

Lobster season start slowed by erratic weather

GILLES GAGNÉ

SAINT-GODEFROI — The start of the 2025 lobster fishing was somewhat hampered by erratic weather along the south side of the Gaspé Coast. However, some catches made by Bay of Chaleur fishermen were comparable to last year's after three days, a small sampling considering that the season lasts ten weeks.

In Saint-Godefroi, Johnny Ross and George Skene landed approximately the same volumes as in 2024 for the first three days of catches, April 27 to 29. Daily landings hovered around 1,000 pounds, sometimes slightly more, sometimes a bit less, for both fishermen.

"I don't always check my numbers daily but it could be a little better than last year's start," pointed out George Skene, who is delivering his catches to the Saint-Godefroi wharf for the second consecutive year, due to the low water draft at the Shigawake wharf.

In 2024, he considered starting his season in Shigawake, but quickly changed his mind and landed his first catches in Saint-Godefroi. Mr. Skene delivers his catches to Gervais Roussy Inc, in Port Daniel, a subsidiary of Paspébiac's Unipêche MDM.

Johnny Ross indicated that his season start "is probably a bit lower than last year's. It is just three days in a season. It is early."

On April 29, the tide was stunningly low in the Bay of



The Mara Bleu remained stranded in the channel leading to the Saint-Godefroi wharf on April 29, while other boats waited offshore for the tide to rise.

Photo: G. Gagné

Chaleur, which forced some heavier boats to wait at least an hour before entering the Saint-Godefroi wharf. One of them, the Mara Bleu, was touching the sandy bottom of the channel leading to the berths, and the crew had to wait a considerable time before delivering the day's harvest.

The smaller boats of Johnny Ross and George Skene passed alongside the Mara Bleu to reach the docks.

"I have not seen a low tide like that very often. The wharf has already been dredged this year. They came about two weeks before the season started and they removed 6,000 cubic metres (of sediments). Usually, it is 1,500," remarked Mr. Ross.

Waiting for a price

By May 1, the 132 fishermen based between Gaspé and Bonaventure didn't know the price they would get for their first landings. Over the last

few years, that price has been determined by an accounting equation integrating what was paid by the grocers and buyers based outside the region.

Bill Sheehan, vice-president of the Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé processing firm E. Gagnon et Fils, the main buyer of lobster in the Gaspé Peninsula, didn't want to speculate much on May 1 about what the fishermen will receive for their first week of catches.

"I don't know what it will be. Last year, it was \$7.75 per pound for the first week. I don't think we will get there. The catches were not super strong in the Gaspé Peninsula because of the weather, but there is lobster coming from Nova Scotia, where the plants are hit by a 25% tariff imposed by China's government for the lobsters weighing more than two pounds. So, that lobster comes to the markets we are serving. Currently, the other provinces (plants) are paying between \$6 and \$6.50. It will



Johnny Ross and his crew unload their third day's catch

Photo: G. Gagné

be hard to pay way more and be competitive when we sell. Mothers' Day is coming next week though (May 11) and demand will be strong. For now, I can't tell the fishermen what I will pay them if I don't know what I will receive from the supermarkets and fish markets,"

explains Mr. Sheehan.

Twenty-five other lobster fishermen based between Bonaventure and Miguasha, as well as on the north side of the Peninsula and around the Forillon peninsula, gradually joined or are joining the fishery since May 3.



George Skene estimates his initial catches were slightly higher than last year's.

Photo: G. Gagné



With no fishermen using Shigawake harbour this year, Saint-Godefroi wharf was a busy spot on April 26.

Photo: P. MacWhirter



Captain of the Cindy Steeve, Vincent McRae proudly displays his new flag.

Photo: P. MacWhirter

Alexis Deschênes defeats Diane Lebouthillier in Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON - In the April 28 federal election, Alexis Deschênes of the Bloc Québécois won the Gaspésie-les-Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj seat in the House of Commons, defeating incumbent Liberal Member of Parliament Diane Lebouthillier by a margin of 4,274 votes. While this victory margin was clear, the lead shifted several times during the first 75 minutes of ballot counting.

Ms. Lebouthillier was seeking a fourth term since her first victory in 2015. She conducted a grassroots campaign, declining several invitations to debates, notably in Matane and Carleton-sur-Mer.

This was her first election since the abolition of the riding of Avignon-La Mitis-Matane-Matapédia. The Avignon and Matanie MRCs incorporated into Gaspésie-les-Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj, while the Mitis and Matapédia MRCs became part of the new Rimouski-La-Matapédia riding.

In his victory speech, at the Naufrageur microbrewery in Carleton, Alexis Deschênes emphasized from the outset that he and his team were able to counteract the "Carney effect," the phenomenon whereby Canada's new Prime Minister Mark Carney won several ridings for his party be-

cause popular perceptions of him as better equipped to hold his own against United States President Donald Trump.

"We had to transform this fear into a desire for national affirmation, and we did it," Mr. Deschênes told supporters gathered in Carleton, where he lives.

He praised the courage of the electors who voted for him. "They chose a representative who listens and acts, and that's what they'll get," he added.

"My first loyalty will always be to my region and to Quebec. I will be the representative of my riding in Ottawa, not the representative of Ottawa in the riding. We will do everything to take into account the courageous political gesture of the voters of the Gaspésie, Magdalen Islands, and Listuguj," he also exclaimed.

Alexis Deschênes also praised the efforts of his opponents, particularly those of Diane Lebouthillier. "I wish her continued success in the challenges she will face," he emphasized.

The challenge of representing such a vast territory remains significant. Geographically, Gaspésie-les-Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj covers an area slightly larger than Belgium, with the Magdalen Islands to serve, nearly 200 kilometres from the mainland.



Alexis Deschênes was promptly hugged by his wife, Pélélope Garon, and supporters upon the announcement of his victory.

Photo: G. Gagné

Diane Lebouthillier concedes victory

Despite her defeat, Diane Lebouthillier appeared calm and confirmed her retirement at age 66, shortly after conceding victory to her Bloc Québécois opponent (see side article).

Diane Lebouthillier lost her position as Minister of Fisheries, Oceans, and the Canadian Coast Guard in Mark Carney's interim cabinet shortly after his March 9 victory as Liberal Party leader. She had previously served as Minister of National Revenue from 2015 to 2023.

It had been over 100 years since a federal Member of Parliament (MP) from the Gaspé had sat at the cabinet table, the last being Rodolphe Lemieux

in 1911. This fact excludes Pierre de Bané, who represented Matapédia-Matane in the 1970s until 1984. Technically, that riding was part of the Lower Saint Lawrence region. He was also minister of Fisheries and Oceans under the government of Pierre-Elliott Trudeau after the latter's return to power in 1980.

Discontent in the Fisheries

Despite Diane Lebouthillier's comments about her time at Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the fact remains that several of her decisions have caused discontent among many fishermen, notably the late announcement re-

garding the resumption of redfish harvesting in 2024, and the low redfish quotas allocated to shrimp fishermen, who were then and still are experiencing a slump due to the collapse of their resource in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

The allocation of a significant number of exploratory lobster licences in the north of the Gaspé Peninsula has also caused some gnashing of teeth, with traditional lobster fishermen fearing that the resource would not be able to support all these new players.

A quick campaign launch and the VIA Rail issue

The campaign was dominated by exchanges between the Bloc Québécois candidate and the incumbent MP, exchanges that began even before the official start of the campaign on March 23.

Diane Lebouthillier immediately emphasized the importance of being on the "side of power," alleging that a Bloc Québécois MP would not be able to adequately represent voters because they would not have access to members of the federal cabinet in the event of a Liberal Party victory.

Mr. Deschênes repeatedly retorted that his rival had failed

Cont'd on page 5

Defeated, Lebouthillier announces her retirement

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER – The victory of Bloc Québécois candidate Alexis Deschênes over incumbent Member of Parliament Diane Lebouthillier wasn't nearly as close as a lot of people had expected.

Mr. Deschênes was elected with 45.8% of the vote, compared to 38.3% for Ms. Lebouthillier. Conservative Party candidate Jean-Pierre Pigeon managed to secure 12.4%. Although she didn't campaign, New Democrat Denise Giroux received 1.8%, Shawn Grenier of the Rhinoceros Party 1.0%, and People's Party of Canada candidate Christian Rioux garnered a meager 0.8%. Voter turnout reached only 59.59%.

Ms. Lebouthillier could not pinpoint what tipped the scales, noting that she campaigned

across the riding, speaking of her record and her game plan for a possible term. She has no regrets though, particularly her decisions in the fisheries sector. "All the decisions I've made, I would make the same decisions again," she said after learning that she had been defeated.

Losing her ministerial seat didn't work against her. "Not at all, because when you look at the cabinet level, Mr. Carney had decisions to make. With a large riding like we had—because it's a huge territory—there are all the issues: agriculture, forestry, fisheries, industry, trade, six airports, a mountain range, two time zones. We have Canada in one riding. The challenges are immense," she said.

For Diane Lebouthillier, this defeat marks the end of her political career. "I'm going back to my property, where I can enjoy myself and stop travelling. Sur-



Diane Lebouthillier watched the election results with a handful of supporters at her campaign office on April 28.

Photo: N. Sergerie

prisingly, I hate travelling. I've had my travel experiences since 2015. Now I'm packing my bags. I'm going to take care of my family, spend time with my grandchildren, my mother, and my partner. I'm going to

enjoy life," the outgoing MP concluded.

Conservative candidate Jean-Pierre Pigeon was satisfied with the result, finishing third with his best result ever, even though he was running for

the fourth time. Although he received just 12.4%, his election expenses will be reimbursed for the first time.

"I think it's the team I had, it was my fourth time running, people knew me," said Mr. Pigeon, who confirmed this would be his last time as a candidate. However, he plans to continue campaigning for the Conservatives, something he has done since 1977.

People's Party of Canada candidate Christian Rioux was disappointed with his result. He laments that the Donald Trump effect took up too much space in the election campaign.

"The media and the other parties used Trump a lot as a distraction rather than talking about their platforms. They capitalized on the fear of Trump," said Mr. Rioux, who was running for the second time. He isn't ruling out running again.

Diane Lebouthillier forgotten in Liberal ad

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - A Liberal advertisement promoting the party’s team in Quebec City and the eastern part of the province forgot to include Diane Lebouthillier.

The full-page ad, published on April 26 in the Journal de Québec - two days before the election - mentions the names of the candidates, including Alexander Reford in Rimouski-La Matapédia and Rémi Massé in Côte-du-Sud-Rivière-du-Loup-Kataskomik-Témiscouata. However, it failed to mention the name of Diane Lebouthillier, the outgoing Liberal Member of the Parliament and former minister since 2015, who was running for re-election in Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj.

The ad was bought by the official agent for Jean-Yves Duclos in Quebec City. When contacted for comment, Ms. Lebouthillier's campaign team said they had contacted Mr. Duclos's team, who acknowledged the omission and called it a mistake.

Her Bloc Québécois opponent, Alexis Deschênes, reacted on the social media platform X writing: “What to make of this Liberal ad naming all the candidates in eastern Quebec except Diane Lebouthillier in Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj?” He did not elaborate further.

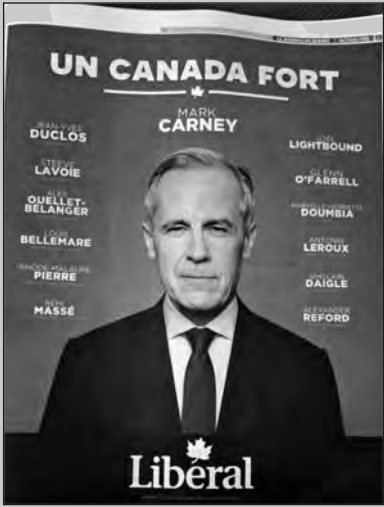


Photo: N. Sergerie

The Liberal advertisement published on April 26 in the Journal de Québec

The Table of Prefects and mayor of Gaspé react to federal election

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula Table of Prefets was expecting a tighter electoral race in the region. Nonetheless the results are unequivocal and reflect the population’s interest in the campaign, which led the Bloc Québécois' Alexis Deschênes to win the election in the riding of Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj.

Following his election, the new Member of Parliament (MP) listed the return of the passenger train to Gaspé, and possible new tariffs in the forestry industry as among his top priorities.

“The return of the train is a major issue for us. In the forestry industry, we agree that in the short term with the current crisis with the United States, there is a lot of uncertainty. Yes, these priorities are consistent with those of the

Table des préfets. As for housing, we're going to sit down together and work on solutions to get the Government of Canada more involved in adding rental housing,’ says Mathieu Lapointe, President of the Table of Prefects.

The fact that the riding is now represented by an opposition MP after 10 years of Liberal representation is not a concern according to Mr. Lapointe. “For us, the important thing is to have an MP who is present on the ground and who listens. I have no doubts about that. We're also in a minority government situation, and the Bloc will be able to play an influential role,” Mr. Lapointe added confidently.

The vastness of the territory remains a challenge, regardless of the MP. “But with today's technologies, we can meet virtually and rally around common issues,” believes Mr. Lapointe.

Although he was long rumoured to be the Bloc candidate in the election that ended on April 28, Gaspé mayor Daniel Côté says he has no regrets, even after the Bloc Québécois won by a large majority in Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj.

“I have no regrets. Three parties approached me. With the vastness of the territory and the distance between federal issues and the population, I'm not sure that's what motivates me in life and that's what motivated my decision,” explains Mr Côté, whose wife is expecting a child very soon. “I'm a hands-on guy. I find municipal politics more appealing than federal politics,” explains the mayor, who was defeated in 2011 by New Democrat candidate Philip Toone, the representative for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine during the Orange Wave.

Police report

Sûreté du Québec seeks public assistance in Pointe-à-la-Croix shooting

A septuagenarian was wounded by a small-caliber weapon on the evening of April 28, at approximately 10:30 p.m. in his home in Pointe-à-la-Croix . He was treated for minor injuries at the Campbellton hospital shortly after. A man in his sixties was arrested the following day and charged with 11 counts on April 30 at the New Carlisle courthouse. However, the criminal prosecutor withdrew the charges against the suspect shortly after because that prosecutor no longer had any evidence against a 60-year-old man from Listuguj. The incident may have been drug-related.

“The Sûreté du Québec is asking the public for information on this case. It occurred on Chaleur Street, in an apartment building. We can also say that it is not related to the battle between criminal groups in the Gaspé Peninsula,” explains Sûreté du Québec communication officer Frédéric Deshaies, referencing recent assaults on small-time dealers by individuals from outside the region over control of drug sales.

Mathieu Élément sentenced to 48 months for drug dealing

Mathieu Élément, 42, a repeat drug trafficking offender from the Saint-Maurice-de-l'Échouerie sector of Gaspé, was recently sentenced to 48 months in prison after a major drug seizure that took place a month ago. On April 9, police conducted two searches of Mathieu Élément's vehicle and residence, police discovered, among other things, nearly 1.2 kilograms of cocaine, more than 2,000 methamphetamine pills, Cialis, Viagra, magic mushrooms, and more than \$10,000 in cash. Judge Denis Paradis agreed with the joint suggestion of the defence and the criminal prosecutor, reminding Élément that the sentence could have been seven to eight years without a prompt guilty plea, given the large quantity of drugs seized. Judge Paradis warned Mr. Élément that any future convictions for similar offences could result in sentences between 12 and 15 years

Two injured in a moose collision in Gaspé

A collision between a car and a moose injured two individuals on the evening of April 30 in Gaspé. “The accident occurred around 6:50 p.m. on Route 197 in the Saint-Majorique sector. The vehicle swerved after hitting the animal and ended in the ditch, a few metres lower than the road. The driver and a three-year-old child were taken to Gaspé Hospital with minor injuries,” says Frédéric Deshaies, of the Sûreté du Québec. Traffic was delayed while the vehicle was towed.

Cap-Chat residents injured in late-night home invasion

On April 25, around 8:30 p.m., emergency services were called to a residence on Notre Dame Street west in Cap-Chat following reports of an altercation. The investigation suggests that hooded suspects entered the residence, leading to a confrontation with the occupants. One victim managed to activate an alarm, prompting the suspects to flee with certain items. “The suspects” are described as white and they left on foot in an unknown direction. They could have taken a ve-

hicle later. The occupants were transported to a hospital for treatment of minor injuries,” says Sûreté du Québec spokesperson Frédéric Deshaies. Investigators from the Rimouski Major Crimes Investigation Division and a forensic identification technician attended the scene to clarify the circumstances of the incident. Anyone who has information relating to this event can contact the criminal information Centre of the Sûreté du Québec at 1-800 659-4264, confidentially.

Patrick Prince's bail hearing postponed

The initial bail hearing for Patrick Prince, 41, who faces 15 charges related to fraud involving false representation of a financial institution in the Côte-de-Gaspé region, was postponed until May 2, just after SPEC's deadline. The man from Port-Daniel-Gascons, who is well known to police forces, has reportedly only had one victim so far, but the criminal prosecutor has confirmed that additional charges will be filed against the suspect. The defence is in discussions with the Public Prosecutor's Office, and the case could well be resolved with a guilty plea soon. Patrick Prince was arrested on April 23 near a financial institution on Renard Boulevard East in Rivière-au-Renard. Police officers recovered over \$3,000, bank cards, and equipment that may have been used to commit fraud. The Sûreté du Québec is continuing its investigation.

Diane Chrétien pleads guilty to major fraud

Diane Chrétien, 62, from Gaspé, pleaded guilty to major fraud at the Alban Aspirault grocery store in Rivière-au-Renard. According to CHNC, a pre-sentence report has been requested, with sentencing submissions scheduled for September 23 in Percé. The woman worked for the family business from 2011 to 2022 and was appointed cashier manager in 2015. Between January 2016 to June 2022, she admitted to stealing \$700 per week from the grocery store, for an estimated \$200,000. It was after a customer complained about the woman in 2021 that the company installed cameras. The crimes involved cancelling cash register transactions on the cash register and then charging the exact amount to the bank card. Chrétien also admitted to taking \$1,640 from an employee fund under her care. Ms. Chrétien has since repaid the amount.

Sébastien Bujold to address employment insurance fraud charges

Sébastien Bujold, 41, from Carleton, is expected to settle his employment insurance misrepresentation cases on June 10. The man faces 98 counts of making false or misleading statements about his bi-weekly benefits between June 15, 2019 and February 2024, for unreported income. Fines for such offences range from \$200 to \$5,000 per guilty verdict. The criminal prosecutor confirms that both parties will submit a joint submission to Judge Janick Poirier on June 10.

Charges dropped against Marcel and Benoît English

The charges that were pending against Marcel English, 61, and his brother, Benoît, 59, both from Gaspé, have been withdrawn by the criminal prosecutor. They had faced multiple charges, including arson, death threats, and mischief, following a dispute on a hunting ground. The prosecutor decided to drop the charges due to insufficient evidence to prove the allegations beyond a reasonable doubt.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Canada is divided

Some elections offer an occasion to mark history. If there is one lesson to be learnt from the April 28 election, it is that Canada is politically more divided than at any time since at least 1993, when the Bloc Québécois harvested 50 ridings shocking people from Halifax to Vancouver.

However, in 1993, there was a huge consensus elsewhere in Canada, about the Liberal Party's ability to run the country. The division was essentially visible between Quebec and the rest of Canada.

This time around, it is different. Canada is back in two-party mode, if we consider that the seven seats won by the New Democratic Party and the 24 seats saved by the Bloc Québécois are almost drops in a bucket of 343 constituencies. Moreover, 85% of expressed votes went to the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party, something that had not been seen in more than half-a-century.

The contrast in style between Liberal Party leader Mark Carney and Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre couldn't be more evident. The banker's quiet, measured and at times boring way of presenting speeches is pitted against the pugnacious, loud, angry and mostly frustrated rant of Mr. Poilievre.

Although some analysts observed during the campaign similarities between the two men's programs, considering that Mark Carney frequently mentioned that he is open to build more pipelines, the platforms and the way to reach their goals could hardly be more different.

Mark Carney suggested pipelines but he also expressed a clear openness for renewable energies and a transition towards green electricity. Pierre Poilievre favoured the "Drill, baby, drill!" slogan of Donald Trump with little mention of renewable sources of energy.

Mark Carney insisted on the necessity of strengthening the funding of CBC during the campaign, while Pierre Poilievre has insisted since winning the Conservative Party leadership race in September 2022 on defunding the public broadcaster, again the way Donald Trump is axing public services in the United States.

The Liberal Party surely took a few steps to the right of the political spectrum with the arrival of Mark Carney at its helm, but chances are that he will opt for consensual positions in some stakes that could trigger controversies.

Although Canada is rich in hydrocarbons, there is hardly any promoter ready to launch a pipeline project in a context that has recently favoured a decrease in oil prices, thanks to the recession Donald Trump's silly tariffs are creating. Moreover,

provinces have a big say in the adoption of pipelines because drinkable water is a provincial jurisdiction.

In Quebec for example, a rejuvenation of the Energy East project would mean crossing the Saint Lawrence river at some point. However, at least 50% of Quebecers take their drinkable water from that river's watershed. Quebecers won't risk polluting their water, which must come before oil.

How to lose
a 25% lead

In January, Pierre Poilievre's party was 25% ahead of the liberals according to some surveys. However, events like Donald Trump's inauguration on January 20 and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's announcement of his resignation on January 6, combined with Mark Carney's entry into the Liberal leadership race, changed the political dynamics.

Despite these changes, Pierre Poilievre stuck to his rigid style and slogans. He kept talking about axing the carbon tax even after Mark Carney's March 9 leadership victory. It also took him weeks before openly criticizing Donald Trump's ambition to turn Canada into the United States' 51st state.

In all likelihood, Mr. Poilievre didn't want to hurt the part of his hardcore base that would gladly opt for the integration of Canada to our neighbours of the south.

Although the Conservative Party increased its voting percentage compared to the last polls, reaching 41.3%, the uneven distribution of those votes, illustrated by many landslides in Alberta and Saskatchewan constituencies and insufficient support in too many ridings in other provinces, led to a relatively clear defeat.

The increased voting percentage garnered by the Conservative Party, the highest since the creation of the party in 2003 out of a joint venture made of the Reform Party, the remains of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Canadian Alliance, also came from the weaknesses of Maxime Bernier's People's Party. The latter lost 4.2% between the 2021 poll and this year's. It also might explain why Pierre Poilievre insisted so much on law and order policies, as well as populist orientations like forbidding the ban on plastic bags' single use.

Pierre Poilievre even lost his seat in Carleton, an area located in Ottawa. His opponent, Bruce Fanjoy, of the Liberal Party, received an absolute majority, collecting 51% of the votes.

In the meantime,
in the Gaspé Peninsula...

In the riding of Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj, Bloc Québécois candidate Alexis Deschênes won with a clear margin of 4,277 ballots against Diane Lebouthillier. He was heavily supported by Parti Québécois' Matapedia-Matane Member of the National Assembly Pascal Bérubé and his organization. It undoubtedly made a difference in that new part of the riding.

Mr. Deschênes conducted an energetic campaign. He is eloquent in public, taking clear and well-reflected stands, which is a tremendous asset when dealing with electors who haven't made up their mind on who to vote for. There were many of them during that campaign, wondering if they had to strategically support the Liberal Party because of Mark Carney's way of dealing with Donald Trump, or sticking to their convictions.

Diane Lebouthillier was at the same time heavily handicapped by a regional record that was less than outstanding, which is an understatement, especially in commercial fisheries, despite her tenure as Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada for a tad over 19 months.

During that period, she minimally failed to recognize the magnitude of the shrimp crisis, and to think of solutions that could allow mackerel and herring fishermen to deal with moratoriums hitting their species.

In addition to such stands, she completely missed on the importance of improving inter-regional transport. Air fares are still exorbitant and VIA Rail's services are still suspended.

She put emphasis on the importance of being on the side of power even before the real start of the electoral campaign. However, after nine-and-a-half years as a cabinet member of the government, she was unable to improve the Gaspésians and Magdalen Islands' access to fair and affordable transportation means. That failure was costly for her on April 28.






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Bruno-Pierre Godbout is remanded in custody

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - Chandler town councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout will remain in jail for the duration of legal proceedings. That was the verdict of Quebec Court Judge Denis Paradis during the bail hearing held on April 25 at the Percé Courthouse.

The defence and the Crown presented their arguments in the morning during a hearing that lasted two-and-a-half hours. The defence requested that Godbout be released since he did not pose a danger to the victims or the public, and since he would be subject to numerous conditions if granted bail.

Bruno-Pierre Godbout testified, guaranteeing a \$2,500

deposit and an equivalent amount without a deposit. A relative of the accused also promised a \$2,500 deposit for his release.

For its part, the criminal prosecution argued that the charges are very serious, including the aspect of violence and control toward the victims. It called a Sûreté du Québec investigator who indicated that the investigation is still ongoing. At the time of his arrest on April 15, police indicated that there may be additional victims.

After taking the decision under advisement, the judge ruled at the end of the day on the side of the criminal prosecution, considering that the accused's release would undermine public confidence

in the justice system, that he faces a sentence of between five and ten years in prison, and that the evidence presented during the bail hearing appeared credible.

The 36-year-old man faces 12 charges related to sexual assault, assault with a weapon, assault, unlawful confinement, and criminal harassment following an arrest warrant.

The events allegedly occurred between 2010 and 2025 in Bonaventure, Gaspé, Newport, Saint-Nérée-de-Bellechasse, and Montreal. A publication ban was issued to protect the identities of the victims.

At the time of his arrest, the Sûreté du Québec stated that Mr. Godbout allegedly used his notoriety to contact the vic-

times.

In addition to being a municipal councillor, Mr. Godbout works as a physical rehabilitation therapist at the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS).

Being remanded in custody represents a new setback for the individual, who is already facing charges of fraud, forgery, and using, possessing, or trafficking in a document. These charges were filed following an investigation by the Permanent Anti-Corruption Unit (UPAC) while the councillor was pro-mayor of Chandler following the suspension of former mayor Louise Langlois in 2021.

UPAC estimated the amount of fraud at approxi-



Bruno-Pierre Godbout while he was a member of Chandler council.

Photo: N. Sergerie

mately \$10,000. In addition, a case dating back to 2021 related to an illegal sports betting lottery remains under review by the Crown.

CHANDLER: Councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout called to resign

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - The mayor of Chandler is calling for the resignation of Newport ward councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout, who is facing charges related to violent crimes.

The town council also tabled a notice of motion on April 24 to terminate his remuneration.

Mayor Gilles Daraïche says he learned of the allegations against Mr. Godbout at the same time as the public, on April 15.



Mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche

Photo: N. Sergerie

may push its adoption past the next council meeting on May 5.

Regarding legal fees stemming from a separate 2021 travel expense lawsuit, when Mr Godbout was pro-mayor, the bill amounts to \$9,500, according to the mayor.

Mr Godbout had been absent from council since April 2024, following a voluntary withdrawal under an agreement reached with the Municipal Commission. That agreement allowed him to continue receiving his salary while awaiting further developments.

Another agreement, between Mr. Godbout and the Town of Chandler stipulates that the town will be reim-

bursed for legal fees if he is acquitted of the charges.

Mr. Godbout is facing charges of fraud, forgery and use, possession or trafficking of a document. UPAC has estimated the fraud at around \$10,000. Reimbursement of legal costs is guaranteed.

“At the Town of Chandler, there is a severance bonus. There are signed agreements,” points out the mayor. Even if Councillor Godbout no longer had any assets, the severance package would allow the Town to pay itself back.

“At least for the legal fees. As for the salary, we'll check with Municipal Affairs, because they're the ones who came to an agreement. He did

not sit on the council, but was recognised as a councillor of the Town of Chandler because he was temporarily withdrawn. We're in touch with the Municipal Commission. If he had been completely withdrawn, we wouldn't have had to pay his salary, but as he is temporarily withdrawn, we're going to check with Municipal Affairs,” says Mr Daraïche.

The mayor also clarified that any legal fees related to Mr. Godbout's arrest on April 15 are not being paid by the town, as the alleged victims are not elected officials.

As SPEC went to press on May 2, Bruno-Pierre Godbout had not submitted his resignation.

ELECTION:

Cont'd from page 2

and a half years. Her presence on the cabinet did not yield satisfactory results in the VIA Rail file, Mr. Deschênes remarked repeatedly during the 36-day campaign.

Admid the tariff war triggered by the United States and its impact on the lumber industry, Mr. Deschênes also committed to following closely the situation of Gaspé Peninsula-based sawmills in order to make sure that they get proper compensations before a new trade agreement is signed between Canada and the American government.

Born at the Maria hospital and raised in Cascapedia-St-Jules, Alexis Deschênes worked as a journalist for Radio-Canada

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and TVA for nine years before returning to school to become a lawyer. He has been practicing law for 10 years in his native Baie-des-Chaleurs.

His first two political experiences, for the Parti Québécois in 2014 in Trois-Rivières and in 2022 in Bonaventure, ended in defeat.

Conservative Party candidate Jean-Pierre Pigeon gathered 12% of the riding's vote and finished third. He conducted his campaign far from the limelight, refusing to participate in one of the two debates pitting Diane Lebouthillier and Alexis Deschênes, even if it was organized in his hometown of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

ation of elected representatives.

“To ensure that in order to be paid, you have to be seated at the council table for the monthly meeting. This is very important. We're going to stop paying people who aren't there,” says the mayor. Currently, councillors earn \$2,171 per month.

“That's the only way we can avoid paying people who are absent,” explains Mr. Daraïche, even though the by-law makes no exception for justified absences.

“We don't have much room to manoeuvre. People have to understand. Asking for the resignation and amending the law on the remuneration of elected representatives are the only things that can be done. These are important actions,” maintains the mayor.

The amended bylaw is expected to come into effect on May 1, although legal delays

“We all agreed that we had to act and not let this drag on. In the minutes that followed, we spoke to our lawyers,” says the mayor, trying to find out how to proceed.

“There are rules to follow. Some people are saying on social networks that the town needs to move, but you have to do things properly to avoid being prosecuted for acting in the wrong way,” explains Mr. Daraïche.

In addition to working with the municipality's prosecutors, the mayor consulted with the Ministère des Affaires municipales and the Commission municipale du Québec.

“A few hours after learning of the events, I asked for Mr Godbout's resignation,” continued the mayor.

On April 24, at a special meeting, a notice of motion was tabled to amend the regulations governing the remuner-

A minister's astonishing statement about his Caquist colleagues in the Gaspé region

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

QUEBEC CITY - The Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) Members of the National Assembly representing the Gaspésie may not be deemed qualified enough to serve as regional ministers, at least that is the impression left by Christopher Skeete, Minister responsible for Regional Development, during a budget session on April 29.

The comment came in response to a question from Parti Québécois Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Matane-Matapédia Pascal Bérubé, during the study of the 2025-2026 budget in the parliamentary committee.

"I want to talk about the

Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine regions. Does the minister think it would be a good idea for these two regions to have regional ministers who are MNAs for that territory?" asked Pascal Bérubé.

"I think it's on a case-by-case basis," replied Mr. Skeete. "Does he think it would be desirable?" asked Mr. Bérubé again.

"I don't make the connection between the idea and the conclusion as to whether or not it's a good thing. You can have a minister responsible for your region who is from your region and that doesn't mean that he or she would be good," said Mr. Skeete.

Questioned on the sidelines of a press conference, the

mayor of Gaspé preferred to be cautious in his comments.

"That's the Premier's prerogative. I still think it's unfortunate that we don't have a regional minister among our regional deputies, but I can't say that we're badly served by Minister Maïté Blanchette Vézina, who is doing the necessary representational work as regional minister. But it has always been an advantage to have a regional minister among our deputies. I won't say any more," says Daniel Côté.

He points out that in the past, ministers representing the region have been in Quebec City and Montreal.

Currently the Regional minister is the MNA for Rimouski.

The Gaspé Peninsula is represented by CAQ MNA



Photo: N. Sergerie

Catherine Blouin in Bonaventure and CAQ MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix in Gaspé.

The last regional minister actually elected within the Gaspé region was Gaétan Lelièvre, Parti Québécois MNA for Gaspé, who served as Minister of the Regions between 2012 and 2014.

CCIBDC asks federal politicians to work for the economy

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

BONAVENTURE - The Baie-des-Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIBDC) expects the Member of Parliaments elected on April 28 in a minority government in Ottawa to work constructively together to advance priority issues for the Canadian economy.

The threat of additional tariffs from the United States still looms over Canada.

"First and foremost, with a minority government, it's about working together with a common goal to counter these tariffs and work towards economic development," said CCIBDC Director Valentine Palma in a joint release with the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec.

"As a first step, it would be important to have trade diplomacy with a chief negotiator to work hand in hand with our American neighbours. That would already be very important. Within Canada, we need to break down barriers and promote trade between provinces, and finally we need to promote a Canadian procurement policy and encourage local content in public

contracts," adds Ms. Palma.

The previous government had begun to implement such measures, but she stresses that more needs to be done.

"We understand that Canada and Quebec are going to lose contracts with the United States, and there are certainly ways of replacing them within our own country," she comments.

The federal government created an economic trio with François-Philippe Champagne, Dominic Leblanc and Mélanie Joly when President Trump imposed his first rounds of tariffs.

The director hopes that this trio will remain intact. "The decision rests with Mr. Carney,

but it's true that having people who are already aware of the whole climate and who have had initial meetings with the Trump administration should help a great deal," she noted.

Business leaders are struggling with the lack of predictability from the US government, particularly with a president who frequently shifts positions on tariffs.

"Having a chief negotiator for Canada with a Canadian negotiating team coordinating with this administration might help us know where we stand. To have a guarantee on future tariffs or how we could come to an agreement. It would be important to have a fairly solid team," she concluded.

The Gaspé Spec makes strategic switch to bi-weekly format

The Publisher of The Gaspé Spec, Sea-Coast Publications Inc. has made the decision to switch to a bi-weekly format. The new publishing schedule will begin on May 14, which coincides with SPEC's 50th anniversary.

You will notice that although your paper will be delivered bi-weekly, it will be equivalent to the size of two week's issues, ensuring that you have plenty to read. "Keeping you informed and providing quality journalism remains our priority," says Publisher Penny MacWhirter.

Your May 14 issue of SPEC will feature a newly designed masthead and a special section dedicated to SPEC's 50th anniversary.

In addition, all paper subscribers will have access to an online edition, at no extra charge. More information on

how to obtain your new online edition will be available in next week's issue. In the meantime, SPEC is also developing an app that will be available in the coming month.

On behalf of all the directors of SPEC, I would like to thank Penny, Holly, Jillian, Emily and Gilles on their hard work in putting together our new bi-weekly format. We'd also like to thank the journalists, contributors and volunteers, who all play a vital role in making SPEC the community paper that it is.

This was not an easy decision, but after reviewing all the information, getting guidance from the wonderful Sharon McCully (Sherbrooke Record), and reading and listening to the input from all our devoted readers, we knew we had to keep our paper going, especially as we celebrate 50 years.

It will take a little while to get used to not reading the paper every week, but rest assured the same great content and lighthearted articles will be included in every issue, along with the regular features, contests and down-home humour.

Thank you to Cynthia Dow for being in constant contact with the QCNA, of which she is a board member, and for making it possible for Ms. McCully to meet with us and share her knowledge of the newspaper business.

We thank all our readers for your continued support through our first 50 years.

Elaine Sexton, President;
Fred Kirch, Vice President;
Gregory Leblanc, Secretary-Treasurer; and Directors, Hayden Sams, Patricia St. Croix, Bonita Annett and Steven Parent.

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The Changing Role of Motherhood

HOLLY SMITH

As families prepare to celebrate Mother's Day, it's a good time to reflect not only on the love and dedication of moms past and present, but also on how the role of motherhood itself has evolved over the generations.

For decades, mothers were often the anchors of large families, managing homes without many of the modern conveniences now taken for granted. They tended gardens, raised livestock, cooked from scratch, and kept households running, often while their husbands

worked in the woods, on the water, or away. Community ties were strong, but life was rarely easy.

Many mothers raised large families in houses with no running water and a wood stove. They baked bread every other day and still found time to knit and care for their elderly parents. They didn't complain, they just did what had to be done. Their strength was quiet, steady and often overlooked, but essential.

While mothers today may not be splitting wood or hauling laundry down to the river, the pressures they face are no

less real. With many families now reliant on dual incomes, and with the rising cost of living, motherhood now often means balancing work, childcare, aging parents, and the mental load of keeping everything running smoothly.

Technology has brought both relief and complications. It's easier than ever to keep in touch with family or to find parenting advice online, but social media also brings with it unrealistic standards and pressure to be the "perfect mom."

Still, there's a growing awareness of the importance of mental health and self-

care, and many younger moms are learning to ask for help, something earlier generations may have resisted. Support groups, parenting classes, and online communities have become vital tools.

The definition of motherhood also looks different. Single-parent households, blended families, and same-sex parents are becoming more and more common. Grandmothers are often helping raise children, and fathers are taking on caregiving roles that were once considered "women's

work." Motherhood today is far from a one-size-fits-all; the times when mothers were expected to do everything in silence are giving way to more open conversations about the challenges and realities of parenting.

This Mother's Day, whether you're celebrating a mom who raised her children on a tight budget or one navigating the complex realities of parenting in 2025, one thing remains the same: the strength, love, and resilience of mothers are worth celebrating.



Trivia Mothers in literature and on the screen

Test your knowledge of these maternal characters from literary works, television and movies. Who am I?

1. Anne Shirley's mother passed away when she was a young child, I later adopted Anne. (Marilla Cuthbert, Anne of Green Gables)
2. I am a kind and gentle and hardworking mother, affectionately known as "Ma". I want my daughters to be strong and independent women.
3. I am a devoted, but recently impoverished mother who must care for my daughters alone while their father is away serving as Chaplain in the civil war.
4. In 1984, I accompanied my husband on a two-week vacation to Iran, only to find myself and my daughter prisoners in a land where women have few rights and Americans are despised.
5. I'm gossipy, indiscrete, social-climbing and a huge embarrassment to my daughters and because of me they almost miss out on love altogether.

ters and because of me they almost miss out on love altogether.

6. I have three children and all I want is "Five minutes' Peace" so I can have a bath.
7. Although I'm a bit yellow, and often seen as a guide of what to avoid, I'm strong, resilient and beloved.
8. I'm a witty and independent single mom and although my own mother is an annoying snob, I play nice for my daughter's sake.
9. I'm a beacon of warmth, have an infectious giggle and see the best in everyone, even the teenagers hanging out in my basement.
10. I'm a loud-mouth Irish matriarch whose favourite pastime is meddling in my kid's lives.
11. My love for my children is steady and fierce. Although my daughter, Shelby is hurt when I'm upset over her pregnancy, I can't help but worry about my daughter and her health problems.

12. I am the mother of seven children, I'm always busy, but find the time to care for one more. In my spare time I sometimes knit Christmas gifts. I am known for saying, "Not my daughter, you b****."

13. I am a frazzled mother, who was so busy I forgot something very valuable when I left for Christmas vacation. I travelled far and wide to get back home to my quick-witted son.

14. I would love my son unconditionally and I always tell him to embrace his unique qualities and not let others define him. I would do anything to get my son into public school.

15. I'm a housewife, but known for my laziness and extravagant tastes. I try to be a good mother to my children and a good wife to my husband, even though I won't be cooking for him anytime soon.

Answers in next week's issue.

A Mother's Love

As April showers fade, we can feel "Mother's Day" approaching, bringing with it childhood memories and the unique love that every mother has.

Years go by, the leaves of friendship fall, youth fades, and time speeds ahead, but a Mother's love never goes away. The gifts she offered are in our hearts forever.

Mother is a simple word, yet how many times have we stopped, taken a deep breath and said "Thank you" for our triumphs and tears? We may have been ungrateful or silent at times, but her patience never withered.

A mother always has a tender smile along with her guidance and compassion of love to shine everyday. Keep in mind that a mother holds a family together, sometimes with tape, glue or safety pins, but she holds it together, on down days and good days. We cannot "Thank" our "Moms" enough for everything they've done for us, topped off with hugs and laughter.

Ken Ross



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What Mom really wants...

PENNY MACWHIRTER

What Mom wants for Mother’s Day isn’t expensive and it isn’t a hard-to-find item. What she’s really hoping for is the gift of time, with the people she loves most.

Mothers and children have busy lifestyles in today’s world. According to Statistics Canada the employment rate for mothers with young children reached a record high of 79.7% in 2023. So, it comes as no surprise that most moms wish they had more time to take care of everything that needs to be done, and more time to spend with their loved ones. A survey by the Canadian Women’s Foundation reported that 50% of the mothers surveyed were exhausted trying to balance work and family. So, taking a break and giving the gift of time is a very meaningful and impactful way to show your mother how much she means to you.

Ideas for young children

Make a handmade card, with a sweet poem dedicated to Mom, with assistance from another adult or older sibling, make breakfast and serve it to Mom in bed, this will provide the perfect opportunity for snuggle time. You could also help mom with chores such as folding the laundry or helping with the dishes.

Ideas for teens

Teenagers looking to give

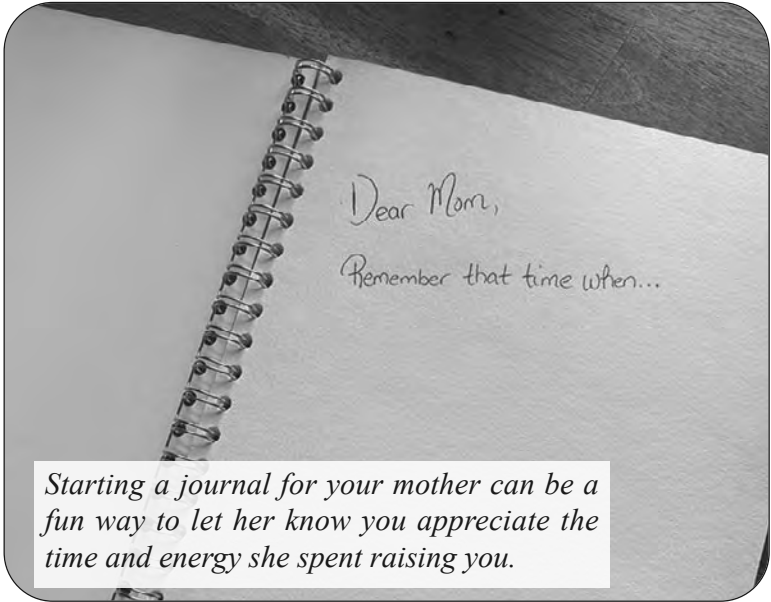


Photo: Penny MacWhirter

their mothers a memorable Mother’s Day gift can start by thinking about what it is mom really wants. Does she rarely get time to herself? If that’s the case make her breakfast in bed, close the door and while she’s relaxing tidy up the house. Maybe a spa day at home would do her a world of good. Set up a Bluetooth speaker in the bathroom and light a candle. If you have younger siblings, let your mom know you’ll watch them while she has her “spa time”. A coupon book offering chores, such as car washing and childcare is also a great way to give your time. For mothers wishing they had more time with their family, teens could help cook supper, set the phones and devices aside, and give Mom your undivided attention during the meal.

Adults

Adults who are looking for a way to show Mom they care

can plan an outing and spend time with her or make her favourite meal and invite her over for supper. She will be thankful for the break and will appreciate the time to catch up and the chance to spend quality time with you. If your mom is the sentimental type, purchase an inexpensive journal and make the first entry. It could be a poem dedicated to her, or even a special memory from your childhood. If you don’t live near your mother, plan a special time to video chat without any interruptions. You could also send her a photo collage (digital or printed) of some of your favourite memories with her.

While handing over a material gift might make you feel like you’ve done your part, remember that experiences have a deeper and longer lasting effect. The memories from those experiences will keep on giving, they will bring feelings of happiness, pleasure and pride, over and over again.

Learn the meanings behind popular Mother’s Day flowers

Mother’s Day is a time to express love and appreciation for mothers, sentiments that are often expressed with gifts. Flowers are a popular present to bestow on Mother’s Day, as they can brighten a room and bring a sweet aroma to any household.

While any flowers may ultimately suffice on Mother’s Day, gift givers may want to select flowers for Mom that convey specific messages. The language of flowers has been recognized for centuries. Though perhaps not as heralded as it once was, flower symbolism persists to this day. Here’s a look at some of the meanings behind certain types of flowers to help guide Mother’s Day gifting.

- **Amaryllis:** These plants start as bulbs and are naturally spring-blooming flowers. The name comes from the Greek word “amarysso,” which means “to sparkle,” and they symbolize pride.
- **Aster:** These daisy-like flowers are delicate-looking perennials. Asters make great gifts because they symbolize love and daintiness.
- **Begonia:** There are more than 2,000 types of begonias, and the flower symbolizes deep thoughts. Begonias were made famous by French horticulturist Michel Bégon, who thought the blooms looked like beautiful girls.
- **Bleeding heart:** These flowers are red and pink blossoms that look like the perfect heart shape with a teardrop at the bottom. They’re beautiful and symbolic of love and affection.
- **Buttercup:** These are associated with youthfulness and cheerfulness and can call to mind childhood days spent picking buttercups and holding them under chins to reveal that you like butter. The flower is known for its beauty and innocent charm.
- **Camellia (white):** White camellias stand for purity and innocence, but they also symbolize admiration and respect. Camellias make beautiful additions to any bouquet.
- **Daisy:** Daisies are happy-looking flowers, and according to Norse mythology they represent motherhood and children.
- **Delphinium:** Delphiniums come in pink, white and blue varieties and embody youth and renewal. They’re a good pick if you want to convey a continued or renewed affection for a person.
- **Tulip:** Tulips with an orange hue are thought to represent understanding and appreciation. They can express appreciation for Mom or another special person. Yellow tulips symbolize happiness, while pink tulips are symbolic of love. Red blooms should be reserved for sweethearts.



happy
Mother's
day

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PLAN A MOTHER'S DAY SHE'LL LOVE

Festival Journalistique de Carleton: A Global Gathering of Minds

ARTHUR POIRIER-ROY
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

Carleton-sur-Mer – The Quai des Arts de Carleton is set to become a vibrant hub of journalistic discourse from May 15 to 18, 2025, hosting the highly anticipated Festival Journalistique de Carleton. This unique event, as revealed in an insightful interview with Alain Bernier, a key figure in its planning and execution, promises to be a remarkable confluence of global perspectives.

Mr. Bernier highlighted the festival’s distinctive position, noting that similar gatherings are rare, with only a few counterparts in France and Italy. This rarity underscores the festival’s significance in fostering international dialogue.

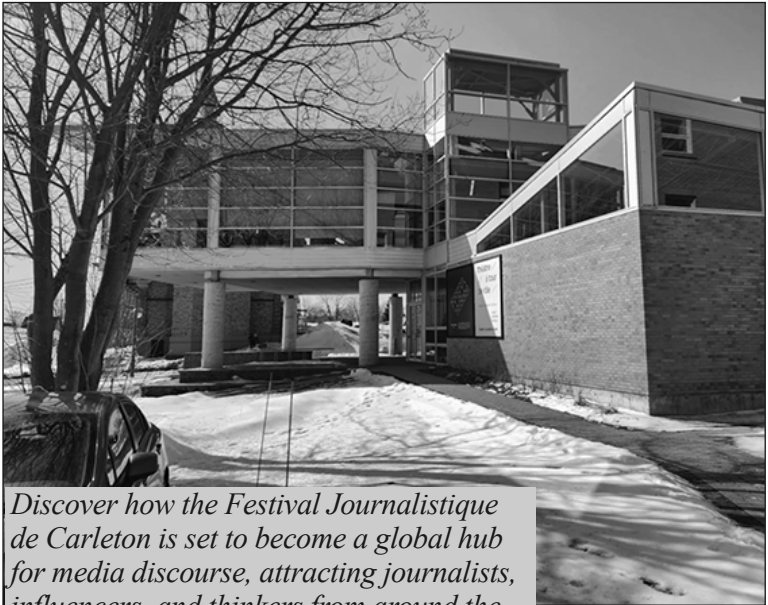
The event attracts a diverse array of participants, from renowned celebrities and seasoned local journalists to influencers, scientists, television personalities, and aspiring students from across the globe.

The festival serves as a vital platform for exploring the evolving landscape of media in our society. Discussions will center on maintaining journalistic integrity, reaching new audiences, and strengthening connections in an increasingly digital world. Bertin Leblanc, the festival’s director, works closely with Mr. Bernier to orchestrate this ambitious event, ensuring a rich and diverse program.

With over 80 panelists spanning three days, the festival will tackle a myriad of

critical issues, from the perspectives of First Nations communities to international politics and war. As Mr. Bernier astutely observed, “The best thing about this event is the collateral advantages.” He emphasized the unexpected and enriching conversations that arise from spontaneous interactions, highlighting the value of serendipitous encounters beyond the scheduled panels.

Mr. Bernier also addressed the potential for discord, given the wide range of topics and participants. However, he stressed that the atmosphere has consistently been one of cordiality and respectful dialogue. This observation aligns with research in social psychology, which demonstrates that humans, as inherently social beings, tend to exhibit remarkably polite behavior in environments characterized by goodwill and shared purpose. Studies suggest that face-to-face interactions, particularly in well-structured social settings, foster empathy and understanding, mitigating the divisive tendencies often seen in virtual interactions. This reinforces the idea that



Discover how the Festival Journalistique de Carleton is set to become a global hub for media discourse, attracting journalists, influencers, and thinkers from around the world.

Photo: A. Poirier-Roy

the current rise of online hate is often a product of disconnection and the dehumanization that can occur in digital spaces.

The festival’s commitment to engaging with current and future audiences is particularly noteworthy. Organizers are keen to understand the information needs and preferences of younger consumers, aiming to expand the reach of quality journalism. This focus on audience engagement reflects a broader effort to ensure that journalistic integrity remains relevant and accessible in a rapidly changing

media environment.

The Festival Journalistique de Carleton is more than just a series of panels; it is a catalyst for meaningful connections and collaborative exploration. As Alain Bernier put it, "The best thing about this event is the collateral advantages. It's not about what you intended to do going there, but about the conversations you'll have with people you didn't expect to see attending the same panel you did." For anyone interested in the future of journalism and the power of human connection, this event is not to be missed.

RéGÎM sees growth almost everywhere in 2024

Nelson Sergerie
GASPÉ - The Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Intermunicipal Transport Board (RéGÎM) has reported growth in several sectors in 2024, and the target of 100,000 passengers for public transit finally appears to be on track.

RéGÎM presented its annual report on April 14, which noted a 9% increase in public transit, reaching 93,044 passengers. Haute-Gaspésie saw the strongest growth, with a 30% increase, reaching 20,864 trips. The Bay of Chaleur saw a 5% increase, reaching 34,095 trips.

Another gain, this time in the paratransit managed by RéGÎM: 17,995 trips were made in the Bay of Chaleur area, 862 more than in 2023. The same is true in Haute-Gaspésie, with an increase of 470 for a total of 10,906.

Special trips organized for festivals or to ski resorts saw the number of passengers increase by 33% for a total of 18,037 trips. Bike-sharing is also growing, with 14,325 kilometres travelled, almost double the 7,440 kilometres travelled in 2023. The Carleton-sur-Mer resort is the most popular, with 7,799 kilometres and a growth of 289%. New Richmond followed with 2,295 kilometres travelled, a growth of 143%.

"The numbers are constantly evolving. If we look at public transit ridership, we're talking about a 9% increase. A few years ago, we thought it would be nice to reach 100,000 passengers on our buses annually. We're at 93,044 passengers, a record," says Gaspé Mayor and RéGÎM President, Daniel Côté.

"We see a positive future. If we had more resources, we would arrive with a more developed network, with new transportation options," notes the president, who dreams of a time when buses could run every two hours instead of just mornings, lunchtime and evenings.

"We have a sustainable mobility plan for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine. We want it to become a reality, and that means investing in our infrastructure and services. We often don't have the means to make these investments ourselves, and that requires government assistance," says Mr. Côté. The RéGÎM is financed by a one-cent tax on every litre of gasoline sold in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, municipal contributions, and user contributions.

Since the electrification of transportation reduces revenue from the gas tax, the RéGÎM is continuing its discussions to request the imposition of a vehicle registration tax, but nothing is simple.

"There are many administrative and legal issues surrounding the admission of an intermunicipal authority to a registration tax," says the president.

The current law permits MRCs to impose tax registrations, not the boards. "It's a major administrative headache to see if there's a possibility, and if it is possible, perhaps we could levy a small registration tax to make up for the losses in the gas tax," suggests the president.



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Canada

Announcements



Obituary



HOORWEG: Alfred

In memory of Alfred Hoorweg of Barss Corner, Nova Scotia, who passed away March 21, 2025, at the Bridgewater Hospital.

Al was born on July 20, 1932, in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, son of Cornelius and Elizabeth Slinger Hoorweg.

Before immigrating to Canada in 1954, Al served as a communications officer in the Royal Dutch Navy aboard the aircraft carrier, the Karl Doorman. In Canada, he worked several years for bell telephone in various locations within Ontario as well as at the "Communication system" in Northern Québec (Knob Lake). He then worked for the Iron Ore Company of Canada in Sept-Iles, Quebec.

While living in Ontario, Al and his first wife, Leona Sequin had three children: Elizabeth Overland, Laura and Anthony Hoorweg.

In 1970, he married Eurda Lodge, and there was yet another career change, where he studied at McGill University and became a high school teacher and an industrial arts instructor. Hired by the Regional School of Gaspesia, Al taught at the New Carlisle High School and the Bonaventure Polyvalent (English section).

Al subsequently retired in 1982 and chose to live in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, before moving in 1996 to Barss Corner, Nova Scotia.

Al was predeceased by his only sibling, Elizabeth (Bep) Van der Windon, who passed away on January 30, 2024.

He leaves to mourn nieces Désirée Brand and Barbara Van der Windon, nephew Daniel Van der Windon (all living in the Netherlands), and first cousin Elly Loderus in the Netherlands, also Paul Vaneyk (Bessie) from Corner Creek Farm, Bowmanville, Ontario.

The family would like to sincerely thank Tanya Taylor and the other caregivers who assisted Al, providing for his needs these past few years.

A deep appreciation to neighbours Lauralee and Gary Seamone. Acknowledgement to Adam Tipert of the Sweany New Germany funeral home, and to Jim Delong.

Respectfully, Eurda Hoorweg-Lodge.



In Memory

ANNETT: Emily (née Tuzo) ANNETT: Francis

In loving memory of a dear mother, mother-in-law and grandmother, who passed away 27 years ago on May 2, 1998, and a dear father, father-in-law and grandfather, who passed away 27 years ago on May 14, 1998.

*Often in the still night,
Before slumber's chains have bound us.
Fond memories bring to light,
Passed days around us.
The smiles and tears of childhood's years,
The words of love then spoken.
The eyes that shone now dimmed and gone,
The cheerful hearts are now broken.
Gone are the days we used to share,
But in our hearts, you are always there.
The gates of memory will never close,
We miss you more than anyone knows.
With tender love and deep regret,
We, who love you, will never forget.*

Sadly missed and forever loved by daughter Bonnie, son-in-law Daniel, granddaughter Janna and grandson John (Evelyne).

BOURGAIZE: Nelson

In loving memory of a dear father, grandfather and great-grandfather who passed away April 29, 1985.

*No matter how our lives may change,
Or whatever we may do.
We will never forget those precious times,
The ones spent with you.
We hold you close within our hearts,
And there you shall remain.*

*To walk with us throughout our lives,
Until we meet again.*

Forever in our hearts and deeply missed by Dolly, Merle, Clayton (Eleanor), Bradford (Shirley) and families.



SCLATER: Thomas July 15, 1946 - May 4, 2024

Dear husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend.

*Gone are the days we used to share,
But in our hearts,
You are always there.*

Always remembered and loved: Your wife Peggy, son James, daughter Jennifer, grandson Louis and all your family members and friends.



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GAËL TREMBLAY
Notary and legal counsel

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1198 Perron Blvd West
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Tel.: (418) 392-5282
Fax: (418) 392-6155
E-mail: gaeltremblay@notarius.net



Notaries and legal counsel

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YORK:

FADOQ

May 10: FADOQ York River Senior Citizens Club will be holding their Annual General Meeting beginning at 4 p.m. at the Gaspé Royal Canadian Legion Branch 59, 197 Jacques Cartier St. The AGM will be followed by a buffet supper and live entertainment with Coco and Dodo. The price of tickets are \$25 with a \$15 rebate for members who attend the AGM. For more information and to purchase tickets contact Ron Mundle 418-355-4732, Tony Patterson 418-368-3276, Debbie Sams 418-868-2977, Clothilda Adams 418-361-5619. Deadline for purchase of tickets is May 8.

YORK:

Gaspé County W.I.

September 6: Gaspé County W.I. will be hosting its W.I. Craft Fair Competition at the York hall. Registration fee is \$15 and you can enter as many craft, cooking, and/or garden items as you would like. To register contact Bonita Annett at 418-368-3453 or gaspe22@gmail.com and she will give you a copy of the fair list. The last date to register is July 31.

SHIGAWAKE:

Shigawake

Community Centre

May 17: Shigawake Community Centre will be hosting a Mother's Day tea from

12 p.m. to 2 p.m. Cost: adults \$12, 6-12 \$6 and children under 6 will be free.

HOPE:

Hope Baptist Church

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

NEW CARLISLE:

Veteran's Historical Committee

May 13: The Veteran's Historical Committee invites you to a public meeting beginning at 6 p.m. at the New Carlisle Legion. Guest speaker Tom Eden will be giving a presentation on the history behind the street names of New Carlisle.

NEW CARLISLE:

New Carlisle

Funeral Association

May 10: The New Carlisle Funeral Association will be having a Mother's Day Tea at the New Carlisle Town Hall from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Cost: adults \$12 and children under 10 is \$7.

NEW CARLISLE:

New Carlisle

Legion

May 9: Mother's Day lobster meal with salads, dessert and live entertainment. Take-out is from 4:30 to 5 p.m. and eat in is from 5 - 6:30 p.m., tickets are limited please call or text 418-372-9301 members \$25, non-members \$30.

Mondays: Mini bingo beginning at 7 p.m. for the months of April and May.

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.

June 3: General meeting at 6 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle

NEW CARLISLE:

Bible Chapel Meetings

Sundays: Breaking of Bread for believers - 9:30 a.m., Gospel meeting and Sunday School - 2 p.m.

Thursdays: Prayer Meeting and Bible Study - 7 p.m. Everyone welcome! For more information: 418-752-3372 or 418-752-6011.

NEW RICHMOND:

Yard sale

May 17: A community yard sale will be held at 462 Route 132 East, New Richmond from 8 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. (rescheduled to Monday, the 19 in case of rain). Those wishing to participate are welcome. Bring your table and set up.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
50+ Club

Tuesdays: Weekly bingo every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. \$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each.

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 19: Meeting at 6:30 p.m.

June: No meeting.

June 15: A Father's Day brunch will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Cost: 13+ \$20, 7-12 \$10, and 0-6 is free.

July: No meeting.

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.

ROTARY CLUB
WINNERS

The winners for the week of April 1 - 5 are:

Carole Smith, André Leblanc, Réjeanne Poirier, Louis Roy and Donna Murphy.

The winners for the week of April 6 are:

Marc Leblanc, Michel Rivière, Marie-Claude Allard, Josée Kaltenback, Andréa Delarosbil, Janique Ouellet and Audrey Cyr.

The winners for the week of April 13 are:

Diane Bujold, Pneus New Richmond, Marie-Eve Verreault, Reine Trépanier, Stéphane Allard, Judith Dugas and Johanne Pelletier.

The winners for the week of April 20 are:

Lana Normandeau, Louis Morin, Sylvie Onreat, Florent Aubin, Muriel Laurans, Louis Fournier and Lisette Henry.

The winners for the week of April 27 - 30 are:

Sarto Perron, Nancy Budd, Kenneth Quinn and Gail Martin Harrison.

UNITED CHURCH
NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, May 11

10 a.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH
HOPE TOWN

Sunday, May 11

10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH
OF CANADA

Sunday, May 11

New Carlisle

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Port Daniel

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH
OF GASPÉ

Sunday, May 11

St. James - Wakeham

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

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