

Alexis Deschênes adjusts to new role as MP

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Alexis Deschênes, the Member of Parliament for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj, has taken on important responsibilities within the Bloc Québécois caucus.

The leader of the sovereignist party, Yves-François Blanchet, appointed the newly elected Member of Parliament (MP) on April 28 as Deputy House Leader of the Bloc in the House of Commons.

"Taking my first steps in the House of Commons as Deputy House Leader is a highly stimulating challenge and a mark of confidence that I accept with humility and a strong desire to rise to the challenge. In the unique context of a minority government, I will have to be closely involved in parliamentary strategy and use my legal skills to ensure that parliamentary procedure is respected. I will give it my all," stated Mr. Deschênes in a press release on May 7.

He will work alongside Christine Normandin, the Member of Parliament for Saint-Jean, who was named House Leader of the Bloc Québécois.

This appointment is another step taken by the new MP, who must act quickly to set things up in his riding, since Parliament will resume on May 26.

Alexis Deschênes has been working on the ground since May 1, making his first official outing as an MP at the Baie-des-Chaleurs Chamber of Commerce and Industry luncheon.

"There are a lot of new things at the beginning," he said, referring to his first trip to Ottawa for his caucus meeting and the orientation the Bloc Québécois will take at the House of Commons. (We have to) see how we hire, all the administrative details. There will be a significant budget. There



Alexis Deschênes at the first Bloc Québécois caucus in Ottawa on May 7.

Photo: Bloc Québécois

will be locations to rent. That's what's keeping me busy," commented the Bloc member in his first steps as an elected official.

A riding as large as Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj will require a significant budget to adequately cover the territory of some 24,000 square kilometres. "What I know is that we have an additional budget, and we may also be able to request a small surplus to ensure we have the necessary means to open offices as well distributed as possible throughout the territory and hire a team," emphasized Mr. Deschênes, who wants to interact with voters.

"I'm already receiving requests from people to accompany me," noted the elected official.

Still, sitting in Ottawa for several weeks a year requires a reorganization of his personal life. He is the father of three boys, the oldest has already left home, the second is heading off to CEGEP, and the third is finishing high school.

"It's one of the sacrifices that political life requires. My goal is to return as much as possible. We'll use the means of transportation we have to return on weekends to spend

time with my family, those I love, and be close to my community," he explains.

At first glance, the VIA Rail train would be the best alternative for leaving the riding, from Campbellton to Ottawa. "We can take the train on Sunday evening in Campbellton, and I hope to leave from Carleton and even New Carlisle soon to get to Ottawa the next day. It seems to me to be the most appropriate means of transportation that will allow me to be as efficient as possible, not waste time driving, and be able to work and sleep," says Mr. Deschênes. The use of the passenger train would become a symbol for someone who, even before running for office, was fighting for its return to the Gaspé Peninsula.

"We need it. It's another tool for our entrepreneurs to get to the city more easily; it increases productivity. It's also an additional tool for seniors to get to

the city for medical care, for students, and for people with reduced mobility. Our job is to ensure that VIA Rail resumes this service, and I'll take the next few days to think about a strategy," he said.

Mr. Deschênes has no idea how his first few days in Ottawa will go, but is counting on his 12 years of experience in journalism, including four years at the National Assembly in Quebec City and another 12 years as a lawyer.

"I have no concerns about my ability to get my points across. My priority will be to build relationships with the ministers who are important to the Gaspé and the Magdalen Islands to move these issues forward. I want links with decision-makers for the region to be a winner," says the Bloc Québécois MP.

Fishing is a way of life on the Coast

PORT-DANIEL: - On the Gaspé Coast, fishing is a way of life. It's roots are deeply intertwined with cultural traditions, family history, and even one's sense of purpose.

Growing up in a fishing community shapes individuals' lives, instilling a deep connection to the water and nature, while fostering intergenerational relationships and learning opportunities.



Oceana and Khy Roussy are part of that community, they woke up bright and early on the first day of lobster season, so they could cheer on their grandfather Captain Mark Roussy; and his helper, their father Mathew Roussy.

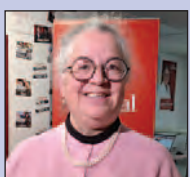


Photo: Emily Hocquard

Inside this week

Diane
Lebouth
illier

Page 2



**SPEC
50th**

Page 11-14



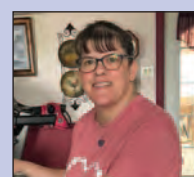
Moose Ticks

Page 15



Long Covid

Page 18-19



Diane Lebouthillier's political testament

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINTE-THÉRÈSE-DE-GASPÉ - Turning the page on 15 years of active politics, outgoing Liberal Member of Parliament and former Trudeau government minister, Diane Lebouthillier leaves with the satisfaction of a job well done.

"I walk around with my head held high everywhere in our riding. More than a billion dollars have been invested in the riding, and I don't know when that will be done again," commented Ms. Lebouthillier in an exclusive interview with SPEC reflecting on her political career. A social worker by training who worked in mental health for 25 years, Ms. Lebouthillier worked from 2008 to 2010 for the former provincial Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Gaspé, Georges Mamelonet, before entering active politics in 2010 as prefect of the Rocher-Percé MRC and a Liberal MP since 2015.

One of the criticisms levelled at the incumbent is that she carried Ottawa's message into the riding instead of representing the riding in Ottawa.

"We did both! Yes, we brought programs, but we also brought things from home to Ottawa. The Fisheries Fund. If I hadn't sat around the table and had discussions with my colleague Dominic Leblanc, who was Minister of Fisheries, this fund would have been created initially for the Atlantic region. It was the efforts made with Dominic that ensured we were able to bring this money back,"



Diane Lebouthillier.

Photo: N. Sergerie

she maintains. Ms. Lebouthillier hasn't performed a complete analysis of her defeat. "But maybe people wanted change. Honestly, I don't know," she begins by replying.

However, when asked about the fact that she had promised in 2015 not to play things over and over again, she reflects by saying, "I've always remained outspoken. For me, having integrity and telling people the truth, even if they don't want to hear it, remained important. Perhaps that's also why I lost my election. No one can say I lied to them. If there are efforts to be made, I will make them, but if we can't go any further, I'll let you know, but if I can open doors for you, I will open them," she believes, adding that in the cabinet, the work had to be seen as a whole across Canada. The past two years, since her appointment as Minister of Fisheries, Ms. Lebouthillier admits that it hasn't been easy, as she doesn't like to travel.

"For the Department of Fisheries, I've been to British Columbia, the Arctic, and in-

land fisheries, and then there's the riding. It's already a challenge to come back to the riding. Every time I flew home, it was incredibly stressful. After 21 days in Ottawa, I would go to bed at night and cry because I couldn't wait to get home," she confides.

Her personal life has brought its share of worries. "On the family front, my partner almost died. My father passed away. We had construction work. A lot of things happened. I have children and I'm a grandmother, and we're trying to juggle everything. Peo-

ple also want to see us everywhere," she adds.

Without completely closing the door, a transition with the new MP will be very simple. "When I arrived as an MP in 2015, what I received didn't even fit in a shoebox. Mr. Deschênes will do what I did. He will learn his files and will do his thing. As a minister, I had too many files from the business community, and when we talk about private companies, the word "private" is excessively important. The files concerning constituents that had been settled were destroyed,

and the constituents who had follow-ups were advised to work with the new elected official who will represent them," Ms. Lebouthillier clearly explains.

She concludes by recalling that politics can be thankless and recalls a statement from an elected official in Parliament. "There was already an MP who told us in Parliament, if you want recognition in politics, you'd better get a dog. It was a Bloc Québécois MP who said that, Louis Plamondon, and he was absolutely right," says the former MP.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR GREENER HARBOURS



ADMINISTRATIONS PORTUAIRES
notre part,
notre collectivité

HARBOUR AUTHORITIES
our harbour,
our community

TOGETHER, LET'S RESPECT OUR HARBOURS AND OUR VOLUNTEERS

Did you know that Small Craft Harbours represents 23 fishing harbours across the Gaspé Peninsula ?

They are the heart of our community and our fishing industry. Owned by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, they are managed by Harbour Authorities, made up of volunteers from the local population who know the needs of their harbour and region. These volunteers are responsible for the management, operation and maintenance of one or more public fishing harbours.

Harbour Authorities therefore play an essential role in the economic and social life of many communities that depend on local harbour facilities.

That's why it's important to support these volunteers and the fishing industry by complying with the regulations posted at all harbours to ensure safety on the wharves and to assist them in the proper management of residual waste.



WHY REACH OUT TO YOU TODAY?

- Facilitate waste management for Harbour Authority volunteers.
- Ensure the safety of industrial activities at the harbour.
- Do our part for the environment.
- Keep our community's public spaces clean and respectful of our heritage.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Wharves are used by workers in the fishing industry. They are places of professional activity which can present dangers if harbour regulations are not respected.
- Equipment is reserved for members and for harbour activities only (containers, waste oil tanks, winches, etc.).
- Large-item garbage pieces are not allowed, please go to an ecocenter.

REMINDER: FORBIDDEN TO LEAVE IN HARBOURS



Large-item garbage and electronics



Building materials



Hunting scraps




Waste Oil

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN KEEPING OUR HARBOURS CLEAN AND SAFE

Harbour Authorities of the Gaspé Peninsula



ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY



LOCATION: LA VIELLE USINE
55, rue à Bonfils, Cap d'Espoir – Concert Hall

DATE: Thursday, June 12, 2025

AGENDA: 4:30 PM: Welcome
5:00 PM: Annual General Assembly
6:00 PM: End of the Assembly

Invitation to the population of the MRC of Rocher-Percé. In anticipation of this Annual General Meeting, at which administrators of the corporation will be elected, a nomination period will open on May 2, 2025 and close on June 1, 2025, at 4:30 p.m., pursuant to By-Law 5.03 of the General By-Laws.

The positions to be filled are as follows:

- SERVICE SECTOR:** Four (4) administrators representing all socio-economic activities corresponding to the distribution or sale of goods, products and services, notably educational institutions, professional services, business services, health and social services.
- YOUTH SECTOR:** One (1) administrator representing young people from the age of 18 to 39.

All nominated persons must fill out the appropriate form in the above-mentioned timeframe and send it to the corporation's head office at: 129, boulevard René-Lévesque Ouest, bureau S-101, Chandler (Québec) G0C 1K0. The nomination form and general regulations are available at the SADC office and on the website in the "Annual Reports and announcements" section.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,
Marthe Larocque
Administrative assistant
418 689-5699, ext. 200

CHANDLER: Minister of Municipal Affairs questioned in the Godbout case

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - The mayor of Chandler is calling on the Minister of Municipal Affairs to force the resignation of councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout, who faces multiple serious criminal charges.

Mayor Gilles Daraïche has already publicly called for the Newport councillor's resignation, but so far, nothing has happened. Mr. Daraïche is asking the Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly (MNA), Catherine Blouin, to intervene with Minister Andrée Laforest.

"I have already spoken to Ms. (Catherine) Blouin's political attaché, who is to send a message to Ms. Blouin so that she can intervene with the Minister of Municipal Affairs," Mr. Daraïche emphasized.

Beforehand, the mayor asked the councillor's lawyer about his intentions. "He may not have access to his emails. I spoke to his lawyer, who needs to talk to him about it before I can send my message. We'd like this to happen as quickly as possible to take the burden off everyone's shoulders, even him. At some point, we have to disassociate ourselves from Mr. Godbout," the mayor stated.

Furthermore, the municipal council filed a notice of motion at a special meeting in April to stop the remuneration of a councillor who is absent from the municipal council. "The gentleman is no longer being paid as of today's meeting (May 5)," the mayor noted. In Chandler, a councillor receives

\$2,171 per month.

Bruno-Pierre Godbout was arrested on April 15 by the Sûreté du Québec. The 36-year-old 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 Belchasse, and Montreal. A publication ban was issued to protect the victims' identities.

At the time of his arrest, the Sûreté du Québec alleged that Godbout allegedly used his notoriety to contact his victims. On April 25, the court ruled that the accused would remain in custody for the duration of the proceedings. After deliberating, Judge Denis Paradis ruled for the Crown, finding that the accused's release would undermine public confidence, that he faces a sentence of between five and 10 years in prison, and that the evidence presented during the bail hearing appeared credible.

On April 29, his lawyer, Ariane Cayer, asked the court to postpone the case until May 13 due to the amount of evidence in the file.

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

The accused is charged with fraud, forgery, and using, possessing, or trafficking of a document. The charges were filed following a UPAC investiga-



Photo: N. Sergerie

tion while the councillor was pro-mayor of Chandler during the suspension of former mayor Louisette Langlois in 2021.

UPAC estimated the fraud at approximately \$10,000.

By mutual agreement with the Municipal Commission, he stepped down from council a year ago with pay while the case was being resolved in court. It was agreed that the councillor would reimburse the Town for the salary and legal expenses if found guilty.

Another case involving an illegal lottery dating back to 2021 is also under review by the Office of the Director of Criminal and Penal Prosecutions.

Police report

Sexual crimes

Judge Richard Côté, of the Quebec Court, will render a decision on June 19 about the case of Kevin Plante, 43, of Gaspé, following a nine-day trial. Mr. Plante was charged with obtaining sexual services from a minor under the age of 16 for consideration, sexual assault, and drug trafficking. In December, Kevin Plante alleged accomplice, Josiane Dufresne, 29, pleaded guilty to several charges related to this case and was sentenced to 30 months in prison for the September 2021 incident that led to their arrest. Furthermore, Kevin Plante will return to court on June 10 after being stopped by the Sûreté du Québec in January 2024 for driving while impaired by drugs. He had previously agreed to undergo closed therapy for substance abuse but failed to meet the conditions of the therapy in May 2024, notably his obligation to abstain from drugs or alcohol.

Fraud case

Patrick Prince, 41, from Port Daniel charged with fraud, was released on bail pending further proceedings. He faces several charges related to fraud involving false representation of a financial institution. He now faces new charges as a second victim has come forward since his arrest. Judge Denis Paradis indicated that while the evidence against him is substantial, the suspect did not commit a violent crime and he could get a maximum sentence of two years in prison. His criminal record dates back to 2014. Judge Paradis added that public confidence in the justice system would not be undermined by releasing him on bail. Patrick Prince was asked to return to court on May 12, just after SPEC's publication deadline. He was arrested on April 23 near a financial institution on Renard Boulevard East in Rivière-au-Renard. Police recovered more than \$3,000 in cash, bank cards, and equipment that may have been used to commit fraud.

Armed robbery

A woman in her thirties was arrested on the evening of May 6 at a Miguasha beach in Nouvelle following an alleged armed robbery. According to the Sûreté du Québec, the woman was in possession of a handgun and allegedly threatened two people while demanding their car keys. No shots were fired, and no one was injured. Police officers seized the weapon and a small quantity of narcotics. The woman, who was remanded in custody, is facing charges of robbery and uttering threats. She is expected to return to the New Carlisle Courthouse for her bail hearing.

Caap General Meeting Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine



We look forward to
seeing you!

June 6, 2025 at 6 p.m.,
Hôtel Ritel de Percé (261, Route 132, Percé, Québec, G0C 2L0)

You can participate in person or remotely using the
Teams link we'll provide at your request.

Please confirm your attendance before May 30, 2025,
by phone (1-877-767-2227 or 1-866-574-0227)
or by e-mail at info@caapgim.com.

Public Notice

Pursuant to Section 392 of the Education Act, public notice is hereby given that the Council of Commissioners of Eastern Shores School Board intends to modify the following By-Laws:

By-Law-8: To Set the Date, Time and Location of the Meetings of the Executive Committee and the Council of Commissioners.

By-Law 14: Delegation of Functions and Powers

The revised by-laws will be presented for adoption at the June 16, 2025, meeting of the Council of Commissioners to be held at 9:00 a.m. at the Administrative Offices of the Board, 40 Mountsorrel Street, New Carlisle, Quebec.

Given at New Carlisle, Quebec this 13th day of May 2025

Denis Gauthier
Secretary General



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

First test passed
by Mark Carney

The first meeting between Canada’s prime minister Mark Carney and the American president Donald Trump went relatively well on May 6. Mr. Carney probably experienced one of the toughest assignments of his professional career, and he looked exhausted following the press conference organized after the meeting.

However, he was able to avoid being called “governor of the 51st state” by Donald Trump, who admitted that he might never call Mr. Carney “governor” even if he would still like his country to absorb Canada economically.

Mark Carney was also able to avoid triggering Donald Trump’s ire despite stating on several occasions during his Washington visit that Canada was not for sale.

The Mark Carney’s third “victory” is less conspicuous, but over the short term, it might be the most important. The prime minister was probably able to convince most Canadians that negotiating a new trade agreement with the United States will be a long process.

The most important statement expressed by Mark Carney came when he said that a new global relationship with the Americans must be developed, and trade negotiations are only one part of it. He was right. Things might never be the same with our neighbours to the south, at least as long as Donald Trump or one of his close team members runs the United States.

In defence, immigration, diplomacy, land use and common policies, the discrepancy between the two countries will more than ever necessitate another type of dialogue.

Donald Trump praised Mark Carney, pointing out that compared to former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, it's a big improvement.

Such a statement is like saying that the green light is given to the two governments to allow political and civil service teams to talk to each other. That first meeting was concluded when the methodical Mark Carney said that we have to get used

to such meetings, where there will be talk, without apparent progress, before negotiators sit and reach agreements, or fail to do so. The same thing happened at the end of the 1980s when the Canadian government of Brian Mulroney and the United States of George Bush took months and months before reaching a free trade agreement.

Mark Carney and Donald Trump will meet again in Alberta in June, for a meeting of the G7, the seven most industrialized countries of the world. Between now and then, the way the American population will react to the economic downturn faced by the United States might have a big say in the tone that will be adopted by the six other countries and, above all, Donald Trump.

Meanwhile in Canada...

On May 6 as well, Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre also had a meeting on his agenda, a meeting with his caucus. It might be a strange way to sum it up, but that meeting was probably more important for Mr. Lelièvre’s future in politics than Mark Carney’s meeting in Washington.

Having lost the April 28 election, having lost his seat in the riding of Carleton, Mr. Poilievre was quieter than usual. He wished Mr. Carney luck for his Washington meeting and stated that it is important to end the tariff chaos with the United States, something he took weeks to express at the beginning of the year, when he was leading by 20 to 25% in surveys.

Pierre Poilievre’s quietness will likely last months, if not more, if he ever wants to stay at the helm of the Conservative Party.

Any Official Opposition leader having lost an election must think that his leadership will be contested. Pierre Poilievre has been living by the sword for the first 20 years of his political career, and some people might take advantage of it when cracks start to appear in his armour.

First of all, he was supposed to win a landslide four months ago. Secondly, he insulted a considerable cross-section of municipal, provincial and federal politicians since his party leadership victory in September 2022, especially in the housing shortage file, where the policies he was promoting would not have solved any problem.

Thirdly, there is no clear indication that, despite his calm manners of late, Mr. Poilievre will not come back to his bully methods a few months down the road.

In his own party, he inspired fear until the end of the electoral campaign, at which point some in-

cognito criticism was voiced.

Within his own party, take 2, some Conservative Party Members of Parliament are not accepting the April 28 loss. They will not express that right away. Even if it took only a few days for Mr. Poilievre to secure a riding where he will be elected soon and be in a position of regaining access to the House of Commons, the next 12 to 18 months will be a challenging period for him.

His team members will no longer accept orders yelled at them. Pierre Poilievre can be ousted of his leadership position automatically if two-thirds of the Conservative Members of Parliament adopt a motion to that effect. He will therefore have to say “please” and “thanks” very often.

Why? Because there will be other people eyeing the leadership of the Conservative Party, people with better manners, people who are not acting like bullies.

Names? The Ontario Premier Doug Ford might be interested, considering that he liked being called Captain Canada during Donald Trump’s November 26 rant about his country absorbing Canada. However, Mr. Ford doesn’t speak French and he doesn’t seem ready to learn.

Caroline Mulroney, the daughter of Brian, will eventually be interested in the position. She is fluently bilingual and closer to the progressive Conservative approach than allowed her dad to win elections in 1984 and 1988, two majorities at that.

Former federal minister Jason Kenney might also check his popularity at one point over the next year-and-a-half. Mark Carney runs a minority government but there will be no opposition party ready to defeat it before 2027. It would be suicidal to do so before another trade agreement is reached with the United States.

So, Pierre Poilievre will also be put through tests over the next months.

Letter to the Editor

Keep up the good work, I wish a long life for this very important newspaper. I read the whole thing.

The Easter basket that my lady friend won was awesome and we really thought that was great.

Thanks to Jillian O’Connell who brought the Easter basket to New Richmond, making it about halfway to New Carlisle. We had a nice little chat and really did appreciate that kind move.

Sincerely, Charlie Adams
Matapedia, Quebec

THANKS
to Our Readers!

Your subscription helps
support the future
of journalism.

SCAN ME

ESTABLISHED • MAY 1975

208-B Gérard D. Levesque
New Carlisle, Que.
G0C 1Z0

Tel: 418-752-5400
specs@globetrotter.net
thegaspespec.com

(Taxes included)
1-year paper \$50
6-months paper: \$29
1-year digital \$40
Outside Canada:
Contact office for a quote

Published every second
Wednesday by:
Les Publications de la Côte Inc.
(Sea-Coast Publications Inc.)

Publisher:
Penny MacWhirter

News Editor:
Gilles Gagné

**Circulation/Office
Manager**
Holly Smith

Office Assistant
Jillian O’Connell

Sales Manager
Emily Hocquard

JOURNALISTS: Nelson Sergerie and Cynthia Dow

SPEC welcomes letters to the editor on subjects relevant to topics covered by the paper. Letters must be kept within 300 words or less and may be edited for clarity or to remove any slanderous, sexist, racist or homophobic statements. We reserve the right to reject any letters. Opinions or letters published do not necessarily reflect the editorial policies or beliefs of this newspaper. All letters must bear the handwritten signature of the writer and include the address and number(s) for verification purposes (address & phone number will not be printed). The Publisher shall not be liable for slight changes or typographical errors that do not lessen the value of an advertisement. The Publisher’s liability for other errors or omissions in connection with any advertisement is strictly limited to publication of the advertisement in any subsequent issue or the refund of any monies paid for the advertisement.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Elaine Sexton
Fred Kirch
Hayden Sams
Bonita Annett
Greg Leblanc
Steven Parent
Patricia Ste-Croix
Annett

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada.
We acknowledge special funding from the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications.

Page 4, May 14, 2025 - Spec

No leading idea for the vacant lots in downtown Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Approximately fifty citizens and twenty organizations participated in consultations on April 30 and May 1 to brainstorm the future of downtown Gaspé. However, during the consultations there weren't any specific ideas that really stood out.

With the help of the firm Raymond, Chabot, Grant, Thornton, the consultation provides everyone with a say in the repurposing of the lots following the closures of the 31,700 square metre Ministry of Transportation service centre and, eventually, the 10,500 square metre arena.

"For now, all sorts of ideas are emerging. "There's no idea that stands out from the crowd, or for example, 75% of people say what we should do," says the Mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté.

Some of the ideas included a community hub, a knowledge hub, a sports hub, green spaces, housing, and commercial development are emerging. "The possibilities are quite diverse. For now, we're continuing the consultations," adds the mayor.

The zoning in the downtown core allows for many things: housing, a green space, commercial development, and even a knowledge hub for the one near the CEGEP.

Citizens could submit their ideas until May 9. Additionally, an online survey on preliminary scenarios is scheduled from May 26 to June 15.

"Once we've combined all these consultations, the town council's task will be to find the point of convergence between the results of the consultation and the other plans we have, including strategic planning and the urban plan," continues Mr. Côté.

"It's a complex undertaking, and when you add citizens, you add ideas and sometimes a layer of complexity, and it's perfect. The council's job will be to make a decision, and we didn't want to

make a decision with seven people or a few experts. This is a development opportunity that is quite unique," comments the mayor.

Regarding the former Ministry of Transportation property, decontamination remains to be completed. The site will be ready for redevelopment in 2026.

Regardless of what is chosen, plans and specifications will need to be obtained based on the priorities expressed by citizens and the council's guidelines. The redevelopment of the site should be completed by 2030.

As for the arena, everything will depend on how quickly funding is obtained from the

Quebec government to build the new sports complex.

"The arena plans are already ready. Let's say we have funding in 2026, the new construction in 2027-2028, and the demolition of the current arena in 2029, which puts us around 2030 in an optimistic scenario. After receiving often disappointing and incomprehensible refusals, it's possible we could reach 2034 and the land won't be available. We'll do everything we can to get it as quickly as possible," the mayor explains.

The municipality's vision for these developments is expected to be unveiled in September, just before the municipal elections.

Gaspé Municipal Update: Septic sludge, waterworks, Tourist Street and beach management

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPE - The Town of Gaspé is addressing major infrastructure and environmental challenges, including sludge treatment, shoreline protection, beach management, and water supply.

Septic Tank Sludge

Gaspé is studying the possibility of treating some of the septic tank sludge in the future aerated wastewater treatment ponds in Rivière-au-Renard.

The town sends its sludge to Chandler through an agreement with the Régie de traitement des matières résiduelles de la Gaspésie and to Matane when Chandler can no longer process it.

"Perhaps we would be able to treat some of our septic tank sludge without any negative impact. At the same time, we could save on transportation costs to the Chandler and Matane sites," Mr. Côté calculates.

Sludge from the northern sector and end-of-season overflows could be treated in Rivière-au-Renard. If the studies are conclusive, Gaspé will ask the Quebec government if any assistance is available.

Municipalization in 2015 remains a good move for residents, as their bills have been cut in half compared to private companies.

Tourist Street

Discussions are continuing between Gaspé and the Ministry of Public Security to con-



Photo: N. Sergerie

vince the Quebec government to protect the entirety of Tourist Street in the Anse-à-Valleau area.

The Quebec government is proposing to protect a central area where the majority of the erosion is occurring. "If we don't fully protect the bank, we'll end up with erosion that will double, triple, or quadruple at the ends of the riprap. We're shifting the problem. It's a basic logic, supported by engineers and scientists, that we must install the entire riprap if we want to avoid problems later," the mayor emphasizes.

The town wants the Quebec government to pay 75% of the bill for protecting the entire area. The municipal council awarded a \$644,000 contract to carry out the engineering work last June. Significant damage occurred following a violent storm in December 2016.

Beach Leases

Gaspé intends to sign a new lease with the Ministry of

Natural Resources to manage the Douglastown, Boom Defense, and Haldimand beaches for the summer of 2025.

In 2020, during the pandemic, the beaches were overflowing with people who had no qualms about the environment.

The Micmac Nation of Gespeg is also involved, "We worked with the Gespeg First Nation and the Ministry of Natural Resources to strengthen prevention efforts to facilitate beach maintenance and make life easier for people. But this is conditional on the lease renewal," explains Mr. Côté. The Nation's ancestral rights are taken into account in the leases to be signed, following a positive meeting with the band council. The leases would be for one year, in order to further deepen the partnership between the Nation and the Town of Gaspé.

Water in Anse-au-Griffon

Gaspé will have to rely on surface water collection to supply the water system in the Anse-au-Griffon sector. Groundwater research over the past several years has never yielded good results. The study will help find the best location to draw water from the river. "The Anse-au-Griffon River isn't very far away. But where is the best location? How should we get our water, the best technique? That's what the engineering firm in charge of the project must evaluate," says Mr. Côté.

A treatment plant will be

necessary to treat the water. A few dozen homes will need to be served. "If we prorate the number of residents served versus government requirements and costs, there is obviously a distortion, but the bill is borne by all residents

served in the greater Gaspé region," says the mayor. A partnership with a private company was ruled out because the process would have been complicated. The mayor is eager to finally turn the page.

Military exercise to take place in Gaspé on May 16

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – Gaspé will once again host a joint Canada-France military exercise on May 16. The two militaries will deploy several units in the region.

Mayor Daniel Côté points out that Gaspé has always been at the heart of military activities, particularly during the Second World War. "We offer air, sea, and land environments with locations that have steep headlands, beaches for landing supplies, and an airport where they can refuel," notes Mr. Côté.

A helicopter carrier will sail into Gaspé Bay, and helicopters, paratroopers, and armored vehicles will be stationed in the region. Gaspé is regularly chosen to host military exercises.

First 20-degree nears record high in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Gaspé came close to breaking a temperature record on May 6. The mercury climbed to 24.8°C at Michel-Pouliot airport, just a tenth of a degree shy of the 24.9°C recorded in 1999.

It was also the first 20°C day of the season. The earliest Gaspé has experienced 20°C temperatures was on April 13, 1968, with 21.7°C recorded at Michel-Pouliot airport. That spot has been collecting data since 1895. The seasonal norm is 12°C during the day.

April was an average month, according to Environment Canada. The average temperature was 1.5°C, just slightly above the norm of 1.4°C. Total precipitation was 90 millimetres, two millimetres more than the average of 88 millimetres. Nearly a third of the rain fell on April 26 alone, with 26.7 millimetres.

Gaspé received slightly less snow than usual, with 34 centimetres recorded, compared to the average of 39 centimetres. Half of that, or 17 centimetres, fell on April 16.

For the winter as a whole, Gaspé saw 325 centimetres of snow fall on Gaspé, a far cry from the 385 centimetres which falls normally in the winter. On average, Gaspé receives five centimetres of snow in May.

Court considers revising the provincial electoral map

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The hearing on the merits of the revision of Quebec's electoral map was heard on May 8, 9, 12, and 13 before the Superior Court at the Saint-Jérôme courthouse.

In December, Judge Annie Breault of the Superior Court for the District of Terrebonne, partially granted the interlocutory injunction requested by elected officials from the Laurentians and Central Quebec regions and ordered the Commission on Representation on the Electoral Map to continue its work, but maintained for the time being the Act that halted the revision of the electoral map. The court allowed the Chief Electoral Officer to complete his work and eventually file his second report, as required by the electoral law, if the court ruled that the law adopted in May to suspend the electoral law was invalid.

Elected officials from the Laurentians and Central Quebec regions had filed a legal action against the Chief Electoral Officer of Quebec and the Attorney General of Quebec seeking to have the law overturned and the revision process resumed.

On May 2, 2023, the National Assembly of Quebec, unanimously adopted the Act to Interrupt the Electoral Boundaries Process.

The Gaspé Peninsula MRCs group pointed out that

the electoral map on the table was then highly detrimental to the principle of effective representativeness, directly affecting the representation of the region in Quebec's democratic institutions.

The group made representations to the court on November 28, 2024, asking to become a stakeholder in the case. "Effective representativeness is at the heart of the debate, but how do we define it? It was defined in a Supreme Court ruling, the Carter Decision of 1991, which stated that beyond the principle of one voter, one vote, we must take into account the factor of belonging and geographic scope. In short, several factors must be taken into account, not just one voter, one vote," comments Daniel Côté, mayor of Gaspé and spokesperson for the Gaspé Peninsula Prefects Table. He is listed as a respondent in the motion filed to have the table intervene in the debate.

According to him, this definition will be the subject of the debate before the court. "We have nothing against reviewing the electoral map, but we must take into account regional specificities. We can't move a piece of Matanie with a piece of Gaspésie." We can't cut an MRC or town in two in the case of a region like ours. It doesn't work on the ground," says Mr. Côté.

"Also, from a legal stand-

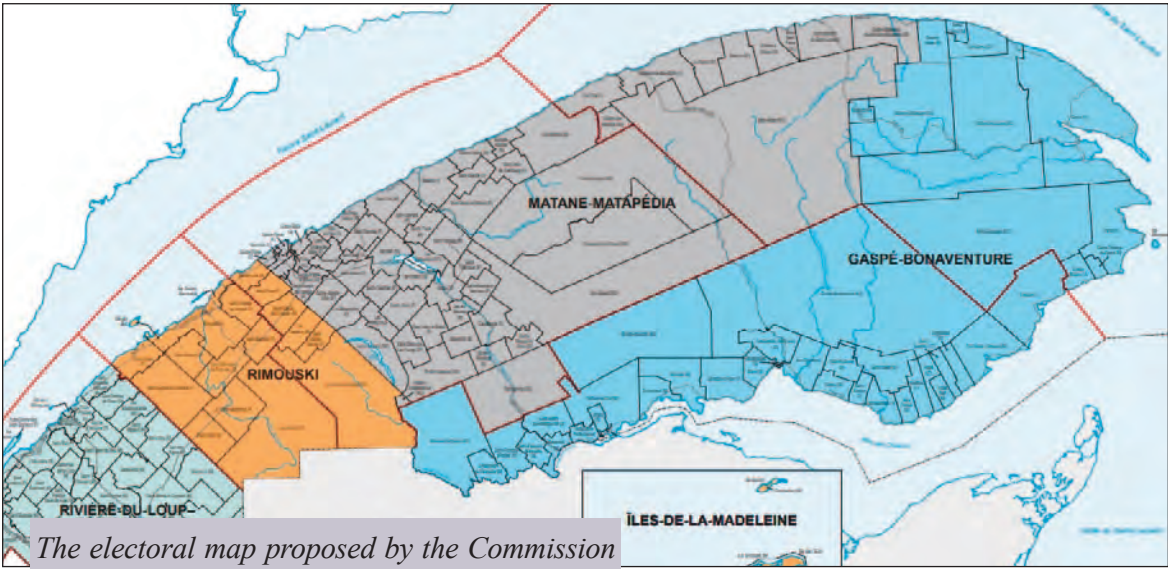


Photo: Archives

point, is the law adopted by the Quebec National Assembly that suspended the overhaul of the Election Act legal or not? I think that once 125 members vote on the same side, it seems to me that it should have some force. Saying no to a Cabinet decree invoked by a premier is fine. But saying no to a unanimous will and saying that this decision is unfounded—I would be cautious if I were the court, and I think the court has clearly grasped the magnitude of the matter," suggests Mr. Côté, who is also a trained lawyer.

The mayor of Gaspé hopes that the National Assembly will move forward with a reform of the Election Act before a court decision.

However, nothing is on the National Assembly's agenda. "The criteria need to be clearer. To my knowledge, not much has moved forward. We

weren't involved or consulted. But there was a clear promise from François Legault's government, with support in principle from the opposition, that the legislation needed to be reviewed. Let's hope we won't leave the Gaspé ridings to a court or a commission based on insufficiently precise criteria," Mr. Côté demanded.

Recall that the commission suggested merging the Gaspé and Bonaventure ridings, bringing together the MRCs of Côte-de-Gaspé, Rocher-Percé, Bonaventure, and Avignon, to create Gaspé-Bonaventure, while Haute-Gaspésie would be transferred to the Matane-Matapédia riding, a Lower St. Lawrence riding. As of April 30, 2023, Bonaventure had 35,898 voters and Gaspé 30,131, far from the minimum threshold. The gap was -29.2% and -40.6%, respec-

tively.

Gaspé thus ranked third among the least populous ridings, behind the Magdalen Islands, which has exceptional status, along with Ungava.

Based on projections of the number of voters from the Institut de la statistique du Québec, the gap in Gaspé's average should soon surpass that of Ungava.

In 2017, the Commission maintained Gaspé's negative exception status and granted the same status to Bonaventure. However, since the inequalities in representation in these ridings are increasing, the commission did not wish to renew this status.

In addition to removing a riding in the Gaspésie, the Commission suggested doing the same thing in Montreal to create a riding in the Laurentians and another in the Centre-du-Québec region.

Guy Bernatchez will leave his position as Haute-Gaspésie Prefect in November

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINTE-ANNE-DES-MONTS - Elected in November 2021, the prefect of the Haute-Gaspésie MRC, Guy Bernatchez, has already indicated that he will not seek a second term. He made the announcement to give those interested in the position enough time to prepare prior to the election, which is six months away. Before joining the MRC, Guy Bernatchez was the mayor of Saint-Maxime-du-Mont-Louis from 2017 to 2021. He also ran for the Bloc Québécois in the riding of Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine in 2019 and 2021. "I've been in politics for eight years. It's a multi-faceted responsibility that I've really en-

joyed over the years, but I think I've covered the gamut and I have other career aspirations for the future," says Mr. Bernatchez, who is a forest manager by profession.

At this time, with the caribou debate raging in Haute-Gaspésie, he doesn't feel like he's jumping ship in the middle of a storm. "Not really. My term isn't over. Who's to say I would have been re-elected? I don't see it that way at all, quite the opposite." I've worked hard to advance this issue in recent years. We've had this issue for decades. The person who gets my seat will continue to advance this issue," emphasized Mr. Bernatchez.

The administrative staff will remain, along with the Table's elected officials from Haute-Gaspésie. "I thought it would

be better to announce it well in advance so that people could take a position, and I will complete my term," he said.

The outgoing prefect would like to finalize the caribou file before leaving office. "I would like to continue working with local people and the Ministry of the Environment to find a scenario that would be most beneficial for the MRC and the users of the territory," says Mr. Bernatchez. He will provide a more detailed assessment once his term is over.

Guy Bernatchez won the November 2021 election with 47% of the vote, defeating his opponent, Allen Cormier, who had been in office for 12 years. Mr. Cormier, who received 38% of the vote, makes no secret of his interest in a possible return to active politics.



Photo: Facebook

"It deserves serious consideration. It's a job I held with great pleasure and excellent results for 12 years. Unfortunately, I suffered defeat. I'm receiving a lot of requests from people. Many are requesting my pres-

ence for a future term. It deserves careful consideration before making such an important decision, but I won't hide from you that I'm going to give it very serious thought," admits Mr. Cormier.

Vivre en Gaspésie optimistic about recruitment drive

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – The Vivre en Gaspésie team that spent three days recruiting potential newcomers for the region came back from a three-day drive feeling optimistic regarding the possibility of landing interesting candidates. Up to 325 people attended private meetings with the Vivre en Gaspésie team members, and 85 of them are very interested in settling in the region soon.

The recruitment campaign took place on April 8-9-10 in Montreal, Brossard and Quebec City. A certain portion of the people who showed up had booked meetings in advance with Gaspesian recruiters.

"It was really good, we're really satisfied with the great meetings in the fields we targeted. We come back with employers that are satisfied with the targeted fields. Some employers told us: "I've rarely seen people so interested in settling in the region". We had selected five sectors before going: health, social services, education, accounting, and notarial work," explains Mariline Poirier-Lamy, coordinator of communications and territorial marketing for Vivre en Gaspésie.

During the three days of meetings, potential newcomers from other professions also showed up, she adds.

"We organized a general public event from A to Z for the first time. It was not an employment fair. We brought recruiters for the first time. When we attend recruitment fairs, it is not reserved just for the Gaspé Peninsula. We're mixed with other regions. People leave with their heads full, a bit confused. Now, people make the effort to come see us. That makes a difference in motivation," further explains Mariline Poirier-Lamy.

Advertising campaign

In order to invite urban centre people to meet the team members of Vivre en Gaspésie, the organization targeted specific cross-sections of the population and used the communication means more likely to reach the desired clientele.

"We ran a fairly targeted advertising campaign. We used social media, but we varied our resources: radio, new media, Spotify, TikTok, and in the targeted fields. We had a bit of stress; we had a team of 15 people. We were wonder-

ing: will people be there, at the meetings? It worked," underscores Ms. Poirier Lamy.

"We met 325 people over the three days. There were three large meetings, plus three public events. We visited three university campuses, so nine activities in three days, with 15 people divided into three teams. Some 85 attendees showed serious interest and will apply for a job. They filled-out a follow-up form; we do this when we see they have a concrete motivation to come," points out Ms. Poirier Lamy.

"Many have already started thinking about it (moving to the Gaspé Peninsula), others are curious. There are mainly two types of profiles seen among the people that attend our meetings. They either come to confirm their perception and there are people who are from the region and who are thinking of coming back," she adds.

What are the strengths of a region like the Gaspé Peninsula during such meetings?

"The wide spaces, nature, and the sea are mentioned. It is always the same. We meet this need. We can go back to a perception survey made in 2022. We ran the results of our most recent survey in a press release. It indicates that up to 10% of the Quebec population is interested in considering the acquisition of a property in the Gaspé Peninsula," stresses Mariline Poirier Lamy.

There are also drawbacks characterizing the Gaspé Peninsula. The Vivre en Gaspésie team doesn't hide them, she says.

"We know that inter-regional transport, the lack of daycare spaces and housing are problems but they are not exclusive to our region. For example, the housing issue exists everywhere. That's why we targeted certain professions," mentions Ms. Poirier-Lamy.

Gaspésie is the only so-called remote region in Quebec to have had a positive migration record for the past eight years, according to data compiled by the Institut de la statistique du Québec (ISQ). Currently, for every 10 retirements, only four people are present in the Gaspé Peninsula to ensure the next generation, hence the necessity to recruit elsewhere.

What's the recruiting secret of the last decade, given its excellent results?

"If we knew, it would be even easier! The fact that the



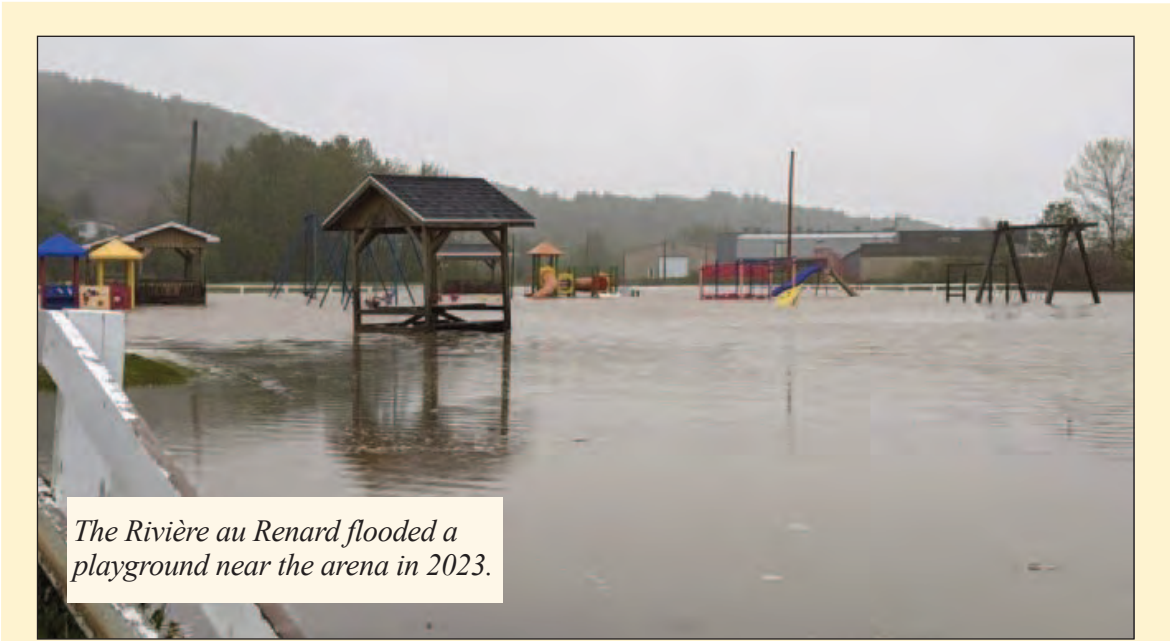
Two members of the Vivre en Gaspésie team provide information to a lady interested in moving to the region.

Photos: Erika Williamson

region has been mobilizing for several years, with the support of elected officials to make demographics a priority issue helped a lot. As I said, wide spaces, the beauty of the region, and the efforts of the great migration team are contributing factors. Our English-speaking side, Living in Gaspésie, and SANA (a service accompanying newcomers) are really efficient. The Eastern Shores School Board was with us this year," explains Mariline Poirier-Lamy. The Gaspé Peninsula is also the happiest region in Quebec according to the Léger happiness index.



Vivre en Gaspésie representative Catherine Landry chats with a potential newcomer.



The Rivière au Renard flooded a playground near the arena in 2023.

Photo: Archives

Flooding: A calm spring

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - So, far, the Gaspé Peninsula has been spared from any serious flooding during the spring thaw, according to the regional Civil Protection department.

Despite approximately 50 millimetres of rain on April 26 and 27, the situation remains under control.

"It's been a quiet spring so far - we're going to be cautious because it's not over yet - but the melt is happening gradually, with not too much heat, slightly cooler nights and a good dose of rain. It's not bringing the elements that could have consequences," says Civil Protection department's Regional Director Félix Caron.

Despite this, vigilance is still required in view of the rainfall. "We are monitoring our rivers. Our forecasts indicate that the rivers should be close to, but not above, the monitoring thresholds. But we're continuing to monitor the situation," adds Mr Caron.

After six years in his role, Mr Caron says this is the first time he has experienced such a calm spring. "It's the first Easter break and the first spring that's been calm in terms of spring flooding," says Mr. Caron.

A third candidate in the PLQ leadership race visits the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Late contender in the Quebec Liberal Party (PLQ) leadership race, Karl Blackburn, presents himself as a proud regionalist and maintains that Quebec will be as strong as its regions.

The former Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for Roberval under Jean Charest from 2003 to 2007, Mr. Blackburn is the son of former Liberal minister Gaston Blackburn. He has remained active within the party over the years and also as director of public affairs and government relations at Produits forestier Résolu. Since 2020, he has been president and CEO of the Conseil du patronat du Québec.

Having recently overcome prostate cancer, Mr. Blackburn says he now feels ready to tackle Quebec's challenges.

"I had one of the best jobs in Quebec. I had a general and peripheral vision of the Quebec economy. When my doctor told me on March 9

that there was no longer any trace of cancer and no longer any work restrictions, that's when I decided that it might be late, but not too late, to run for the top job," says Mr. Blackburn.

Within 36 hours, he had fulfilled all the conditions required to become a candidate in the race.

Karl Blackburn describes himself as a regionalist and says he is in a position to remobilise activists and reconnect the regions and Francophones.

"I'm a proud regionalist. For me, Quebec must be a strong Quebec if all its regions are strong. If Baie-Comeau is strong, if Gaspé is strong, if Rivière-du-Loup is strong, if Roberval is strong, if all the regions of Quebec are strong, Quebec will emerge bigger and stronger," explains the candidate.

"I bring a detailed knowledge of the regions of Quebec, a detailed knowledge of the Quebec economy and above all of the interconnections between the regions and Montreal and Quebec City,



Photo: N. Sergerie

Karl Blackburn presents himself as a proud regionalist.

and above all I bring a unifying vision. I don't want to do what Mr. Legault did, for example, divide the population into good Quebecers and not-so-good Quebecers. Instead, I want leadership that brings people together," continued Mr. Blackburn.

The candidate wants to put an end to the wall-to-wall ap-

proach, an idea that has been overused in every possible way.

"Decentralisation must come with a form of accountability and the means to achieve it. Remember when Jean Charest's Liberal government, with Nathalie Normandeau as Minister for Municipal Affairs, developed

tailor-made solutions rather than wall-to-wall solutions. We took some important steps back then," recalls the former MNA.

Mr. Blackburn proposes a modernized approach: "Today, in 2025, can we go further? Stronger? Faster? Of course. I have a definite idea where the regions are going to play a role in health, education and infrastructure, with the means to decide what is good for them, with national guidelines, because those who live in the regions are the ones who know best how to deliver these services according to their advantages and challenges," he explains.

In his view, funding should be population-based, with equalization measures to support less populous regions.

"The Gaspésie will have the tools it needs to take control of its own destiny, based on national criteria for all Quebecers, but according to the realities specific to Gaspésie," maintains the candidate, who points out that the concept has been tried and tested elsewhere in the world.

Six months at Percé Mayor's Office for Daniel Leboeuf

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - The mayor of Percé believes he has turned things around after the storm following a damning report from the Municipal Commission on the town's management, six months after taking office last November.

Daniel Leboeuf, who will run again in the November election, sees progress. "It's calmer, but we have to keep rowing even though there isn't as much swell because we lost members. Recruitment is continuing," says the mayor, who is aware that services to citizens are suffering, particularly in urban planning, with long delays in issuing permits.

The closure of the Desjardins counter in the tourist heart of the town is a hard blow. The Caisse Desjardins du Littoral Gaspésien refused the offer of a location to maintain an ATM. "It was a complete rejection from the Caisse du Littoral. It was a complete

Page 8, May 14, 2025 - Spec



Daniel Leboeuf during his election last October.

Photo: N. Sergerie

rejection from the Mouvement Desjardins in Lévis, to whom we sent our official request with letters of support," the elected official emphasizes.

The counter closed on May 2 after the financial institution's management cited a drop in traffic at the counter and ATM. The nearest service counter is now located on the border of Percé and Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé.

Percé and other municipalities are working on a solution, but the elected official remains discreet.

A clearcut in the Chemin d'Irlande area of Percé is causing concern among residents. Several people attended the municipal council meeting on May 6 and expressed concerns about the visual aspect, the recreational tourism component, the environment, and the water table. They questioned the need to cut down all the trees to protect the forest from the spruce budworm.

The mayor noted that the issue is not within his jurisdiction, as the matter falls under the jurisdiction of the Rocher-Percé MRC and the Ministry of Natural Resources.

"Citizens are proposing other methods of controlling the spruce budworm. I'm not a forester. There may be other methods: selective logging, watering. We can't control that. I understand the citizens and I support them in their efforts," says Mr. Leboeuf.



Marc Bélanger has the backing of the provincial Liberals in Gaspé.

Photo: N. Sergerie

The provincial Liberals in Gaspé back Marc Bélanger

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Provincial Liberal Association of the Gaspé riding is backing Marc Bélanger in the Quebec Liberal Party leadership race.

Association President Jocelyne Huet says Mr. Bélanger is the only candidate who has agreed to meet with her so far. She also emphasizes his strong platform and roots in the region as key reasons for the association's endorsement.

Although fellow candidate Pablo Rodriguez did call Ms. Huet, she notes that no further steps were taken to engage with the local organization.

Meanwhile, Christian Cyr, the president of the Bonaventure Quebec Liberal Association confirmed that they will remain neutral during the campaign, which will end on June 14 with the election of a new leader.

Spotlight on agriculture in Avignon and Côte-de-Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Avignon and Côte-de-Gaspé MRCs are promoting agriculture within their respective territories.

The Côte-de-Gaspé is launching a promotional campaign featuring video clips to showcase the 16 agricultural businesses in the area.

"When doing the experiment, people can't name two or three. We're now at almost 17 businesses in production or startup," emphasizes Olivier Deruelle, social development mobilization officer for the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC. In addition to Produits Tapp's sauerkraut, two beef producers, four market gardeners, five fruit growers, flower growers, and processors of seaweed, mushrooms, wild herbs, honey, and maple syrup are spread across the territory.

"What we would like is for people to get to know the people in the community to create a sense of trust and build loyalty in their purchases from producers and then from grocery stores, and not the other way around," says Mr. Deruelle.

The Côte-de-Gaspé region

lost 42% of its agriculture producers between 1993 and 2017. "Since then, we've managed to stop the hemorrhage and are even experiencing slight growth. They're not all large businesses, but it's encouraging," he emphasizes. The MRC is also focused on developing short supply chains, which reduces greenhouse gas emissions. "We would like a more local, more fair, and more sustainable food system," says Mr. Deruelle.

For its part, the Avignon MRC has launched its third Agricultural Zone Development Plan.

"It's an important sector for the MRC, vital, and it's a sector we've wanted to promote for several years," says Mathieu Lapointe, Prefect and Mayor of Carleton-sur-Mer.

The first plan was unveiled in 2017, and despite this, developing new businesses remains a challenge.

"Regarding uncultivated land, it was a major concern a dozen years ago. It still is today, but much less so. New production has been added, and fields that weren't cultivated are now being culti-



Photo: N. Sergerie

Côte-de-Gaspé producers at the launch of the initiative by the MRC.

vated," notes Mr. Lapointe.

In total, the Avignon MRC has 60 agricultural businesses. The western part of the territory primarily features livestock producers, while the eastern part is dominated by market gardening.

Maple production is also very present in the region. "There is significant maple potential and large businesses," explains the prefect. Convincing Quebec to allow new taps remains a major

challenge.

"We have producers who want to expand onto public lands. We are working with them. The MRC owns inter-municipal lots. We want to ensure that the maple potential on our lots is protected. The same goes for public lands. We are raising awareness within the ministry. Even if there is no maple production, we want to ensure that the maple potential in the region is maintained and in-

creased for future businesses," explains the prefect.

The MRC has set itself a major goal to achieve. "The idea is to support our businesses. We want to promote them. What we would like to do in the long term is for people to become more aware of our businesses, to help them, and to support them," says Mr. Lapointe.

To help market local products, a traveling public market will be set up.

Côte-de-Gaspé launches buy-local campaign

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - A buy-local campaign is being launched in the Côte-de-Gaspé MRC to encourage residents to support local businesses.

The Côte-de-Gaspé MRC and the Caisse Desjardins de la Pointe de la Gaspésie are investing \$100,000 in the campaign, with technical support from the SADC de Gaspé and the Côte-de-Gaspé Chamber of Commerce.

"Through a Web platform, people will be able to buy prepaid cards and benefit from discounts at merchants. If you buy a \$25 card online from merchant 'X', the MRC and Desjardins will boost your card by 50%. We're encouraging local purchases with funds from the MRC and Desjardins," explains Côte-de-Gaspé prefect, Daniel Côté.

The goal is to steer consumers away from large online retailers like Amazon and Temu, where prices are often



From left, Dave Lavoie, Gaspé SADC; Bruno Bernatchez, Côte-de-Gaspé MRC director general; Daniel Côté, prefect of the Côte-de-Gaspé; Émilie Leblanc-Laberge and Lidia Martin-Bérubé, merchants; and Denis Lévesque, director general of the Caisse Desjardins de la Pointe de la Gaspésie.

Photo: N. Sergerie

lower.

"If the argument is just money, people won't have that savings argument any more. People will have the same prices as on the big platforms, but they'll be buying locally," says Mr. Côté.

Approximately 50 merchants across the MRC are taking part in the buy local campaign which will run for the next three years.

An annual bonus cap of

\$25,000 has been established, and safeguards are in place to prevent individuals from making bulk purchases and reselling the cards on the black market.

"At the end of the day, we figure that with around a hundred thousand invested over three years, we should at least double or even double and a half the returns on our investments. It's a bold gamble, because we've never done it

before, and we think it'll be a winner, and the merchants will get visibility," says Mr. Côté.

Similar campaigns have been launched in other regions with mixed results.

"If we don't try it, we'll never know. One of the strongest elements in the Gaspésie is that we're a proud people. We know our merchants, but maybe we've never taken the time to walk

through the door. I'm appealing to the pride of our people and calling on local merchants. The excuse that I won't go because it's cheaper online no longer exists with this campaign," says the prefect in a burst of patriotism.

The prepaid card will be available on the MRC's website starting on May 15. A video will accompany the launch to explain the campaign and guide users through the process.

Residents will be able to purchase a card, choose a participating merchant, and once the transaction is confirmed, the card will be credited. "It's like giving a credit card to a retailer. If you buy a \$50 card, it becomes \$75. That's \$25 free," explained Mr. Côté.

If the campaign goes well, organizers believe it could generate up to \$250,000 in economic benefits.

"I think it will have a snowball effect. At the end of the day, we want it to benefit our residents and businesses," says Mr. Côté.



It is likely that the annual peak in influenza cases is behind us, with the number of cases declining.

Difficult flu season

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula was hit harder than usual by the flu this year. According to the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands Public Health Department, influenza was quite active throughout the province.

The weekly rates of positive cases indicate a maximum of 34.9%. Overall, there were three weeks with rates above 30%, which is high compared to recent years.

This year's influenza season also reached its peak later than usual. Although virus circulation is now decreasing, cases are still being reported.

Since this decrease appears to be a trend and not simply a weekly variation, and given that it is consistent with what is observable for Quebec as a whole, it is likely that the annual peak is behind us. Despite

high activity this year, this increase did not translate into a significant increase in emergency room visits.

Pilot Project

The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) ended its user travel pilot project on March 31 due to budgetary constraints in the healthcare network.

Introduced on May 1, the measure allowed users who had to travel to a facility outside their local service network to receive care or services to accumulate their trips, for the same treatment, over a three-month period.

Without this pilot project, beneficiaries would not have received any financial compensation. The project cost nearly \$100,000. Users have until June 30, 2025, to submit their claims.

Gaspé-based Claudine Roy appointed to chair the Sépaq board

Gilles Gagné

Claudine Roy, co-founder of the Traversée de la Gaspésie, an international winter event that gained international recognition, has recently been appointed chair of the board of directors of the Société des établissements de plein air du Québec, better known as Sépaq. The appointment was announced by Isabelle Charest, Quebec's minister of Sport, Recreation and Outdoor Activities. Gaspé-based Claudine Roy has extensive experience in the tourism and hospitality industries. "Her entrepreneurial journey and her many commitments demonstrate her ability to combine strategic vision and social impact. Her varied experience and dynamic approach will be major assets for Sépaq," stated minister Charest in a press release.

Claudine Roy is originally from the Pointe-à-la-Frégate sector of Cloridorme, Northern Gaspé Peninsula. She opened the bistro-bar Le Brise Bise in downtown Gaspé in 1987. She later collaborated on the creation of the Musique du Bout du monde festival and was an inn owner in downtown Gaspé for several years. A graduate in physical education, she holds a certificate in administration and a certificate in educational sciences from the Université du Québec à Rimouski. In 2010, Premier Jean Charest appointed her as a Knight of the National Order of Quebec.

Gérard D. Levesque Foundation now accepting Scholarship applications

GILLES GAGNÉ

PASPEBIAC – Students from the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands aged 35 and under who are pursuing post-secondary studies can submit their applications before June 30 for a Gérard D. Levesque Foundation scholarship. These scholarships are funded by the revenues of the Gérard D. Levesque and Denis O. Servant funds. In fall 2025, the following scholarships will be awarded: a \$6,000 scholarship to a student pursuing a graduate degree; \$1,500 scholarships to undergraduate students; \$1,000 scholarships to students pursuing technical college training; \$750 scholarships to students in vocational training

In 2024, 16 scholarships with a total value of \$22,000 were awarded. By supporting

the region's students, the donors of these funds aim to recognize their perseverance in studies and the quality of their academic results. This recognition also aims to encourage them to pursue their studies in a sector likely to have positive impacts on the region's development and thus promote the return and settlement of young people. These funds also aim to encourage training in the region when the study program is offered locally. Students can apply at fondationgdl.ca.

Created in 1992, the Gérard D. Levesque Foundation promotes access to post-secondary education for students from the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands. In 2007, a financial partnership between the Gérard D. Levesque Foundation, Quebec's Youth Secretariat, and the

Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Youth Commission led to the creation of the Gérard D. Levesque Fund, managed by the Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Community Foundation.

The Denis O. Servant Fund, created in 2017, has the same mission, with a particular focus on students from Haute-Gaspésie. Since January 2022, the Gérard-D.-Levesque Foundation has been the beneficiary of the income from this fund. As the custodian of Mr. Denis Servant's estate, this fund will ultimately allow the Gérard-D.-Levesque Foundation to double its scholarship offerings.

To date, the Gérard-D.-Levesque Foundation has awarded scholarships totaling more than \$400,000 to over 200 students from the region.



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AWARD

Recognizes students who are making a difference in their community.

Annual bursaries of **\$500** each will be awarded to a graduating student from EACH of the following high schools:
Gaspé Polyvalent, Evergreen High School, New Carlisle High School, New Richmond High School, and Escuminac Intermediate School.

Open to:
Class of 2025
High School Graduates

Deadline: Friday, May 30, 2025



VOLUNTEER



TO QUALIFY FOR THIS BURSARY, PLEASE EMAIL A 400-WORD ESSAY TO CASA DESCRIBING THE FOLLOWING:

- ✓ Why you volunteer, how long you've been a volunteer, and why you think it's important to volunteer?
- ✓ Where you will be studying in 2025-2026 and what course or program of study you will be following?
- ✓ Please include your name, age, high school.

TO APPLY:

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR ESSAY BY EMAIL: ✉ ashley@casa-gaspe.com or in person at the **CASA office:**
**168, Gerard D Levesque
New Carlisle, QC, G0C 1Z0**



SPECS@GLOBETROTTER.NET
418-752-5400 (Call or Text)

The Gaspé SPEC

50
1975
to
2025
YEARS

SPEC is 50 years old and right from day one, the paper covered a wide range of subjects

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – The Gaspé SPEC, the English voice of the Gaspé Coast and beyond, turns 50 in 2025. In fact, the first edition of the newspaper was published on May 15, 1975. It was founded seven months after CASA, the Committee for Anglophone Social Action, which opened its first office in October 1974.

As it appeared below the list of employees and administrators of the paper, it was “Distributed free of charge to all 4,200 English households on the coast.” That reality changed after a few publications, the result, no doubt, of the financial challenges of launching and running a newspaper in the period of recession and intense inflation like the mid-1970s.

The necessity of founding the SPEC was explained by co-chairman Lynden Bechervaise on page 3 of the first edition. His write-up explains at length the context. Many paragraphs stand out, but one in particular captures the anglophone reality of the Gaspé Peninsula at that time:

“We, as Anglophones, living in Québec, are more aware of what is happening in the Legislative Assembly in Fredericton than of what is happening in the National Assembly in Québec. We receive TV and radio in English from the Maritime provinces only. Consequently, we are not much better informed about current Québec news than a person in Moncton or Corner Brook. The only exceptions are the Québec – AM



Volume 1, Number 1, May 15, 1975.

program transmitted to parts of the east end of the coast and the limited number of Quebec daily papers received in the area”.

The first news editor of the SPEC was Bernard “Bernie” Saint-Laurent, who went on to have a remarkable career for CBC as a show host and political analyst, among other roles.

Some articles appearing in the first years of the newspaper’s existence were unsigned. At the time this was a trend in newspapers published in Canada and in the United Kingdom. However, it can be

assumed that they were written by Bernard Saint-Laurent,

The Content

Right from the beginning, the SPEC ran articles about a wide range of topics, from community-oriented material to matters of national importance, most of the time with a Gaspé Peninsula twist.

It is worth noting that

1975 SPEC STAFF

Lyden Bechervaise
Co-Chairman

Gary Briand
Administrative Committee

Ann Vautier
Social Animator

B. St-Laurent
Co-Chairman

Donald Miller
Administrative Committee

Gérard Vallières
Social Animator

Printed by: Bellavance Inc.

Excerpt from verna’s garden...

Spring is here at last. Once again I’m looking through seed catalogues, choosing garden seeds and wondering about new varieties that will grow well in our climate. With the high cost of living these days, if you have your own vegetables and make your own pickles and preserves, it will keep the family budget down and provide you with vegetables all winter.

Excerpt from you are what you eat...

“Some of our ancestors had ways of telling us how we should eat: “breakfast like a king; dinner like a prince and supper like a pauper.” It tells us that we need post of our nourishment at the beginning of our day to supply the energy for our daily activities. You would not start on a long motor trip without putting gas in your tank; nor would you “fill ‘er up” to park in the garage for the night.

Each issue over the next year will have a special 50TH SECTION in the centre that you are encouraged to set aside in order to form a booklet.

SPEC’s founding coincided with the creation of CLSCs (local community service centres), a development covered extensively in the early issues.

In the days following the first paper of May 15 1975, people living in the 4,200 English households of the region could also read series such as in verna’s garden and you are what you eat. Other topics included learning another language, who will pay for the lost traps? There was also a section dedicated to historical topics and photos.

In that issue and those that followed, regular columns appeared under headings such as farming, the happy hunter, and perSPECTives. If one notices the lack of capital letters, it is simply because there was hardly one in the newspaper. The team had adopted a policy basically excluding “caps” and its originality stood out.

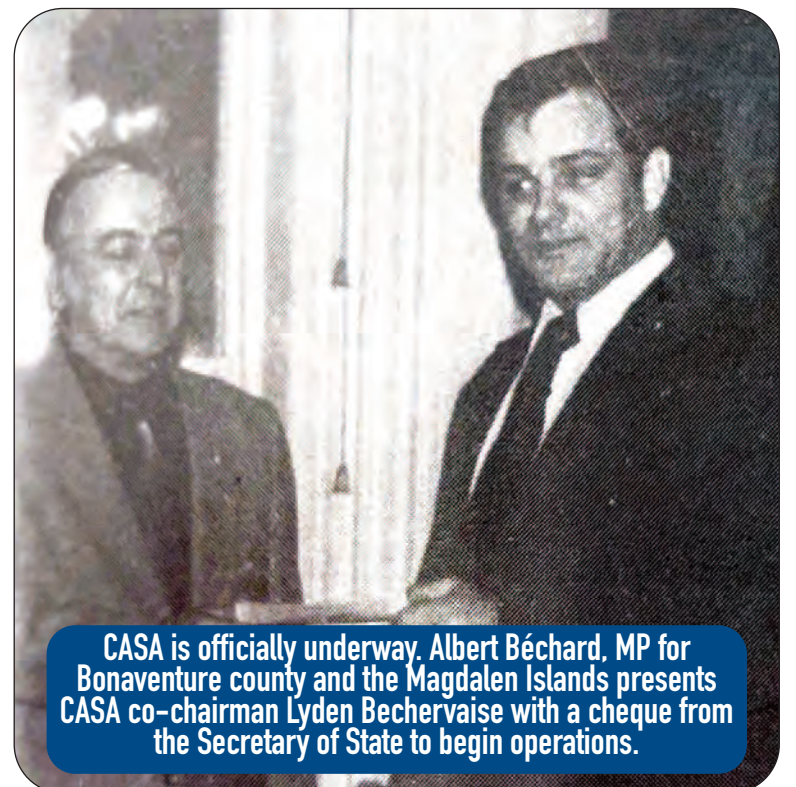
The perSPECTives featured longer articles requiring in-depth interviews and some research. Many of the topics covered would still be relevant today, like the state of the roads, seasonal employment, commercial fisheries and so on.

In the article entitled *who will pay for the lost traps*, readers learned that a storm on April 30 destroyed 700 traps waiting to be laid in the water the following day, May 1, which was the start of lobster fishing in the Bay of Chaleur area 50 years ago. It is interesting to note that despite its bad state, the “port daniel west wharf” was the place where ten lobster fishermen were delivering their catches. Yes, ten for such a small wharf!

Robin was the company that sponsored tv listings. There were only two channels, CHAU, channel 5 and CKCD-CKAM 12, in all likelihood CTV related stations through a subsidiary call ATV, for Atlantic Television.

Back then, CHAU was affiliated to Radio-Canada-CBC. The Carleton-based station prepared at one point a television program for the CBC (Radio-Canada) featuring the English population of the Gaspé coast. It was aired across Canada by Radio-Canada and shown by CHAU after the first screening.

As months passed, more columns were added, such as the law and you and dollars and sense.



The progression of SPEC over its first year of operations

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE - The intention of the SPEC founders was to publish a newspaper every second week. However, it took a while before the paper could produce more than a monthly issue.

In 2015, when the SPEC turned 40, Lynden Becher-vaise explained that it was a bit too ambitious to think that issuing two papers monthly was feasible, considering the inexperience of the team, the recession of the mid-1970s and, above all, the difficulty of uniting an English-speaking population scattered over a large territory, including linking communities that at times hardly knew anything about the more distant neighbours.

Vol. 1 No 2
June 1975

- This issue featured an interesting article entitled What about our old folks: we are not taking care of our old people, a topic that still resonates today. The newspaper also ran an article produced by the Townships Sun, The future of the English in Quebec, based on interviews with Premier Robert Bourassa and Parti Québécois Minister Jacques-Yvan Morin.
- The plight of Bougainville

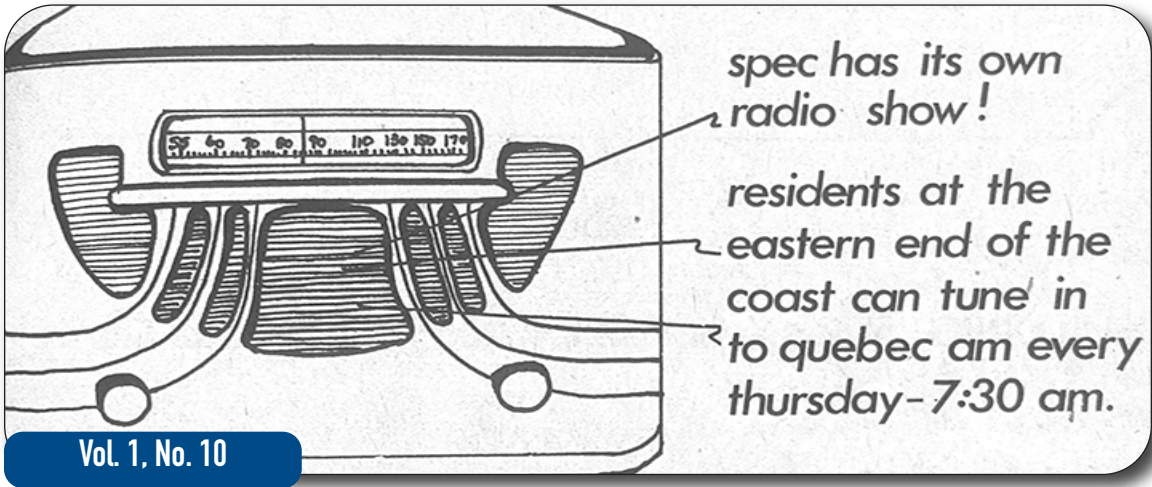


area residents to get their road paved was also featured in the second issue entitled new hope for line road and the topic continued to be followed by SPEC throughout the year.

Vol. 1 No 3
June 26, 1975

- The third paper included a message from the staff: "Help, we are in over our heads," a call from SPEC to potential volunteers. It marked the official beginning of a long tradition, as volunteers have been instrumental in the development and longevity of SPEC.

- The same issue also included a long story about the New Brunswick International Paper decision to recuperate logs floating on the Escuminac and Nouvelle rivers with bulldozers, which were also used to "correct" the banks of the river. The words "environmental protection" were frequently used in the newspaper regarding a case that eventually went to court.
- A part II of the Forillon Park saga was also published, with poignant testimonies expressed by Murray, Cyril and Clarence Roberts, as well as Trafford Simon.



Vol. 1, No. 10

Vol. 1 No 4
July 25, 1975

- The staff issues a first invitation to readers, offering them subscriptions. The cost was \$6.50, or \$7 for off-the-coast readers.
- Meanwhile, Bougainville residents put up a road blockade, tired of the dust, potholes and lack of safety characterizing the "line road."

Vol. 1 No 5
August 14, 1975

- The perSPECTive focused on the budworm infestation affecting the Gaspesian forest.
- Gaspé Copper Mines ran an ad highlighting the company's hiring of 300 students over the summer. Girls are featured in the photo picture.
- Percé hosted "Canada's first sailboat festival."
- In Miguasha, there are talks about building a fossil museum.
- A photo showed Port Daniel's Louis Dow and helper Peter Martinson after catching a 950-pound tuna.
- In Gaspé, a French research ship called Thalassa called midway through a mission whose goal is to find new redfish grounds.
- There are talks in Chandler about a Gaspesia mill strike, as a recession is getting stronger, with a high inflation rate. The initiative is spearheaded by the 500 members of the papermakers' union. The mill provided jobs for 1,450 people, including forestry workers.
- The New Carlisle Royals reached the final in a fastball tournament held in Matane but lost 4-2 to Rimouski.

Vol. 1 No 6
September 6, 1975

- Some paper mills in Ontario are already on strike. In the Gaspé Peninsula, the employees of the Gaspesia newsprint mill in Chandler and the Consolidated-Bathurst linerboard mill in New Richmond, a total of 2,200 people, are about to vote for a strike.
- Such is also the context at Gaspé Copper Mines in Murdochville, where the minimum wage is \$4.26 an hour, compared to \$5 for the other Noranda Mines plants. Mine workers' minimum wage is \$5.60 in Sudbury and \$5.67 at Quebec-Cartier Mining, on the North Shore. Michael Arsenault is the union president in Murdochville. He later reached the upper national echelons at the Quebec Federation of Labour's Métallos, but he experienced a hard time at the Charbonneau Commission in 2013.
- The obituary section features the passing of H.E. Agnès, born in Jersey in 1898, who moved to New Carlisle at 16. It shows the tight links between the Channel Islands and the Gaspé Peninsula.
- There is a long feature of Bernie Donohue, a butcher, baker, bootlegger and constable of the law.
- An article about the Little Cascapedia Canoe Race.
- A publicity promoting the expansion of Canada's maritime zone from 12 to 200 miles, and a Gaspé Copper Mines ad stating that 2,154 people were earning an annual total of \$26,930,000 in wages.

assurancia
GAUTHIER FLAMAND
Cabinet en assurance de dommages

Do you need advice or information about your house, car or business insurance?
If you need a dedicated professional contact us!

Assurancia is the solution for all your insurance needs!

@ reception@assuranciagf.ca 418-547-6648 ext. 3

Linda Gauthier
Patterson and her team

Joël Flamand

Cynthia Flamand

From Page 12

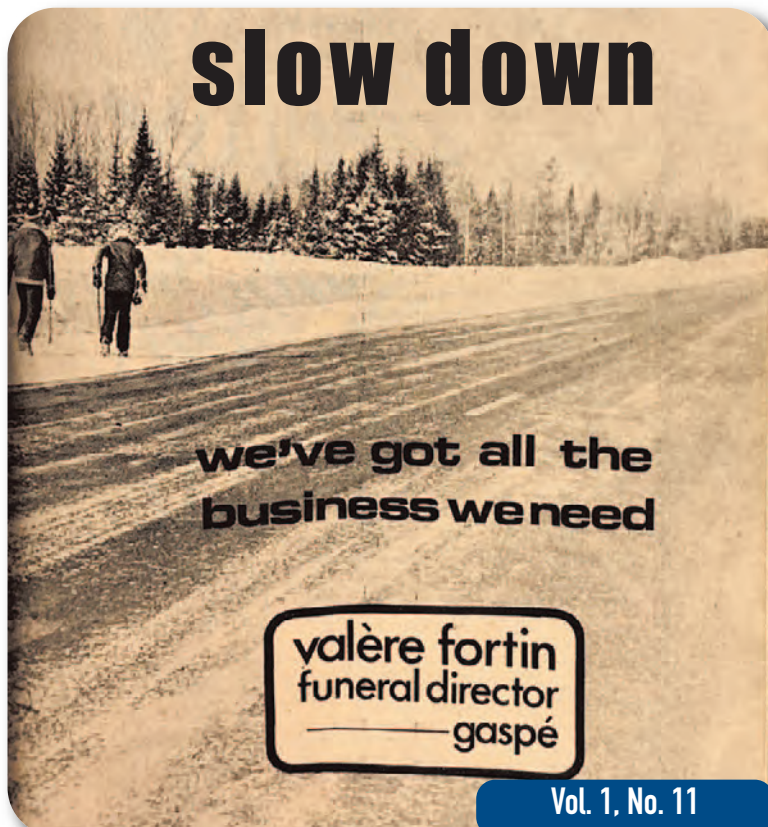
The progression of SPEC...

Vol. 1 No 7
September 26, 1975

- perSPECTives features a long article about labour and the welfare state.
- There is a follow up on the Forillon Park situation.
- An article entitled hello mexico, this is barachois calling new carlisle denounces Quebec Telephone's poor service for the 645 exchange, to such an extent that citizens formed the 645-exchange committee to deal with the situation.
- In the same area, a 29-foot-long basking shark was caught by Elmer Lucas and Vincent Boyle.
- An article entitled what choice for the English reports on Parti Québécois leader René Lévesque's visit to the Gaspé Cegep, 14 months before the 1976 election.
- In the protests pay off article, we learn that the Bougainville residents will have their road paved, after a day-and-a-half blockade. Paving 7 miles (close to 12 kilometres) would cost \$400,000!

Vol. 1 No 8
November 20, 1975

- Pottery artist Enid Legros appears on the cover, and more photos inside show Louise Wright and Gloria Hayes.
- As part of The Early Years series, the article covers the history of the 82nd Gaspé Field Battery RCA. In SPEC



Vol. 1, No. 11

number 3, the history of New Richmond had been published.

- There is also a long article about LIP, the Local Initiative Projects, which gave work to hundreds of Gaspésians during the mid-1970s hard times and set up numerous sports and leisure infrastructures in the region.
- This edition of the SPEC features articles in French, written by Denys Courchesne, Radio-Canada's correspondent in Gaspé. Another article presents the Diffusion Gaspésie/this is gaspesia radio, the community-owned radio station eventually founded in Gaspé.

Vol. 1 No 9
December 18, 1975

- This issue includes a report

on the Gaspesia strike.

- A long article, democracy and the little people, which addressed missing names on electoral lists, notably in Bougainville.
- Write-ups about curling in the region.
- The official opening of the CLSC Malauze was also featured.

Vol. 1 No 10
February 6, 1976

- A write-up from J.A. (Bud) Campbell sparked the launch of the letters to the editor column, prompting more readers

to start sending letters.

- A long article entitled bureaucracy around the bend, presented the case of a Black Cape turn where 28 cars left the road between December 2-23, and ended up on Joseph Boudreau's front lawn.
- The perSPECTives column featured the situation of Gaspesian truckers, who were hit hard by the strike of the region's two paper mills.

Vol. 1 No 11
March 8, 1976

- A long profile of pediatrician Marc-André Pouliot was featured.
- An article on crime on the rise.
- A write-up presents the trial of Bougainville Citizens Committee members Iris and Grant Budd, plus Carson and Bradley Annett, who are charged with intimidation during the road blockade on the previous summer. The trial was postponed to April 13.
- The Gaspesia mill strike is over while the Gaspé Copper Mines workers are able to get a minimum wage hike to \$4.90, from \$4.56. At the Consolidated-Bathurst mill in New Richmond, talks are still ongoing.
- Back then, the number of deadly accidents on the region's road was staggering,

hovering around 100 casualties annually, far exceeding today's numbers. Valère Fortin's funeral home in Gaspé therefore ran a thoughtful ad asking people to "slow down, we've got all the business we need."

Vol. 1 No 12
April 3, 1976

- The main topic was the end of the Consolidated-Bathurst strike at the New Richmond mill. At the time, 450 people worked there, with even more employed in forestry operations.
- In New Carlisle, plans were made for the Green, the sport and leisure facility located on New Carlisle's waterfront.

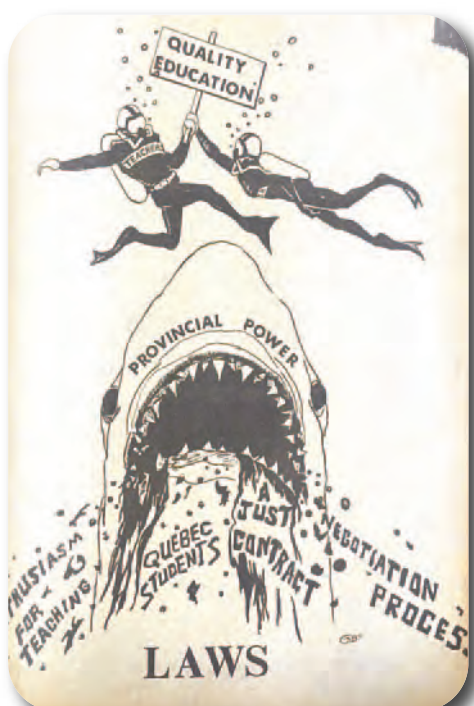
Note: The upcoming articles about the newspaper content might not be as detailed, topic-wise. This first summary was created to show how SPEC was born and what the hot topics were in its first year.



Excerpt from classifieds...

Wanted: Carrier pigeons for Gaspé - New Carlisle and stopping over in Barachois. Serious offers only.

Wanted: Poetry and short stories written by Gaspésians, to be used in a high school literature.



DEJA VU OPTICS

Had your exam at another Clinic? NO PROBLEM!
Deja Vu can access your prescription! FREE!!

VARILUX

Premium Progressive Lenses

\$399

SAVE 50% on each additional pair
See our staff about details and how you can save more!

City Centre Mall, Campbellton, NB 506-753-6000
157 Water St, Campbellton, NB dejavuoptics.com

A grainy, black and white photograph showing a dirt road or path leading towards a railroad crossing. In the background, there are railroad tracks and crossing signals (X-shaped signs with lights). The scene appears to be in a rural or undeveloped area. The text "protests pay off" is overlaid in the lower right quadrant of the image.

“We wanted the people of Bougainville to realize the advantages of working and cooperating together as a group to obtain their objectives.” said social animator Rod Hayes...



Family Ties

AN EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER

Activities for Seniors

Family Ties is pleased to present monthly activities for seniors.



Please join us:


WEDNESDAY MAY 21ST 2025
1:30-4:00 PM
NEW CARLISLE TOWN HALL

THIS MONTH'S ACTIVITY: GERMAN ROOTS WITH CATHERINE MELCHIORI

*Space is limited. Please RSVP by Monday May 19th, 2025 to Madelyn Hayes at 418-752-5583.










CLÔTURES KENNEDY
DÉNEIGEMENT
EXCAVATION • KENNEDY

TÉL.: 418 368-4774 CELL.: 418 368-9302
GASPÉ, DOUGLASTOWN
FOSSES SEPTIQUES

Snow Removal



Transport



CRE suggests mediation to find a way forward on the caribou issue

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

BONAVENTURE - The Gaspésie Regional Environmental Council (CRE) will act as a mediator in an attempt to bring all parties together following the meeting a month ago by stakeholders from Haute-Gaspésie on caribou protection.

Approximately forty elected officials and socioeconomic leaders had called on Premier François Legault, the Minister responsible for Gaspésie, Maïté Blanchette-Vézina, the Minister of the Environment, the Fight against Climate Change, Wildlife and Parks, Benoît Charette, and the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, for rapid intervention since Haute-Gaspésie claims it is being economically suffocated. The stakeholders called for a suspension of interim caribou protection measures and the non-implementation of the measures contained in the pilot project announced in April 2024, considering it was never adopted.

"The reaction of the Haute-Gaspésie community to the Quebec government's proposal is legitimate. We're at an impasse here," notes CRE senior advisor Michel

Chouinard.

The pilot project for caribou protection, would set aside a vast territory of 5,000 square kilometres for caribou conservation. However, the recent closure of the Damaboïs sawmill in Cap-Chat and the loss of 18 direct jobs, as well as indirectly impacting dozens more, was the final straw, as recreational tourism projects could no longer be developed.

"The idea is to get back to working together and finding acceptable solutions for both caribou protection and ensuring that local economic activities can continue," notes Mr. Chouinard.

The CRE points out that Canada's federal Ministry of the Environment had proposed financial compensation to minimize the socioeconomic impacts of certain protection measures.

"But the initial idea is to implement joint action between Haute-Gaspésie and the Gaspésie to see how we can organize ourselves to maintain the population. It's important to remember that this is an obligation under Canada's Species at Risk Act, which takes precedence over any other law," continues Mr. Chouinard.

Failing to find a solution is no longer an option. "The idea



Photo: Louis Fradette

Mediation is requested in order to save the caribou herd of the Gaspé Peninsula.

isn't just to save 11 caribou. We must aim to reestablish a population and be able to live within a few decades on a territory that allows them to roam. Conditions are no longer what they were, particularly in old-growth forests, but let's look together at what we can do," he explains.

"We have to get out of the current impasse. We can't operate in opposition. The community is opposed to Quebec's proposal. There's a way to look at things differently and say this doesn't suit us and

how we can find solutions," explains Mr. Chouinard.

A project manager has been hired to become a facilitator to find a way to move forward on the various available measures.

Gaspé Member of the National Assembly Stéphane Sainte-Croix suggested that the 5,000-square-kilometre zone could be revised. He mentioned expanding the protected perimeter around Parc de la Gaspésie and the Chic-Chocs Wildlife Reserve instead.

"It's as if we had imposed drastic restrictions from the start. The idea is to take it step by step. We'll take care of the current population, provide the best conditions for survival and reproduction, and from there, build for the coming years with a plan for two, five, or ten years in the future. We can't take it all at once," Mr. Chouinard said, to reduce the impact on the environment.

As of now, no timetable has been set for reaching a consensus of implementing a final plan.

Moose ticks are still present in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Despite a lower-than-expected hunter turnout, analyses carried out by the Ministry of Wildlife shows a marked presence of moose ticks during the 2024 moose hunting season.

Wildlife technicians collected samples at the Grande-Vallée, Gaspé and Nouvelle stations in order to have a better picture of the presence of ticks.

The Ministry had expected to see about 100 or so hunters at the region's registration stations, however only about thirty moose were registered at the stations. Hunters now have the option to record their tagged large game online instead of physically going to a registration station.



A moose in Forillon Park.

Photo: N. Sergerie

"We think we still have a good picture of the degree of (tick) infestation, which was high last fall, both in terms of the percentage of moose and the number of ticks that each of them carried. We expect there to be a lot of ticks on animals this winter," says biologist Marie-Claude Richer

from the Ministry of Wildlife's Gaspé office.

It's difficult to compare data from the last decade, particularly because of the pandemic.

"We can go back to 2013. Between 2013 and 2019, we had continuous data. Then, we had some. This year,

we're about at the same level as the highest years, from 2013 to 2016. It's a year that seems important for the infestation rate," she explains.

The presence of the tick varies from year to year, depending on weather conditions, since the herd remains relatively stable.

The Ministry is considering a different method for collecting data next fall. "We're going to try to either go to the stations during the first weekend of hunting or do business with butchers used by hunters. This is an avenue that we will try to develop to see if it would not be easier to go to the butchers. Many hunters register online but still use butchers. We will try to change our way of doing things," says the biologist.

Long, rainy summers, an early spring and a late fall are factors that increase the survival of female ticks and eggs.

Subsequently, the larvae can attach themselves to moose and cause damage at the end of winter when their physical condition is at its lowest.

Deer hunting statistics declined slightly 2024 compared to 2023 in the Gaspé Peninsula

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – The deer harvest by hunters in the Gaspé Peninsula increased by 11.57% in 2024 compared to 2023. The total climbed from 873 to 974 deer in what is often referred to as Zone 1.

However, trends varied depending on location, with the northern side of the Gaspé Peninsula seeing a decline, and the southern side, where deer are traditionally more abundant, experienced an increase.

On the southern side, hunters harvested 794 deer in 2024, a 17.28% increase compared to the 677 animals harvested in 2023.

On the north side of the region, there was a decrease in 2024, as 180 deer were harvested, a 16,7% drop from 2023.

These results were published in a statistical report released at the end of January by Quebec’s Department of Wildlife.

Zone 1 South 2,798 whitetail deer permits were sold in 2024
Zone 1 North 1,532 whitetail deer permits were sold in 2024

Zone 1 South

The total harvest and hunting success increased for a second consecutive year in that area. The total harvest of 794 deer included 770 adult males and 24 antlerless deer.

This represents a 60% increase compared to the 2021-2023 average of 498 deer.

A total of 2,840 hunting licenses were sold in the region in 2024, including 2,798 regular licenses and 42 additional licenses. The total number of licenses therefore increased by 7% compared to 2023, at 2,643 licences and by 21% compared to the 2021-2023 average of 2,344.

As for hunting success, it climbed to 28%, which is 2% higher than the 2023 rate of 26%, and 7% higher than the

2021-2023 average of 21%.

An overall interpretation of the results and the overall context provided by the Department of Wildlife, mentions that the white-tailed deer hunting results were once again positive in Zone 1 South in 2024. Hunting success and the number of deer harvested are on the rise, indicating that the deer population has increased in 2024.

“Deer experienced mild winter conditions in 2023 and 2024, which contributed to the increase in the population over the last two years. Indeed, in Zone 1 North and Zone 1 South, the winters of 2023 and 2024 were among the mildest in the last 10 years,” mentions the report.

The report also notes that white-tailed deer are a productive species, and that milder winters promote their survival and reproductive success, leading to rapid population growth.

However, no antlerless deer permits were issued for Zone 1 South in 2024. “Hunting in this zone is exclusive or very oriented towards adult males, because the female segment, responsible for population growth, is protected there to maintain or increase populations,” concludes the document.

Zone 1 North

In Zone 1 North the 2024 results represent an 8% decline compared to that of 2023. However the harvest of 180 animals is still a 20% hike compared to the 2021-2023 average of 150 deer.

As for the number of permits sold, it reached a total of 1,532, consisting of 1,471 regular permits and 61 supplemental permits. It represents a 11% hike compared to the 1,383 permits sold in 2023 and a 28% increase compared to the 1,198 permits sold on the average between 2021 and



Photo: P. MacWhirter

Overall deer hunting results improved in the region 2024.

2023 inclusively.

Hunting success decreased to 12% in 2024, down from the 14% in 2023 but equal to the 2021-2023 average.

According to the Department of Wildlife, the interpretation of those results shows that while the number of permits sold has been increasing since 2022, “The increase in the harvest in 2023 probably helped attract more hunters in 2024. However, the harvest remains above the average of the last three years and the success is equivalent, which indicates that the deer population would have generally been maintained in this zone in 2024.”

Like on the south side, no antlerless deer permits were allocated for the north side of the region in 2024. Similarly, hunting in this area is exclusive or very oriented towards adult males, because the female segment, responsible for population growth, is protected there to maintain or increase populations.

Provincially

In Quebec, the overall results of the 2024 hunting sea-

son were historic with record hunting success. The number of hunters continued its growth that began in 2020 and returned to the level of 10 years ago. Game was very abundant and the harvest was the second-highest ever recorded.

More than 59,500 deer were harvested in Quebec, a total excluding Anticosti Island, during the last hunting season, an exceptional harvest that was only surpassed in 2007.

Across the province, “The hunting success for a first deer was 40%, a remarkable rate for a territory located at the northern limit of the white-tailed deer’s range and which

compares favourably with that of neighbouring provinces and states,” states the document released by the Department of Wildlife.

Excluding Anticosti Island, where special permits and hunting conditions apply, more than 142,000 people hunted whitetailed deer in 2024, a 3% increase compared to 2023. Approximately 21,700 hunters obtained an additional permit, representing 15% of all hunters.

As for Anticosti Island, the final tally is not yet complete, as sport hunting ended on December 24. However, preliminary results suggest a record with more than 9,000 deer harvested.

Fair Haven Bible Camp New Carlisle, Quebec

Little Campers (A)	7 - 9 years	June 29-July 4
Girls Camp	10 - 12 yrs	July 6-11
Little Campers (B)	7 - 9 yrs	July 13-18
Boys Camp	10 - 12 yrs	July 20-25
Teen Camp	13 - 18 yrs	July 27-Aug 1

ACTIVITIES:

Beach Time, Group Games, Field Sports, Water Sports, Picnics, Hikes, Camp Fires, Tuck Time, Crafts and Chapel



CITQ 085164

Rate: \$140 (includes \$30 non-refundable registration fee).

To reserve: etransfer your registration fee to rose.roussy@gmail.com or mail payment to Nelson Roussy, 371 rte 132 east, New Richmond, QC, G0C 2B0

Include camper’s name and which camp they are attending.



VILLAGE
Real Estate Agency

Suzanne Landry
CERTIFIED REAL ESTATE BROKER AEO
418-752-0792
suzannelandry@royallepage.ca
www.suzannelandry.ca

Friendly bilingual service
from Matapedia to Port Daniel
24 years experience

Correctional officers demonstrate in Chandler

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - On May 1, correctional officers from the New Carlisle and Percé detention centres held a demonstration in front of the Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly's office in Chandler.

The twenty or so officers who attempted to meet with MNA Catherine Blouin denounced the Quebec government's proposed offer of 12.7%, while most other government employees received 17.4% over five years.

"We want to make it clear to our CAQ (Coalition Avenir Québec) elected officials that the offers are not satisfactory given our working conditions. Our collective agreement expired in 2023. We are here to



Photo: An unidentified correctional agent

Correctional officers in front of the Bonaventure MNA's office in Chandler.

make it clear that the 12.7% offer is not sufficient given the increase in violence and the mandatory overtime that has become commonplace. Our conditions have deteriorated significantly in recent years, and we are asking for a raise that reflects the value of the work we do," explains Noémie Boudreau, president of the New Carlisle Detention Centre officers' union.

The Quebec government considers that working conditions are too high to justify a lower raise than other public sector workers.

"The employer has many requests for a reduction in our working conditions. They are willing to increase the salary offer only if we agree to a reduction in our conditions, which is unacceptable," warns Ms. Boudreau.

The union does not have the right to strike or to arbitrate. Agents must be imaginative to make themselves heard, like a commercial recently aired during Canadiens playoff games. "There are approximately three meetings per week at the bargaining table. Depending on the means we use to make ourselves heard, it can move quickly or take time, but we will not neglect our efforts to reach a satisfactory settlement," emphasizes the president.

The union would like to conclude a new collective agreement before the summer season.

Rocher-Percé Prefect Samuel Parisé will seek a second term

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - Samuel Parisé announced his intentions on May 6 via a message on social media that he will seek a second term as prefect of the Rocher-Percé MRC in the November 2 election.

"It's been a lot of learning. Being involved with the public and organizations is rewarding and enriching," notes Mr. Parisé, who was just starting his career in politics when he was elected in 2021.

He says he is proud of the modernization of the Rocher-Percé airport, including the extension of the runway and the expansion of the terminal, as well as the fight against Quebec to allow MRCs to support the construction of rental housing.

However, he quickly learned early in his mandate that the political machine doesn't move as fast as the will to act.

"When I realized that, I had to take a step back. We want to change things quickly, to put certain things in place, but sometimes things are bigger than us. Everything that has to do with the federal or provincial government is a mechanism. The administration is always present. They have directions and things in place. Changing this mechanism is a long-term job," maintains the outgoing prefect. Even when



Outgoing prefect Samuel Parisé was also president of the Gaspésie Residual Materials Treatment Board during his term.

Photo: N. Sergerie

decisions are made, they can be changed, as was the case with the rail refurbishment in the Gaspésie.

"We still believe this is an essential project both economically and for tourism," says the prefect. However, the announced rule requiring residences to be 300 metres away from a railway line would have a significant impact in Rocher-Percé.

"It would have an impact on the development of housing and certain land. This is crucial for us. We must find the best agreement and the best way for these projects to coexist. We will continue all of our efforts," he says.

Continuing the work already underway will be the key principle of a possible second term. "There have been steps taken in the housing crisis. It

will definitely be a priority issue. We want to house our people adequately and safely," says Mr. Parisé. The fight for the return of Réno-Région will also continue to enable low-income people to renovate their homes.

"If this basic need isn't met, it's difficult to think of other projects to revitalize our territory," notes the outgoing prefect, while the MRC continues to rank at the bottom of the pack in terms of development.

"Things are improving demographically; we have people who want to come here, new talent to meet priority needs like health and local services. If we want to ensure continued development, we need to harmonize the reception of new people and the retention of those who currently live in the area," analyzes Mr. Parisé.

New collective agreement for Paspébiac's municipal workers' union

Gilles Gagné

Municipal workers in Paspébiac have secured an 18.5% wage increase over five years under a newly signed collective agreement with the town's administration. The wage increase includes the 9.5% catch-up pay effective upon signing. The agreement, negotiated by the Confédération des syndicats nationaux, (CSN), covers the period from 2024 to 2028. In addition to the wage increases, the Municipality of Paspébiac will join the Quebec Municipal Employees Retirement Plan (QMERP) under its defined benefit component. It joins more than 260 small municipalities that have made this choice. The agreement also includes improvements to work schedules and vacation time.

Lobster base price set at \$7 for the first week

Gilles Gagné

SAINTE-THÉRÈSE-DE-GASPÉ – Lobster fishermen in the Gaspé Peninsula received a base price of \$7 for their first week of landings, which covered the period from April 28 to May 4. Roch Lelièvre, president of the processing plant Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan, explains that this price only applies only to Gaspé fishermen, as Magdalen Islanders only started on May 3 and landed their first catches on May 5. "The price will be adjusted through the joint marketing plan equation next week, a plan that includes the Magdalen Islanders," points out Mr. Lelièvre. Will the price go up from the second week and on? "It is hard to tell. After the beginning of May, the fishermen from everywhere (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland) deliver their catches to the markets. There is no stability in the orders we receive," he adds, stressing that the \$7 price was not well received by the fishermen. In 2024, the base price settled at \$8 per pound. The retail price is more affordable for consumers this year. Lelièvre, Lelièvre et Lemoignan also operates a fish market and on May 8, the price for live lobster hovered around \$8.95 per pound, which is 80 cents lower than last year.

Long Covid: The Lingering Battle After Infection

HOLLY SMITH
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PASPEBIAC - Long COVID is a growing health crisis that affects thousands of Canadians, altering their lives in ways they never imagined. For some, the symptoms persist for months or even years after the initial infection, making even the simplest tasks a challenge.

According to Statistics Canada, as of June 2023, about two-thirds of Canadian adults reported having at least one confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infection. Among them, nearly 15% developed long COVID, meaning their symptoms lasted for three months or longer. This translates to approximately 1.4 million people, or 4.6% of the adult population, struggling with ongoing health complications.

Long COVID symptoms vary from person to person, but the most common ones include fatigue (72.1%), cough (39.3%), shortness of breath (38.5%), and brain fog (32.9%). Nearly half of those affected reported experiencing symptoms for a year or more, and 21.3% said their condition significantly limited their daily activities.

Roxanne Major, a licensed practical nurse from Paspébiac, knows all too well how devastating long COVID can be. Before contracting the virus, she lived a full and independent life. She worked full-time in healthcare, ran a small foot care business, sold Tupperware, and volunteered at her children's school. But all that changed on April 1, 2023, when she woke up with severe COVID symptoms.

"I had generalized pain, fever, chills, vomiting, severe spinning vertigo, and was unable to go to the bathroom alone. I did a home COVID test which was positive, then had a positive PCR test at the CLSC. Five days at home in bed. On day six or seven, I tried to work for a week wearing an N95 mask, but was unable to finish the shift twice my husband came to get me," says the mother of two.

Despite being fully vaccinated and taking all necessary precautions at work, Roxanne tested positive for COVID-19. At first, she thought she would recover within a few days. But as the weeks passed, her condition worsened.

"I lost 90% of my hearing



Photos: Courtesy of R. Major

Roxanne, who was once a very active member of her community now finds simple activities require careful planning and energy conservation.

in one ear and my symptoms have worsened following COVID. I went to the CLSC and was put on sick leave for a suspected sinus infection following COVID. Shortly after, I had an appointment with my family doctor, who put me on indefinite sick leave."

Over the past two years, Roxanne's list of medical diagnoses has grown. "Starting with bilateral Ménière's disease, autoimmune inner ear disease (loss of hearing in both ears – with two hearing aids), postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (standing for more than 15 minutes increases my pulse rate, decreases my blood pressure, inner tremors), sinus tachycardia, and long COVID, all triggered by COVID," explains Ms. Major.

The Daily Struggles of Living with Long COVID

Roxanne, who was once a very active member of her community now finds simple activities require careful planning and energy conservation. "On good days, I help my husband make meals and wash dishes using a bench to sit on. I need a family member at home when I shower, which I do sitting down twice a week, in case I fall like I have in the past. On the days I shower, I can't do anything else because it requires a lot of energy and many breaks between each step. Just cleaning the toilet tires me out for days." As a mother, Roxanne wants to enjoy her family as much as possible, "Since the beginning, and still today, I need a short nap

twice a day to enjoy the little moments with my family."

Memory and concentration problems are also a significant challenge. Ms. Major's memory and concentration have also declined. "I was even forgetting to take some of my pills. I now have them prepared by the pharmacy in a dispill. One of the 25 pills I take daily, is an immunosuppressant to try and stabilize my hearing loss." However, this means she is now more susceptible to infections and viruses. She told SPEC that one time her children had a cold, which she caught and a week later she had to go to the emergency room. She was diagnosed with a severe sinus infection and prescribed antibiotics. But it didn't end there, "The week after, I got a severe case of gastroenteritis which took another week to get over," explains Ms. Major

The Emotional Toll of Long COVID

Living with long COVID is not just a physical struggle, it's an emotional one as well. Many people don't understand the severity of the condition, leading to judgment and isolation. "People are fast to judge when they don't see someone out and about in the public, not knowing things a person is actually going through."

She recalls a painful moment when a family member told her, "You should quit the CHSLD (long-term care facility), you're always sick when you're there, try to work less." Another person accused her of keeping her

husband from socializing with the neighbours. "They even said I don't take care of my children, that I spent the summer rocking outside." There is still much stigma relating to Long COVID, considering it is a relatively new disease, this manifests the individual being misunderstood, not taken seriously. A report by Simon Fraser University states, "Long COVID awareness and education is needed among doctors, nurses, care providers and the public in Canada to reduce stigma around the condition and legitimize the disability."

The Fight for Better Healthcare and Awareness

One of Roxanne's biggest frustrations is the lack of understanding about long COVID in her region. "Here in the Gaspésie, doctors haven't yet understood the long-term effects of COVID. Despite living in a remote region, I'm lucky to have found and have been cared for by all these specialists in the city since two months post-COVID."

Her medical team, based in Quebec City, includes ENT specialists, rheumatologists, internists, ophthalmologists, and infectious disease experts. She also receives care

it's not in my head."

Vestibular physiotherapy has also played a key role in her recovery. "I also have vestibular physiotherapy sessions every week. This helps me enormously improve my balance and reduces the intensity of my vertigo spells and migraines. As you can see, it takes a whole team of professionals to help me manage all the damage caused by COVID."

Looking to the Future

Although her condition has changed her life dramatically, Roxanne remains hopeful. "The way I see my future today is being focused on learning to improve my quality of life by reducing the intensity of my symptoms and enjoying the simple pleasures with my family: crocheting, swimming in my pool, camping, hunting, gardening, relaxing by swinging on my deck, and getting as much fresh air as possible."

She knows she may never return to her nursing career, but she still hopes that medical advancements will one day lead to better treatments. "I've already accepted that it will be impossible for me to return to my vocation, but I still have hope that one day someone will find a miracle



Before she was sick, Roxanne enjoyed bike rides with her children Nicholas and Shyanne, "Now, even walking to the truck is a challenge." says Ms. Major.

from the Long COVID Clinic in Rimouski. "They're incredible. At first I had access to online webinars to help me understand my symptoms. Since there's no known cure yet, I'm still learning to manage my symptoms. The team also helped me understand that, it's not just the flu and

pill for us (long COVID patients)."

Her message to others struggling with long COVID is clear: "Anyone can get long COVID: vaccinated or not, in perfect health or not, regardless of age or where you work. It is definitely NOT just a cold. Stay safe."

Carleton’s Sonia Landry retires at 37 due to long Covid

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – At the end of the summer, Sonia Landry, a 37-year-old Gaspesian woman from Carleton, has had to resign herself to retiring from work due to the devastating effects of long Covid contracted in March 2022.

Having been a journalist, information officer and marketing agent for the past 15 years, Ms. Landry tried to return to work after three weeks of Covid in April 2022, but her relentlessness may have contributed to her case deteriorating, a factor that helped her accept this retired status, which she wholeheartedly hopes will be temporary

Despite the bad luck taking its toll on her body, she considers herself “lucky” to be able to count on insurance that gives her 70% of her salary, perhaps until the age of 65 years old, if her condition does not improve.

“I am considered retired. It makes an impression that I am in the process of retiring from the Canadian public service. I would otherwise receive \$1,600 per month from the RRQ (Régie des rentes du



Sonia Landry has to pace herself most of the time when she walks her dog Sardine, and when she lacks energy, she uses a mobility scooter to accompany him.

tional therapists, but not necessarily doctors,” she emphasizes.

A long descent into hell

Sonia Landry contracted Covid in March 2022 even though she was working from home.

“I don’t know who gave it

utes, no more at the moment, and not every day. I also have tinnitus, and sensitivity to noise and light. The intensity of my symptoms will vary. I have a cognitive limitation that prevents me from driving. The stimuli exceed my limits. If I insist, I feel post-exertional malaise. This interview risks giving me post-exertional malaise,” says Sonia Landry.

Over the past year, she has managed to better identify certain warning signs of these ailments.

“I managed to find my limit to the effort, with occupational therapists specialized in long Covid. The most important thing to do is to learn to stabilize and not to have post-exertional malaise. An accumulation of post-exercise discomfort can lead to a permanent deterioration in physical and cognitive abilities,” she notes.

Her condition may depend on the weather, even if research on this subject is embryonic.

“A change in atmospheric pressure is intense. There are not many of us talking about it. I deduced it. Every time I don’t feel well, I check the weather. In late September and early October, there were solar storms, which triggered the northern lights. It’s like in May, and I don’t feel well in this context. Such solar storms give me a huge headache. It reassures me to know that there is a reason,” emphasizes Sonia Landry.

It’s not just the physical effects that undermine the ability to lead a normal day, she assures.

“Having long Covid is an

extreme mental load. You are always calculating your energy reserves. For the past two and a half years, my brain has been constantly “spinning” (mobilizing). We spend our time asking ourselves questions. It’s a disease that, by default, is fluctuating, that makes energy and symptoms fluctuate,” she insists.

Medications galore

Sonia Landry used to stay away from medication before her long Covid. Her reality has changed completely over the past 30 months, and especially during the first year, when her weight dropped by 25 pounds, she, who had none to lose.

“I take special medications. When I first sent my mother to get my medication, the pharmacist questioned it a little. My mother wondered if I wasn’t a guinea pig. In particular, I take microdoses of Naltrexone, generally given to drug addicts, but I take five milligrams, whereas it’s 50 milligrams for drug addicts. It fights insomnia and fatigue. In Quebec, it’s given to people suffering from fibromyalgia,” she says of this form of chronic fatigue.

The game of emotions can also be quite a challenge for people suffering from long

that will last a week. You can control the desire not to jog or work, but not the anxiety. Antidepressants are on the list of medications I take.”

The public gaze sometimes hurts, when she finds the strength to go out.

“I wear a mask in public. I have to say that I’m not sick, that I’m protecting myself. It’s the same when I use the mobility scooter to walk my dog. I have to pace myself. I see people shocked when they see me get off and walk. But I’m lucky. I’m surrounded by kind and intelligent people,” she says with a smile.

Sonia Landry remains hopeful that her immune system will return to normal, which would rid her of most of the effects of long Covid.

“We have histamines, the messengers in the body, that multiply, and that tells the white blood cells to activate and protect me. I accumulate too much histamine in my body, which creates fatigue. I have become intolerant to a bunch of foods that contain histamines: tomatoes, alcohol, vinegar, cheese, yogurt, citrus fruits, tofu and leftover fish. It triggers major gastric attacks, which have a domino effect that is hard to find a solution for. But I have hope. We managed to calm my pain attacks,

COVID

Québec) because I am considered disabled, or from social assistance, at \$900. I qualified. After two years of absence from work, the employer can terminate the employment link. My group insurance (as a Parks Canada employee) takes me, and accepts me until age 65, if necessary. They will continue to pay me. As soon as I can work 20 hours a week, my insurance will let me go,” explains Sonia Landry.

She says she has been able to count on other “lucks” during her journey over the past 30 months, including a good family doctor, “a fairy tale in the nightmare,” and a partner, Guillaume, who is about to obtain his caregiver status.

“I am lucky to be followed by Alain Piché, a career infectious disease specialist, the great specialist in long Covid, who opened a clinic at the start of the pandemic. People should know that there are not necessarily doctors in all clinics treating long Covid. There are physiotherapists, occupa-

to me. It lasted like three weeks. I am talking about the intense infection. During the first week, I felt very tired. I didn’t work. I stayed in bed all day. During the second week, I got the flu. During the third week, I suffered from extreme fatigue, which prevented me from working even though my office is next to my room. After the third week, I told myself that: “it’s over, it’s time to go back to work”. I did that for a month and a half, thinking that the residual fatigue would pass. At some point, I crashed. I experienced post-exercise malaise. In June, I was completely off work, stuck with a “battery” of two hours”, she says, talking about her autonomy without needing to rest.

“In the year that followed, my battery capacity dropped to half an hour, with symptoms such as extreme fatigue - fatigue being an understatement - physical and cognitive, to the point that it limits me to watching TV for 25-30 min-



Photos: G. Gagné

Sonia Landry has been taking a range of medications for 30 months, and her “health” binder is never far away.

Covid, explains Sonia Landry.

“We learn that having emotions can generate an effect. They are to be counted in the “pacing” (evaluation) of activities that can tire us out. Are there people who don’t have the energy to go jogging every morning? I don’t have the energy to have an anxiety attack

and my fibromyalgia. I have felt small improvements for a year,” she explains.

She recently started clinical trials with powerful omega-3 doses. “It could attenuate the brain fog effects. It is taking place in Maria. I am glad that we have access to such tests in the region,” she concludes.

Announcements



Celebration of Life



ANNETT: Elaine (Almond)

Family and friends of Elaine Annett (Almond) are invited to a Celebration of Life on Saturday May 31 at the New Carlisle United Church at 11 a.m. A reception will follow at the New Carlisle Legion at 12:30 p.m. No flowers by request.

Prière infaillible à la Vierge Marie

Fleur toute belle du Mont-Carmel, vigne fructueuse, splendeur du ciel, mère bénie du fils de Dieu assistez-moi et montrez-moi, ici même, que vous êtes ma mère de Dieu, reine du ciel et de la terre, je vous supplie du fond du cœur de m'appuyer dans cette demande. Personne ne peut résister à votre puissance.

Ô Marie conçue sans péché priez pour nous qui avons recours à vous (trois fois). Saint Marie, je remets cette cause entre vos mains (trois fois). Faites cette prière trois jours de suite et vous devez publier. La faveur demandée vous sera accordée.

D. J.

Advance Notice Burial of Ashes

A graveside service will be held for
Betty Le Maistre
at the New Carlisle Cemetery
on August 2 at 2 p.m.

Betty's family would be honoured if you would join them. Details to follow at a further date.

Send your announcements to:
holly.smith@globetrotter.net



Four Generations of Monument Craftsmen

HIGHEST QUALITY - BEST PRICES

MONUMENTS, MARKERS, CEMETERY LETTERING,
LASER DESIGNS AND PORTRAITS

SALES REP:

Steven Imhoff

418-752-6041
581-233-2101

Covering Port Daniel to New Richmond

Announcement Deadlines:

May 21 for the May 28 issue

June 4 for the June 11 issue

June 18 for the June 25 issue



Business & Professional DIRECTORY

Grenier, Grenier & Grenier LAWYERS



Réal Grenier, b.a.ll.l.
Jules Grenier, b.a.ll.l.

96 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd, P.O. Box 519
New Carlisle (Quebec) G0C 1Z0
Tel.: (418) 752-3308 • Fax (418) 752-6935



LÉONARD LOISEL & FILS INC. General Contractor R. B. Q.: 2155-8705-95

Foundations - Landscaping House lifting
Sale and delivery of sand and gravel

Office: 176 rue Saint-Pie-X,
Paspébiac (QC) G0C 2K0
(418) 752-2028

Garage: 138 rue Day,
Paspébiac (QC) G0C 2K0
(418) 752-5061

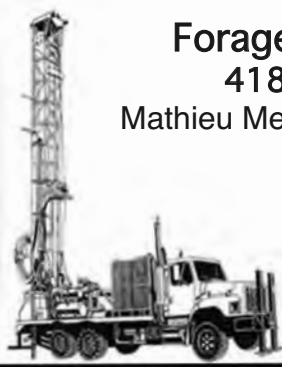
Aldège Loisel: (418) 752-4331
Pascal Loisel: (418) 752-0048
Luc Loisel: (418) 752-0407
aloisel4305@gmail.com

GAËL TREMBLAY Notary and legal counsel

TREMBLAY & BARRIAULT, NOTAIRES INC.
119B Perron Blvd West
New Richmond, (Québec) G0C 2B0
Tel.: (418) 392-5282
Fax: (418) 392-6155
E-mail: gaeltremblay@notarius.net



FULLY
BILINGUAL
SERVICE



Forage Moreau Inc. 418-392-9501

Mathieu Mercier - Driller/Owner

- Artesian Well Drilling
- Budgetary Price
- Bilingual Service
- RBQ: 5672-1467-01

foragemoreaumercier@gmail.com

To reach the anglophone
population of the
Gaspé Peninsula, advertise
in

The Gaspé Spec!
418-752-5400

specs@globetrotter.net



Electricity - Plumbing
Automation
Industrial computing
Counter sales

3 Rue Cerisiers
Gaspé, Québec G4X 2M1
Tel. (418) 368-5425
Fax (418) 368-7290
www.groupeohmega.com



Dr. Pascal Cyr
Optometrist



Dr. Stacey Starrak
Optometrist

CLINIQUE D'OPTOMÉTRIE L'ÉMERILLON

LENSES CRAFTED ON THE PREMISES

PASPÉBIAC: 104 Gérard D. Levesque Blvd West • 418-752-5553

CHANDLER: 260 René Lévesque Blvd East • 418-689-5553

MARIA: 435 Perron Blvd West • 418-759-5553



BILINGUAL
SERVICE

MEMBER
OF



Canada's Largest Network of Optometrists

YORK:
Gaspé County W.I.
May 31: Gift bingo beginning at 1 p.m. taking place at the York River Community Hall, 702 Blvd. York West, Gaspé. Lots of lovely gift prizes to be won.
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.

YORK:
York River Community Hall Committee
June 9: The Annual General Meeting of the York River Community hall committee will begin at 7 p.m., 702 York West Boulevard. It is important for the public to attend and help support this committee. Note that at this meeting two members of the audience will be chosen to sit on the committee to be representatives of the public. We hope to see many of our community members at this meeting.

PORT DANIEL:
Three Star Golden Age Club
May 17: Yard sale from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., new and used items, plants, jams, jellies and more.
May 22: Military whist party beginning at 7:30 p.m.

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:
New Carlisle Legion
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 CARLISLE:
St. Andrew's Anglican Church
June 7: St. Andrews church will be holding a Spring potluck supper for 4:30 - 6 p.m., in the basement of the church. Cost: adults \$14, children \$6. Take out orders will be available however, no delivery.

NEW RICHMOND:
Yard sale
May 17: A community yard sale will be held at 462

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, May 18
10 a.m. Service
Sunday, May 25
10 a.m. Service

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 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

UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN
Sunday, May 18
2 p.m. Service
Sunday, May 25
2 p.m. Service

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.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, May 18
New Carlisle
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Shigawake
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Hope Town
3 p.m. Holy Eucharist
Sunday, May 25
New Carlisle
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Port Daniel
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, May 18
St. Philip St. John Sandy Beach
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Sunday, May 25
St. Matthew-Peninsula
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Important dates for the Coast Round-up page

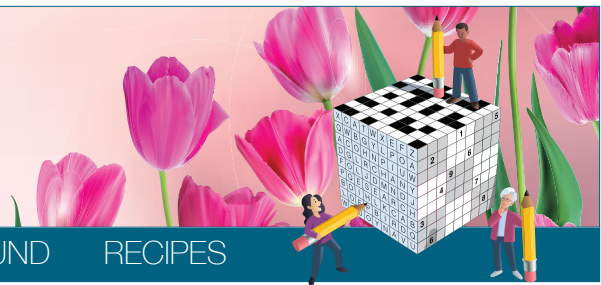
Annoucement Deadlines:
May 21 for the May 28 issue
June 4 for the June 11 issue
June 18 for the June 25 issue

Delivery Methods:
Email: specs@globetrotter.net
Facebook Messenger: Friends of the SPEC
Phone or text: 418-752-5400

If you do not already have a Coast Round-up Plan, you can take advantage of this unique advertising opportunity for only \$80/year. Call or e-mail us today for more information.

On the Lighter Side...

POEMS CREATIVE WRITING PUZZLES WHAT'S THIS CHALLENGE SPEC GETS AROUND RECIPES



Answers to Mothers in literature and on the screen trivia:

- 1) Marilla Cuthbert, Anne of Green Gables.
- 2) Laura Ingalls, Little House on the prairie.
- 3) Marmee, Little Women.
- 4) Betty Mahmoody, Not without My Daughter.
- 5) Mrs. Bennett, Pride and Prejudice.
- 6) Mrs. Large, Five minutes' Peace.
- 7) Marge Simpson, The Simpsons.
- 8) Lorelai Gilmore, Gilmore Girls.
- 9) Kitty Foreman, That 70s Show.
- 10) Agnes Brown, Mrs. Brown's Boys.
- 11) M'Lynn Eatenton, Steel Magnolias.
- 12) Molly Weasley, Harry Potter.
- 13) Kate McCallister, Home Alone.
- 14) Mrs. Gump, Forrest Gump.
- 15) Peggy Bundy, Married with Children.

Weekly + HOROSCOPES

May 14 - May 20

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Telling the truth has always come naturally to you, Aries. But tact isn't always your specialty and sometimes your candor is now well-received. Keep that in mind this week.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

It is time to make peace with someone even if it is the last thing you want to do this week, Taurus. There is no better option than to talk it out, so schedule that chat as soon as possible.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Sometimes there is nothing you like more than

How to Change Direction—Cat-style

In a lifetime of living with cats, I've seen them flick light switches, turn doorknobs, and check out changed artwork on the walls—but this one is new. Zoom-zoom* does her own, unique thing. She's a small cat, not yet a year-old. Her fur is a sleek and shiny tortoiseshell (dark mixed with cream and soft orange patches); her eyes are green. Tortoiseshell cats are known to be high-energy cats—strong-willed, feisty, even sassy, a behaviour called "tortitude."

Zoom-zoom likes to stand on the kitchen window ledge facing the sink. It's a narrow space, barely wide enough for two small paws. So she's standing sideways when she decides she'd rather face the other way. Of course, she could jump down and get back up, but that's not what she does. Instead, Zoom-zoom puts all her weight on her two front paws and fans her body up along the window till her back feet come down facing the other way. All this is performed in slow motion, like a gymnast who has supreme control, which, I suppose, she is.

Zoom-zoom got her name this way. No point in asking where she is, only where she's been. To answer is to be wrong, for she's usually gone from where she was last spotted. For example, when I call her from my back door, her passage is so speedy that she's often standing behind me while I'm still looking out. Zoom-zoom.

The End

-Constance Brochet



being silly with other kindred spirits who get you, Gemini. But you're in a different mood this week and it might feel unfamiliar to you.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

It is fair to say this week that you desire some time alone and maybe need it as well, Cancer. Take some time for yourself and let others know you're going off the grid.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, although your first inclination might be to get into a war of words with someone with whom you disagree, this week you might want to try a different approach. Remain open to others' views.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

You might be tired of recent drama in your life, Virgo. But if you dig deeper, you might find that you have contributed to the noise. Make some meaningful changes this week.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Your negotiation skills are well-known, Libra, and you're usually the first person anyone thinks of when they need a third party to help them smooth over a situation. Enjoy the attention.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, even if someone is pushing your buttons this week, you won't let that get in the way of doing something for this person because they are dear to you.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

You are no stranger to good luck, Sagittarius. This week that luck will be shared with people who cross your path. They will appreciate the fortune.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Expect to experience a strong feeling of wanderlust this week, Capricorn. You may find it challenging to pass up a trip or a new experience of any kind.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, right now the old adage that if you ignore it, it will go away might not hold true. Failing to face something right now may not be the best approach.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

You are ready to share secrets with a soulmate, Pisces. The challenge lies in trying to find the time when you are alone to have this important conversation.

May 21 - May 27

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, this week your dreams might be a tool for gaining insight on what you want to accomplish. Although dreams can't predict the future, they may reveal some of your subconscious desires.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Follow your instincts this week, Taurus, even if you're more prone to reason than whimsy. Let the chips fall where they may and go with the flow.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

This week can be all about feeding your mind, Gemini. Walk around a bookstore and pick up the first book that catches your eye, regardless of its subject matter.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

Something may be worrying you lately, Cancer, but you can't exactly put your finger on it. Talk

about your feelings with others as another person may have a different perspective.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, seize an opportunity to pursue the things that you want most of all. Use this week to map out a plan and then get started on all of the steps before you reach your goal.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Check out ways that you can advance your career or education this week. The energy around you is favoring growth, so now is the time to take advantage and learn a new skill.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Others trust your opinions because your intuition tends to be spot on, Libra. When a friend comes to you this week asking for some advice, you will not hesitate.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Use your creativity to make things happen this week, Scorpio. This may not produce a finished product, but it could be about an innovative way

to approach a task or problem.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Figure out some new ways to expand your horizons this week, Sagittarius. Identify means to personal growth, including educational opportunities.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, it is important to step out of your routine every so often to increase your knowledge and expand your horizons. This is one of those weeks to do so.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18


Are you satisfied with your career, Aquarius? If you have been mulling a career change, this could be the week to start moving your chess pieces around.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, don't worry too much about the changes that lie ahead this week. You have a more adaptable nature than you might realize. As changes come your way, embrace them.

Local Business Directory


LOCAL BUSINESS
ADVERTISING SPECIALS
CONTACT US TODAY FOR DETAILS!



Sales Manager
Emily Hocquard

 **418-752-5400**
sales.gaspespec@gmail.com

LES ENTREPRISES
PEC INC.
No R.B.Q.: 8003-3228-31
ENTREPRENEUR GÉNÉRAL



152A Chemin de St-Edgar, New Richmond (Québec)
www.entreprisespec.com

AXIO
arpenteurs-géomètres inc.
land surveyors
151B, Avenue de Grand-Pré, Bonaventure (Québec) G0C 1E0

Alexandre Babin, Arpenteur-géomètre
C abag@axioag.com
Guillaume Lapierre, Arpenteur-géomètre
C glag@axioag.com

Membre de l'Ordre des Arpenteurs-Géomètres du Québec

418 534-3113 / info@axioag.com
axioag.com

LFG CONSTRUCTION
PROUD PARTNER IN YOUR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS SINCE 1975!
constructionlfg.com

Gaspésie-Les Îles | Côte-Nord | Bas-Saint-Laurent

418 364-7082 / 1-844-664-7082

BÂTIMENT ÉNERGIE ET GÉNIE CIVIL MÉCANIQUE INDUSTRIELLE

ENERGY TRANSPORTATION GROUP

WHAT MAKES US
DRIVEN TO BE DIFFERENT?



www.shipENERGY.com



DISCOVER MORE

 Centre de formation DE LA CÔTE-DE-GASPÉ

WELDING AND FITTING

COURSE STARTS AUGUST 2025

Do you:

- Have good shape perception?
- Enjoy physical and manual tasks?
- Have good visual acuity, dexterity and good execution precision?
- Have excellent powers of observation?

If so, **WELDING** is for you!





SCAN ME

Register by August 2025

100% placement rate

FREE residence



OGPAC +  = 

Gaspesian organization for people affected by cancer

SUPPORT SHARING ACCOMPANIMENT MUTUAL AID

1 888 924-5050 | ogpac.ca



Discover your true nature

Register now!
cegepgim.ca



Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles



Helping Adults with Everyday Skills

We provide **free** one-on-one tutoring for adults 16+ who want to build confidence and **skills that matter**.
Get help with reading, writing, using your cellphone or tablet, understanding basic finances and more!
Learn at your own pace with friendly, personalized support.

info@gaspelit.ca   www.gaspelit.ca



SCAN ME

Walking to raise money for autism’s respite services

GILLES GAGNÉ

SAINT-THARCISIUS – Since the morning of May 4, a man living in Causapscal, Yvon Sickini, 65, has been walking around the Gaspé Peninsula in order to raise money for the respite services offered by Autisme de l’Est-du-Québec. Those services benefit the family members of people experiencing autism and living in the Gaspé Peninsula, the Magdalen Islands and the Lower Saint Lawrence regions. "I am a truck driver and I decided to take a little break. I was wondering if I would take on a physical challenge and I was thinking of hiking something like Compostela. After thinking about it a few times, and after talking to my employer, whose son deals with autism, I decided that walking around the Gaspé Peninsula for autism could be just as great. Besides, I could lose a bit of my gut in doing so," he explains with a smile.



He intends to walk 20 kilometres per day. After starting in Causapscal, he went to Amqui, took the shortcut to Matane, where the SPEC saw him (in Saint-Tharcisius), and from Matane, he will go to Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Grande-Vallée (without taking the Murdochville shortcut), Gaspé, and all along the

south coast to Causapscal. So, Gaspésians living in the east half of the peninsula will start seeing him around May 15 or so. Mr. Sickini’s slogan is “The greatest journeys begin with a single step.” People who want to help can offer a meal, a little patch of land where he can put his tent, or a bed for a night.

Donations can be made at: <https://www.zeffy.com/donation-form/tour-de-la-gaspesie-yvon-sickini-au-profit-des-services-de-repit-dautisme-de-lest-du-quebec>



Photo: G. Gagné

Fundraiser for Pointe-à-la-Croix orchard acquisition

GILLES GAGNÉ

POINTE-À-LA-CROIX – The Corporation de développement de Pointe-à-la-Croix is launching a \$15,000 fundraising campaign to acquire Pomme en fête, the orchard developed in the 1980s by the late Rodrigue Guitard. Since his 2020 passing, the orchard has been operated on a rental basis by the Pointe-à-la-Croix development corporation.

Pomme en Fête is an organic orchard with a community focus. The fundraiser aims to buy back the land in order to ensure more autonomy for its operators so they can continue to offer local and organic products. A renewal phase of the orchard is underway through the planting of several hundred trees and shrubs, partly to replace aging trees and partly to diversify the crop with the addition of about ten new species such as Saskatoon berry, blackcurrant, white mulberry, and several varieties of plums and pears.

Following Rodrigue Guitard’s death, the Pointe-à-la-Croix development corporation received the support of the Avignon MRC and the Municipality of Pointe-à-la-Croix in order to ensure that the fruits of so much hard work and passion did not go to waste. Since 2020, the corporation has obtained organic certification from Ecocert Canada and established a work-fruit exchange program that allows anyone who wants to get involved to share the harvest and its processed products. The members of the corporation also set up a processing space equipped with high-performance tools that will soon be available to other organizations and businesses aiming for resilience and food self-sufficiency in the region. This crowdfunding effort, with a goal of \$15,000, combined with contributions from partners (MRC d’Avignon, Municipality of Pointe-à-la-Croix, and the Development Corporation), will enable the purchase of the largest plot in the Apple Festival orchard.

The fundraiser is using the La Ruche Québec platform, which can be consulted at: <https://www.laruchequebec.com/fr/projets/e14d0c42-bb2441ac-8d23-851d47cd9c02>



Photo: Groupe F. Dufresne

The new Pétro-Canada in Paspébiac will look like this.

Construction of new Pétro-Canada is underway

Nelson Sergerie

QUÉBEC - The reconstruction of the Pétro-Canada in Paspébiac, which was destroyed by fire on November 25, has begun.

Groupe F. Dufresne, the site’s owner, is investing nearly \$2.5 million in a building that will feature the updated branding of Sprint convenience stores.

The owners hope to reopen the location in time for the Fête nationale, aiming to benefit from the influx of tourists expected in the region during that period.

Following the fire, Gabriel Bérubé Pelletier, the group’s Marketing and Communications Manager, remarked in November that such an incident was extremely rare for the company.

Authorities have ruled out foul play as the cause of the fire.