies in the States," Lepage pointed out. "We're tightly regulated here, to preserve the forests. That's a good thing, but it also means we don't have the same financial flexibility. We might not have the resilience to endure a long, drawn-out tariff war." The difficulty in predicting future revenue streams makes it challenging to justify large expenditures, leading to a reluctance to invest in necessary upgrades.

Even the growing trend of

wood construction, while offering potential benefits, adds an element of uncertainty. While wood construction is presented as a sustainable and efficient alternative, the long-term market demand and the necessary infrastructure to support this growth remain unclear.

The Gaspé Peninsula's timber industry is facing a confluence of challenges. From the unpredictable nature of international trade to the internal pressures of modernization and

workforce development, the sector is grappling with a high degree of economic uncertainty. Navigating these turbulent times will require careful planning, adaptability, and a willingness to embrace change, even as the path forward remains shrouded in doubt.

This is the first in a journalistic series based on an interview with Engineer Alexandre Lepage, offering his insights on the sector's current state."

Rain of March 6 and 7 nearly ended the snowmobile season

Nelson Sergerie

CARLETON-SUR-MER - Despite the heavy rainfall of March 6 and 7, snowmobile trails remain accessible in the Chaleur Bay. But the 2025 season came close to ending abruptly.

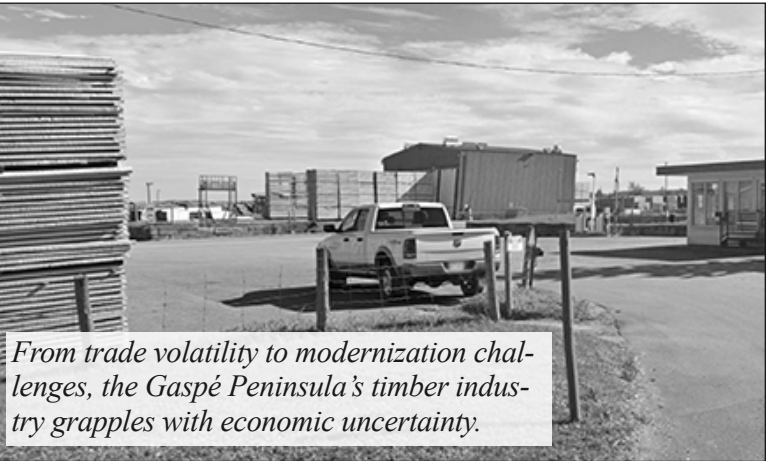
The transformation of the precipitation into snow saved the season, which had already been shortened by late snowfall. "The rain had an impact for a few days, but we had closed the trails as a precautionary measure. But since Sunday (March 9), snowmobilers have been riding," said Denis Henry, president of the Mount Carleton Snowmobile Club.

The trails were coded "yellow" in the following days to encourage snowmobilers to be cautious. Without the snow, the season would have been over. "For us, with the 211 kilometres we have to cover, we would have finished the season on March 8. But fortunately, Mother Nature took pity on us, and everything turned around," explains Mr. Henry.

Environment Canada predicted a thaw on March 14, 15, and 16. "If it's short-lived, it won't affect our trails because when our groomers are paving the trails, it hardens the snow base and helps the trails last," explains the president.

Tourists are still present on the trails, notes Mr. Henri. This is the second consecutive season marked by up-and-downs for snowmobilers in the Gaspé Peninsula.

The year 2025 started a month later. "At the federation level, we started talking about a shortened season. Last year, even clubs in the Montreal area couldn't open, and this year, it's been delayed." "We have to follow the whims of Mother Nature," says Mr. Henry. The 2024 season ended on March 11.



From trade volatility to modernization challenges, the Gaspé Peninsula's timber industry grapples with economic uncertainty.

Photo: Arthur Poirier-Roy

Announcements



Obituary



MCNAIR: George Beverley
1937 – 2025

With heavy hearts, we announce the passing of George Beverley McNair, who left us peacefully on Sunday, February 23, 2025, at the age of 87. He passed away at Saint-Joseph's Residence after a brief stay, surrounded by his loving family.

Bev was predeceased by his parents, Norman Lee McNair and Dorothy Louise Jonah McNair; sisters, Helen Marilyn Webster (Bruce Webster) and Norma-Jean McNeill (Robert

Alexander McNeill); sister-in-law, Noella Rita Carbonneau McNair; and brother-in-law, Alister Gyles Harrison.

He is lovingly remembered by his devoted wife of 64 years, Madge Agnes Fairservice; daughters, Eunice Jane McNair Pizzolato (Allan Leo Pizzolato) and Jennifer Anne McNair Hosking (Sean Kenneth Hosking); cherished grandchildren, Jennifer Lynne Pizzolato and Evelyn Lila Hosking; and step-grandchildren, Lisa Marie Pizzolato, Allan Ryan Pizzolato, Michael Christopher Pizzolato, and Philip James Pizzolato. Bev also leaves behind his sister, Marion Lorene Harrison; brothers, Gerald Milne McNair and Robert Norman McNair; along with many beloved nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family, and dear friends.

A hardworking and kind-hearted man, Bev found immense joy in life's simple pleasures—family gatherings on the farm, caring for his animals, and engaging in meaningful conversations. His warmth, wisdom, and love for those around him will be deeply missed and fondly remembered.

A celebration of Bev's life will take place this summer, with the date to be announced.

The family would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has reached out with cards, calls, messages, and visits. Your kindness, whether through flowers, food, or simply your presence, has been deeply appreciated and will always be remembered.

The New Carlisle
Funeral Association
extends sympathy to the family of
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NEW CARLISLE:
Bible Chapel Meetings
Sundays: Breaking of Bread for believers - 9:30 a.m., Gospel meeting and Sunday School - 2 p.m.
Thursdays: Prayer Meeting and Bible Study - 7 p.m. Everyone welcome! For more information: 418-752-3372 or 418-752-6011.

NEW CARLISLE:
New Carlisle Legion
Wednesdays: Shuffle board beginning at 4 p.m. Line Dancing beginning at 7:30 p.m. for \$7.
Thursdays: Darts beginning at 7 p.m. for \$10.
Saturdays: Pool beginning at 8 p.m. \$1 per game.
Sundays: Singles Cribbage tournament every Sunday at 7 p.m. for five weeks, starting March 9. Registration is \$10, followed by \$5 per player each week.

April 1: General meeting at 6 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle.
April 5: Mega gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m.

NEW RICHMOND
St. Andrew's United Church
March 30: A chili luncheon will be held from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. cost: \$10 for adults and \$6 for children under 12. If you would like take-out, please contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896 by Friday, March 28.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
50+ Club
Tuesdays: Weekly bingo every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. \$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each.
April 19: A turkey dinner will be held from 4 - 6 p.m. cost: 13+ \$20, 7-12 \$10 and 0-6 is free.
May 11: A Mother's Day brunch will be held between 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. cost: 13+ \$20, 7-12 \$10 and 0-6 is free.
May 24-25: Spring Bingo will begin at 1 p.m., doors

open at 12 p.m.
April 21: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
May 19: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
June: No meeting scheduled.
June 15: A Father's Day brunch will be held from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Cost: 13+ \$20, 7-12 \$10, and 0-6 is free.
July: No meeting scheduled.
September 20: A Harvest Bingo will begin at 1 p.m. - until finished, doors open at 12 p.m.
September 21: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
October 19: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
November 16: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

December 21: Annual General Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
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.

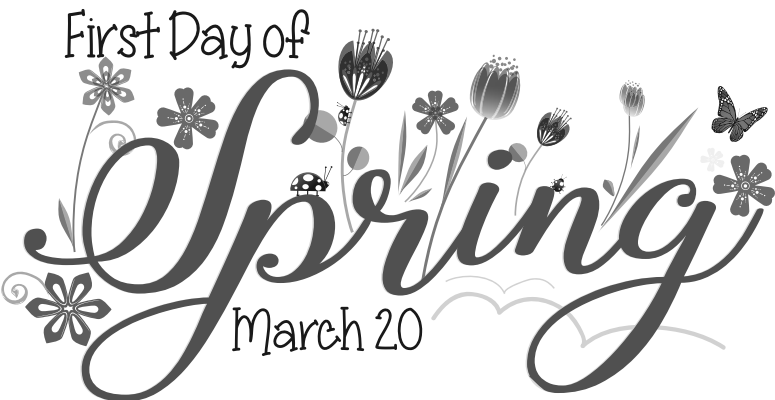
UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN
March 23
2 p.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND
March 23
10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
Sunday, March 23
New Carlisle
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Port Daniel
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH OF GASPÉ
Sunday, March 23
St. Andrews - York
10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Tuesday, March 25
St. Pauls - Gaspé
7 p.m. Holy Eucharist



Environmental talks being held to dream of a clean, green 2050

CYNTHIA DOW

The Centre d'Initiation à la Recherche et d'Aide au Développement Durable (CIRADD) which is affiliated with the CEGEP in Carleton is spear-heading a project to encourage Gaspesians to envisage a more sustainable future.

The project, entitled Collectivités Zéro émission nette Gaspésie, or "Collectivités ZEN Gaspésie" is a collaborative one with about a dozen partners, including the regional Public Health department and the Regroupement des MRCs. Other partners include the regional environmental council, Environnement Vert Plus, Solidarité Gaspésie, the regional women's table, the ROCGIM, and many other social movements. Natural Resources



Jacques Ouellet from Solidarité Gaspésie, a initiator of the project, listens intently at a session in Bonaventure.

Photo: Cynthia Dow

Canada is one of the funders. The aim of the three-year project is to build resilience in the face of ever more challenging impacts of climate change throughout the Coast, by imagining a future where the human population can live in harmony with the planet while ensuring decent living conditions for all.

The first step is to bring Gaspesians of all walks of life together to talk about a collective vision and to plan activities to bring that vision to reality. This spring, up to 50 public sessions will be organized to bring people together in small groups to discuss hypothetical future scenarios which will help inform and

focus what Gaspesians would like to see happen in the future.

"Participants don't need to have any particular expertise on environmental issues," explained CIRADD's animator, Patricia Chartier, in a release outlining the project aims and activities. One of their goals is to ensure to "include the opinions of the area's most vulnerable populations."

Each session is animated by a project employee and structured around texts describing the lives of future Gaspesians living in 2050, developed in cooperation with the Université de Montréal. The sessions take about 90 minutes and the results will be tabulated and used to create an overall vision for the region.

Animator Benoît Trépanier

will be in touch with the Indigenous and English-speaking communities to ensure their input is included in the project. "I am in the process now of reaching out to organizations and municipalities to promote the project in their communities," he told SPEC.

Sessions can accommodate a maximum of 10 people each, and the goal is to complete them up by this June.

In the second and third years of the project, a working committee will gather, analyze and make decisions on the input, ultimately developing a concrete action plan. The project also includes a scientific committee which is preparing a situation report to assess the current state of the Gaspesian environment.

For more information, visit <https://czengaspesie.ca/>.

HOROSCOPES

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, forcing an agenda right now might backfire. It is best to be patient and let things unfold organically. A few new people may come to your aid this week and support you.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

You might need to reconsider what you have been fighting for, Taurus. A current battle could be particularly hard to win, so you will have to rethink your strategy.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Someone in a position of

power might try to convince you that their way is the best approach this week, Gemini. You are determined to stick with what you think is right, but keep an open mind as well.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, avoid impulsive decisions right now, particularly those that are financial gambles. Poor or selfish actions can deliver consequences that are hard to reverse.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, what you desire could be in direct conflict with what a loved one in your home wants. Instead of trying to force your

ideas on them, figure out a way to compromise.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, the universe is calling the shots right now and time is moving at whatever speed is right. It might seem like very slow progress, so you'll need to remain patient.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, this week you might be tempted to put wants before needs. Self-control is needed or you could start spending more than is financially wise right now.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, frustrating exchanges

between you and loved ones might leave you retreating to quieter spaces. Any communication is better than no communication, so keep that in mind.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, you can resist a certain situation, but you might need to remain flexible as you do so. Don't fight battles unnecessarily right now. Look for the silver lining if need be.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, shortcuts can compromise your personal growth.

The pathway to greater success is to work hard and put in the hours necessary to reap the most lasting rewards.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, you have more power than ever before, but remember it comes with extra responsibility. Always use your authority wisely and think through decisions thoroughly.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, if you hope to make progress, you may have to change tactics. What you have been doing simply isn't working. Start looking at other strategies.

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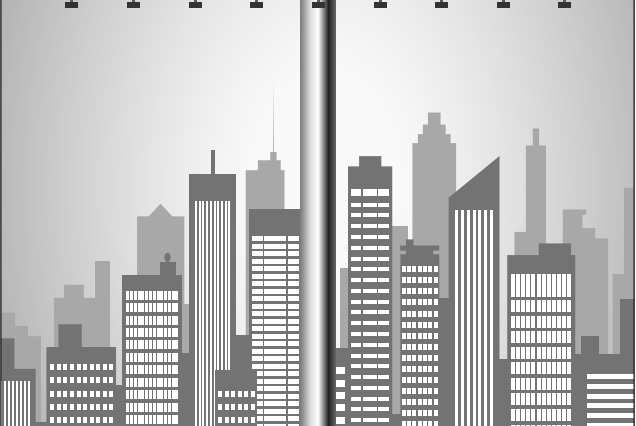
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