



Maria receives land transfer requests from Indigenous Services Canada *Gesgapegiag wants to expand its land base*

GILLES GAGNÉ

MARIA - Indigenous Services Canada recently sent a letter to the Municipality of Maria and to the Municipality of Cascapedia-St-Jules in order to assure the eventual transfer of three pieces of land. The federal department is acting following a request by the Gesgapegiag band administration initially formulated in March 2023.

The two properties are located within the limits of Maria, situated close to the west limit of Gesgapegiag and along Highway 132, the Chalets de l'Anse Sainte-Hélène is one of them, while a piece of land located on Broken Road, north of Gesgapegiag, is the other one. In the latter case, it could be used to for new streets.

In Cascapedia-St-Jules, Gesgapegiag would like to in-

tegrate to the reserve the Apo'Qon'Ma'Tultinej cultural centre, located along Highway 132. The building was acquired by Gesgapegiag at the beginning of 2023 by the community.

Gesgapegiag's surface covers only 2 square kilometres. The acquisition of the three properties, including the Chalets de l'Anse Sainte-Hélène, would add about 0.2 square kilometres to the community.

The mayor of Maria, Jean-Claude Landry, points out that his municipality received Indigenous Services Canada's correspondence around April 20 and sent a reply back to the federal department on May 13. "We are not disagreeing but we are not in favour either. We receive, in the Chalet de l'Anse Sainte-Hélène case, tax revenue, as it is a tourist accommodation, acquired in



The mayor of Maria, Jean-Claude Landry points out that his municipality has replied to the federal government and is waiting for feedback.

Photo: G. Gagné

2017 by Gesgapegiag. Offices were added since. If it is transferred to Gesgapegiag, we will lose close to \$15,000 in property tax revenue. We explained that in the letter we sent to Indigenous Services Canada," explains Jean-Claude Landry.

He added that he has nothing against the development of Gesgapegiag. "Two or three years ago, we supported a resolution to the effect of increasing the volume of wood harvested by Gesgapegiag, from 10,000 cubic metres to

50,000, since their loggers could not earn decent revenues with a small volume. The situation is different here because the land is fragmented. The land targeted by Gesgapegiag is not adjacent to the reserve," stresses Mr. Landry.

The Maria municipal administration has to verify if Indigenous Services Canada can unilaterally expropriate the three coveted properties. He thinks it is the case. "I think the federal government can decide unilaterally, while informing the Quebec government of its intentions. However, we don't think it is a good idea to have some fragmented pieces of land," points out the mayor of Maria.

The Gesgapegiag band administration and the Municipality of Cascapedia-St-Jules are not yet ready to comment on the issue.

World Kidney Cancer Day 2025

KAREN ROSS

Traditionally, a photo of David alone was used for my annual article in the Spec in order to catch your attention.

In recent years, the Kidney Cancer Canada have become aware, more and more, that the family caregiver, be it spouse, partner, daughter, son, brother or sister stand quietly in the background. For years, quite often, the needs of the caregiver have been overlooked and many of them do not speak up.

This is why, moving forward, this annual World Kidney Cancer Day article will have a photo of David and myself, because the patient and the family caregiver walk this journey together.

The International Kidney Cancer Coalition has declared Thursday, June 19, 2025, to be World Kidney Cancer Day.

The theme this year is

"Show Your Kidneys Some Love".

Kidney health matters. Not only is it important for the patient's physical and mental well-being, poor kidney function also effects Quality of Life, limits treatment choices and may exclude patients from some clinical trials.

There are 3 simple kidney tests your doctor can do:

1. Monitor Blood Pressure – low kidney function causes high blood pressure, high blood pressure puts stress on your kidneys. Your doctor can give you medicine to control your blood pressure.
2. Check your urine – too much protein in your urine (proteinuria) can be a sign of reduced kidney function. Your doctor can also test your UACR (Urine Albumin Creatinine Ratio).
3. Do a blood test – your doctor can check for creatinine and eGFR (estimated Glomerular

Filtration Rate), both signs of how effectively your kidneys are filtering your blood.

The International Kidney Cancer Coalition has created a checklist to take to your doctor. You can download it at kidney-cancercanada.ca

What else can you do to maintain your kidney health? There are also lifestyle changes that can make a big difference to kidney health. Talk to your doctor about which are the most important for you.

1. Quit smoking: smoking is harmful to your kidneys, may increase the side effects and decrease the effectiveness of cancer treatments. It is also a major risk factor for many cancers, high blood pressure and heart disease.
2. Maintain a healthy weight: this reduces the risk of cancers and heart disease. If you need to lose weight or gain weight, as people with kidney cancer often do – your doctor may be

able to help.

3. Be active but avoid contact sports: being active is beneficial for both physical and mental health, but contact sports – like football and most martial arts, put your kidneys at risk.
4. Drink enough water and no alcohol: it is important to stay hydrated. Drink sufficient water to satisfy normal thirst and when thirsty, choose water.

The WHO (World Health Organization) recommends no alcohol at all.

Please remember, if you have or know of someone who has been newly diagnosed with kidney cancer or is living with kidney cancer please tell them about Kidney Cancer Canada/Cancer du rein Canada. They can help! They can be reached at kidney-cancercanada.ca or by calling 1-866-598-7166.



Photo: Courtesy of Karen Ross

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Over 50 hectares ravaged by largest brush fire in 20 years to hit Pointe-à-la-Croix

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

POINTE-À-LA-CROIX - A brush fire of an intensity not seen in over 20 years ravaged 50.3 hectares in Pointe-à-la-Croix on May 14.

The Société de Protection des Forêts contre le Feu (SOPFEU) declared the fire under control the following morning, and authorities sus-

pect arson.

The alert was given mid-afternoon on May 14. Pointe-à-la-Croix firefighters called SOPFEU for assistance because the blaze was near residences and, fueled by the hot and windy weather, the fire was heading toward the forest.

At the peak of the effort to contain the fire, dozens of firefighters were deployed, supported by a helicopter, and

two water bombers.

"This is something we have to deal with every year. It's becoming a concern. The fire moved closer to the residences," noted Mayor Pascal Bujold.

Several small fires have been started in Pointe-à-la-Croix in past years. "It's definitely criminal. It's always

individuals who start fires. We denounce it. We've never been able to catch the people, but this time, we hope it will be different," says the mayor.

This is the largest fire to occur in the Gaspé Peninsula in over 20 years. The last fire of this magnitude was in 2004, when 59 hectares burnt in the Rocher-Percé MRC.

Overall, the largest fire to occur in the Gaspé Peninsula was in 1995, when 23,105 hectares burned following a forestry operation, an area equivalent to half the size of the island of Montreal.

In the last ten years, the average area burned annually in the Gaspé Peninsula has been around 16 hectares.



Photo: Mayor Pascal Bujold's Facebook page

WORKING TOGETHER FOR GREENER HARBOURS

ADMINISTRATIONS
PORTUAIRES
notre port,
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

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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

How about avoiding some crisis management?

Human beings often wait until there is a crisis before making decisions. Energy is vital to human life.

These two statements go hand in hand, even if they seem unrelated at first glance. A look at the current events shows that people tend to delay action until a crisis hits, whether the response is wise or misguided.

Energy-wise, whether we are talking about fossil fuels or renewable forms of power, all types of vehicles, all machines and, first and foremost, all human beings need to be “fed” with energy vectors in order to function.

Over the last few years, a new reality surfaced in our society, artificial intelligence. Chat GPT was its most visible and most accessible form, but anybody spending a few hours on a computer daily sees other forms, almost everywhere.

You click on an article in order to document some research you want to do on a specific topic and you are offered a summary of the document. You click on a drawing and there is a software option offering you some other drawings.

Artificial intelligence, or AI in the technical jargon, has its positive sides. People can use an AI software option to get the transcript of a recording. People can therefore avoid taking notes, as long as they keep the recording, because the transcript is sometimes far from the reality.



Fred Kirch

Guest Commentary

If there were a Guinness record for lying, Trump would win hands down

If there were a Guinness World Record for lying, Donald J. Trump would have shattered it years ago and continue to smash his own record every day since. No one has been more brazen, prolific, or shameless in their complete disregard for the truth.

At the end of Trump's first term as president, "The Washington Post's" Fact Checker documented an astonishing 30,573 false or misleading claims on his part during his administration. That's roughly 21 lies per day for four years straight. This was not the product of confusion or miscommunication, it was a part of a deliberate, calculated campaign of distortion that began before his election as president. Whether it was about the size of his inauguration crowd, the path of a hurricane, or the nonexistent voter fraud that he insists cost him the 2020 election, Trump's lies have been unending and purposeful.

Upon returning to the presidency, Trump picked up right where he left off. He continues to fabricate wildly distorted narratives, claiming vindication where none exists, attacking critics with baseless accusations, and misrepresenting economic, legal, and public health information to suit his agenda. As ever, the truth remains incidental. What matters to Trump is dominance of the narrative and above all personal loyalty, not accuracy or accountability.

What distinguishes Trump's dishonesty from that

AI can also become a nightmare

In high schools, CEGEPs, technical schools and universities, artificial intelligence is also becoming a nightmare, often way more detrimental than useful because some students are utilizing it profusely.

Some lazy students use it to write their papers as much as possible. Sometimes, for teachers, identifying the excerpts written by AI is easy, especially when it goes from the beginning to the end.

In other cases, finding such AI use is more complicated. It is so complicated that over the last two or three years, the consequences of AI use, like giving the failing grades to a rising number of students, has become a major source of burnout for an equally rising number of teachers. The latter can hardly cope with the pressure of students' retaliation, or their parents', who have often raised them like little kings and queens.

What is the link between crisis management, artificial intelligence and energy? In North America, including Canada and Quebec, AI is piling risk on already suffocating energy grids.

In Quebec, a national policy discussion is already underway about the needs and the rules governing a rapidly transforming electric grid. The Coalition avenir Québec government wants to accelerate the approval of power generating projects, to such an extent that some important consultation steps could be skipped in order to land ventures faster.

Although Hydro Québec has recently put a bit of emphasis on the necessity of saving energy in the near future, the Quebec government is not acting accordingly. One good way of backing Hydro Québec would be the implementation of robust construction norms and financial incentives to take that route. There are a few measures but we are far from a well-advertised multi-year energy saving plan.

Artificial intelligence is an electricity-consumption giant

From OpenAI founder Sam Altman down to smaller players, American technology industry giants

of others is not just its volume, but its intent. His lies are not merely political spin, they are part of a sustained strategy to sow confusion, discredit democratic institutions, and construct an alternative reality where only his version of events is allowed. He aggressively attacks the press as "the enemy of the people," dismisses judges and prosecutors as corrupt merely because they rule against him, and labels any unfavorable outcome as "rigged" or "fake". He claims credit for everything he chooses, whether or not he is entitled and accepts responsibility for nothing.

Trump's use of dishonesty mirrors a propaganda model known as the "firehose of falsehood", a strategy to overwhelm the public with so many lies that distinguishing fact from fiction becomes exhausting. The goal is not necessarily to convince everyone of the truth of any one lie but to degrade the public's capacity for understanding altogether. In such an environment, cynicism thrives, trust erodes. and manipulation becomes effortless.

The consequences of this strategy have been profound. Millions of Americans now doubt the legitimacy of elections, distrust public health guidance, and believe in sprawling conspiracy theories, often without a shred of credible evidence. The January 6, 2021 insurrection, a violent attempt to overturn a lawful election, was fueled by lies that Trump knowingly repeated and amplified. That attack was not just a spontaneous outburst of rage, it was the logical outcome of years of systematic deception.

But Trump doesn't operate alone. His lies are echoed and amplified by a network of aides, surrogates, and politicians who chose complicity for their own purposes. Some enable him out of fear of losing influence, fear of retribution, or alienating his fanatic political base. Others do it for personal gain, calculating that loyalty to Trump, however dishonest, is the

make it clear that they plan to build huge data farms to dominate China in the race to control artificial intelligence.

In the United States, electricity distribution grids are extremely complicated to manage because they are owned by towns, cities, counties, states at times and private enterprises. It is a miracle that power outages are not occurring more often.

Such commitments that AI firms need huge sums of power are raising anxiety levels for the regional power executives whose systems would need to handle those data centres' humongous volumes of electricity. Power delivery firms are already coping with extreme weather shocks and the country's harsh political divisions on energy and climate policy.

Those tensions mean that the risks of outages across the United States are reaching record levels. The federal regulators were recently made aware of the problem.

Meanwhile companies like Amazon, Meta, chip maker Nvidia, Microsoft, Google and its parent company Alphabet, as well as a wide array of financiers backing OpenAI's goals are driving record forecasts for electricity consumption. In the meantime, president Donald Trump is promising an era of unlimited growth for artificial intelligence.

The potential outcome of such American ambitions cannot be good news for the people worried about climate change and its consequences on human beings. Government people and power industry executives have been discussing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, where people are planning a future that likely holds the restarting of high production cost old coal and nuclear plants, as well as natural gas-fueled power stations built from scratch.

In some areas of the United States, artificial intelligence could be behind 90% of the electricity increase demand, according to energy grid operators.

Business-wise, stabilizing market rules and finding the intersection between reliability and affordability working for consumers and suppliers will represent an enormous challenge, as that intersection is getting increasingly hard to find. Producing energy costs more

Continued on page 12

most direct path to power.

The result is a political culture where truth is expendable, integrity is optional, and opportunism is rewarded. It's not just Trump's dishonesty that's corrosive, it's the willingness of those around him to treat lying as a price for access to his inner circle.

It's improbable that Donald Trump will ever win a Nobel Prize, but if there was an award for sustained and systematic dishonesty, he'd be the undisputed champion. Lies from the president, the highest elected official in the land, serve to undermine the very foundation of democratic life.

In a functioning democracy, truth is not optional, it's essential. And any leader who denies it, habitually and remorselessly as Trump does, is not just unfit to lead, he is a danger to the country he claims to serve, as well as the world at large.

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MP says there’s nothing good for Quebec in the Speech from the Throne

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

OTTAWA - Alexis Deschênes, the Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament (MP) for the riding of Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj believes that the Speech from the Throne, read on May 27, by King Charles III, in Parliament, contains nothing for Quebec's regions.

In his first appearance in the House of Commons, Alexis Deschênes spoke on behalf of his party during an "Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne."

"The Speech from the Throne gives no space to the interests of our regions. We are coming off an election campaign totally focused on the importance of protecting our economy from Donald Trump. Yet, the Speech from the Throne makes no mention of Quebec's forestry industry and its needs in the softwood lumber dispute. It makes no mention of aluminum, one of the sectors hit by American tariffs. It makes no mention of fisheries, a sector as precious as it is fragile, whose exports are far too dependent on the Americans," the MP asserted.

According to him, the speech, read by a British monarch, could have been written in London, "It is so out of touch with the needs of Quebecers."

Meanwhile, moments before Mr. Deschênes' first address to Parliament, members of the Bloc Québécois caucus welcomed his arrival in the House, and the MP also em-



Photo: CPAC screenshot

MP Deschênes during his address in reply to the Speech from the Throne.

phasized the trust placed in him by voters.

"I will strive at every opportunity to live up to it and defend the interests of Quebec and its regions," the MP promised.

Furthermore, the MP has been named the Bloc Québécois critic for fisheries, oceans, the coast guard, and the St. Lawrence Seaway. The Bloc member sees this role as an additional role to that of Deputy House Leader.

Mr. Deschênes said he has met with several fishermen, plant workers, and industry stakeholders in recent weeks and intends to remain attentive. Among his priorities, the elected official will seek funding for economic diversification missions, create an independent agency for the management of stocks, permits, and quotas, improve port infrastructure, and correct the injustices experienced by pelagic fishermen.

\$100,000 for seniors in Chandler

CHANDLER - Good news for seniors in Chandler as the Quebec government is providing \$100,000 in support through the Seniors Infrastructure Program.

"This is very good news given that we're seeing cuts everywhere in programs," says the Mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche.

The money will be used, among other things, to extend the bike path and adapt the existing one to the needs of the population. "We need to keep our community active, and we're contributing to that," emphasizes the mayor.

The Town of Chandler has a collaborative development plan to develop other projects. In the letter sent by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Andrée Laforest; and the Minister Responsible for Seniors, Sonia Bélanger, obtained by SPEC, it is written that "This financial assistance will contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of seniors and their loved ones, as well as to the active aging of your community as part of the Municipalité amie des aînés initiative (age-friendly municipality initiative)."

Nicole Appleby, former mayor of New Richmond, passes away at 84

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The former mayor of New Richmond, Nicole Appleby, passed away on May 29 at the Maria hospital, after a short illness. She was 84. She served as mayor of New Richmond from 2002 to 2013.

From the mid-1980s until November 1993, she was Finance minister Gerard-D. Levesque's chief of staff, remaining in the role until his death. She ran for office in the Bonaventure riding during the February 1994 by-election but was defeated by Marcel Landry of the Parti Québécois.

During her time with Gerard-D. Levesque, she was instrumental in convincing Raymond Malenfant to invest in the Pin rouge ski centre,

which was built in 1990. She was influential enough within the Liberal Party government of Robert Bourassa to secure government funding for Pin rouge despite the fact that Raymond Malenfant, who was experiencing financial problems, was not ready to invest. In fact, he went technically bankrupt before investing in the ski centre.


As mayor, Nicole Appleby managed the crisis caused by the closure of the Smurfit-Stone linerboard mill in August 2005. She acted as if the mill would not reopen and used her contacts with the Liberal Party government of Jean Charest to get infrastructure funding, notably for the roundabout and the industrial park. She also spearheaded a project to build 32 cottages at the base



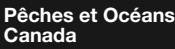
Photo: Courtesy of CIEU FM

Nicole Appleby in October 2007, about midway through her 11 years at the helm of New Richmond.

of Pin rouge and brought a branch of the Quebec City Summer Festival to New Richmond during the summers of 2010, 2011 and 2012.



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada



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Canadian Navigable Waters Act

Notice of work at St-Georges-de-Malbay Harbour

Fisheries and Oceans Canada hereby gives notice that an application has been made to the Minister of Transport, pursuant to the *Canadian Navigable Waters Act*, for approval of the work described herein, its site and plans.

Pursuant to paragraph 7(2) of the *Act*, Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Small Craft Harbours – has deposited with the Minister of Transport on the on-line Common Project Search Registry (<https://common-project-search.canada.ca/>), and under registry number **12619**, or under the Navigation Protection Program (NPP) File Number **2009-300039**, a description of the following work, its site and plans:

- Breakwater
- Floating pontoons

At St-Georges-de-Malbay Harbour, located around 48° 37' 13.38" N - 64° 11' 59.14" W, on lot 4 900 148, cadastre of Québec, Saint-Georges-de-Malbaie, Percé, Gaspé Region, province of Québec.


Comments regarding the impact of this work on marine navigation can be sent through the comment section on the Common Project Search Registry website by searching the registry number. Members of the public who do not have access to the Internet can send comments to:

Transport Canada, Navigation Protection Program
1550 d'Estimauville Avenue
Quebec, QC G1J 0C8

Transport Canada will not make your comments on a project in the online registry available to the public. However, any information related to a work is considered as unclassified public record and could be accessible upon legal request. As such, the information and records provided should not contain confidential or sensitive data. If you want to provide confidential or sensitive information that you think should not be made public, please contact Transport Canada before submitting it.

Comments will be considered only if they are received in writing (electronic means preferable) no later than 30 days after the publication of this notice. While all comments relating to the above-stated information will be considered, no individual responses will be sent.

Posted this 11th day of June, 2025.



Police Report

Fewer deaths on Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands roads

The number of road fatalities has declined over the past year in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, according to data from the Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) published on May 22. The region recorded eight road deaths in 2024, a 33.3% decrease from the 12 recorded in 2023. Compared to the five-year average, this represents a 25.9% decline.

However, there were 31 people seriously injured in road accidents in the region, compared to 24 in 2023, an increase of 29.2%. The number of people with minor injuries increased to 367, plus 11.9%, compared to 328 in 2023.

In total, 406 people sustained bodily injuries in a traffic collision in 2024, an 11.5% increase from the 364 in 2023. Provincially, there were 379 road deaths in 2024, one fewer than in 2023. The number of injuries followed the same trend, falling from 28,104 in 2023 to 27,854 last year.

Furthermore, compared to the 2019-2023 average, the SAAQ noted a decrease of 14 deaths among motorcyclists (-23.5%); a decrease of three deaths among young people aged 15 to 24 (-6.4%); an increase of two deaths among people aged 75 and over (+4.2%); an increase of one death among cyclists (+8.3%); an increase of 16 deaths among pedestrians (+24.6%); and an increase of five deaths among occupants of heavy trucks or tractor-trailers (+55.6%).

The Quebec-wide death rate per 100,000 inhabitants decreased from 4.3 in 2023 to 4.2 in 2024.

According to the SAAQ, human behaviour remains the leading cause of fatal and serious collisions, indicating that many of these incidents were preventable.

Two young drivers arrested for excessive speeding in Rocher-Percé

Two drivers were stopped by police in the Rocher-Percé MRC after being caught excessively speeding on Highway 132.

On May 25, in Port-Daniel-Gascons, shortly after 4 a.m., an 18-year-old driver from Chandler was caught on radar going 177 km/h in a 90 km/h zone. He received a \$1,686 fine, 18 demerit points, and a seven-day licence suspension.

On May 31, around 12:30 a.m. in the Pabos Mills sector of Chandler, a 20-year-old driver from Newport was caught on radar going 160 km/h in an 80 km/h zone. The driver received a \$1,611 fine, 14 demerit points and a seven day licence suspension.

Both drivers held probationary licenses, which contain a threshold of four demerit points only. As a result according to the SAAQ, unless the infractions are contested, both drivers could face an additional three-month licence suspension, in addition to the fines.

The Sûreté du Québec reminds drivers that speeding or reckless driving remains the leading cause of road-related deaths.

Drug bust in Saint-Alphonse and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts

On May 28, Sûreté du Québec officers conducted two searches of private residences located in the areas of Route Bélonie-Lévesque in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and Route Principale Ouest in St-Alphonse-de-Caplan, as well as a vehicle. In connection with these operations, the police arrested a 34-year-old man in the St-Siméon area. He was questioned and released pending further legal proceedings. He could face charges related to narcotics and possession of prohibited and unauthorized weapons. At the scene, police officers seized the following items: Over \$18,000 in Canadian currency, 16 long guns, 2 brass knuckles, approximately 40 prescription types of medications, approximately 40 grams of hashish and equipment used for the sale of firearms.

These operations were based on information received from the public. The CENTAURE strategy's mandate is to ensure constant pressure on organized crime and thus actively combat gun violence in Quebec. CENTAURE allows all partner police forces to maximize their efforts at the national, regional, and local levels, targeting the supply, importation, manufacturing, distribution, and illegal possession of firearms.

Any information related to the possession, trafficking, use and manufacturing of firearms can be reported to the CENTAURE information line at 1-833-888-ARME (2763).

Second drug bust in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts

Around 6 a.m. on May 30, Sûreté du Québec officers conducted a search of a private residence in the 5th Street West area of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts. The search resulted in the seizure of: more than 1,700 methamphetamine pills, over 100 prescription pills, 200 grams or more of illicit cannabis, more than 700 contraband cigarettes, approximately \$2,500 in Canadian currency and various drug trafficking equipment.

A 65-year-old man from Saint-Anne-des-Monts was arrested and questioned by police officers. He was detained before his court appearance. He faces charges related to possession of narcotics for the purpose of trafficking, possession of a sum of money knowing that it was obtained through the commission of an offence, and charges under the Tobacco Tax Act. The information leading to his arrest was received from the public and it enabled the police to complete this operation.

The Sûreté du Québec reminds that any information related to drug trafficking can be communicated at any time, confidentially, to the Sûreté du Québec's Criminal Information Centre at 1-800-659-4264.

Gaspé Peninsula will keep two ridings in the 2026 provincial election

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – The Gaspé Peninsula will retain its two provincial ridings – Bonaventure and Gaspé – in the next election, scheduled for October 2026.

Judge Alexander Pless dismissed the application by elected officials from the Laurentians and Central Quebec regions against the Chief Electoral Officer of Quebec and the Attorney General of Quebec to revoke the Act to interrupt the process of delimitation of electoral districts, adopted unanimously by the National Assembly of Quebec on May 2, 2024.

The Regroupement of Gaspesian MRCs argued during the hearings held from May 8 to 14 that the electoral map on the table was highly detrimental to the principle of effective representativeness, directly impacting the representation of the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec's democratic institutions. In his decision rendered on May 29, the judge noted that "In principle, everyone's vote must carry equal weight. However,



Photos: N. Sergerie

Gaspé MNA
Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

Section 3 of the Charter guarantees the right to effective representation. This requires consideration of other factors that conflict with the strict arithmetical equivalence of votes."

"I am of the opinion that the impugned law does indeed infringe the applicants' right to vote, as guaranteed by Section 3 of the Charter. However, the Attorney General of Quebec demonstrates that the law is justified under Section 1 of the

Charter. The application for a declaration of invalidity must be dismissed," noted Justice Press.

"This is a lengthy 43-page judgment that truly covers the state of the law on the issue of electoral districts. Its interpretation of the 1991 Carter decision on effective representativeness is exactly the same interpretation that we have," responded Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté. The decision upholds Bonaventure and Gaspé, but the judge warns that for the subsequent election, the National Assembly must review the electoral law to protect the little democratic weight remaining in the regions.

"That leaves a little time, but the process for reviewing the electoral law is long because the MNAs are both judge and jury. That said, there was a commitment from all political parties to ensure a certain lasting influence for the regions of Quebec whose populations are growing less rapidly than urban centres. If we want to avoid finding ourselves in 100 years with 100 MNAs (Members of the National Assembly) in the

Montreal region and 25 for all regions of Quebec, there are principles that must be reviewed in the electoral law to ensure that the regions maintain a minimum weight," states the mayor, who is also a lawyer by training.

The elected officials of the Laurentians and Central Quebec regions still have the option of appealing the decision. "They have the right to appeal if they believe they have been wronged. This isn't a decision made on the spur of the moment. The judge really delves into case law and cites deci-



Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté.

sions made by the Speaker of the National Assembly where he had to rule on principles," notes Mr. Côté.

The deadlines for achieving their goals are very tight, particularly for the Electoral Commission, which was told in November to continue its review work while keeping its report secret.

"For now, that's what the judge says because the 2017 map will prevail in 2026," explains Mr. Côté. What the judge is saying is what is more damaging? Removing one of the two ridings in the Gaspé Peninsula or ensuring the principle of one voter, one vote for the regions surrounding Montreal? He concludes that what is more damaging is removing a riding in the Gaspé Peninsula," the mayor quotes.

Prior to the court's decision, Quebec had indicated it was waiting for the ruling before taking a position, while elected officials in the region hoped the National Assembly would adopt a revision of the electoral law before the court's decision.

Cont'd on page 27

Ambitious residential development plan for Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - A "second downtown" near the current downtown in Gaspé is on its way to becoming a reality, as developer Gestion Bourgade plans to build 320 housing units, an investment that could reach \$65 million during Phase 1.

In the works since 2021, Gestion Bourgade has signed an agreement with the Town of Gaspé to build the main infrastructure on a 50-50 basis, and to acquire land from the developer at a cost of \$2 million as a land reserve for future housing projects. "We had an idea, and when we reached the bidding stage, general contractors told us it was a big project. Our vision is so clear, and the information we received indicated we were heading in the right direction," says Sophie Bourdages, Vice President of Projects and Administration at Gestion Bourgade.

The company plans to invest about \$5 million in infrastructure and has already allocated \$2 million to acquire land near the Ruisseau Dean area.

Twenty-two lots have been created for Phase 1, and the permitted uses include a mini-



A view of what the Gestion Bourgade project will look like.

Photo: Town of Gaspé, Gestion Bourgade

mum of six housing units, multi-unit and multi-family housing, condominiums, and local businesses.

"We've never seen a project of this magnitude before, and I don't think we'll see it again for a long time. Phase 1 alone is quite a colossal project. We've been working on it for four years." I'm looking forward to seeing it come to fruition because we're in a serious housing shortage," says Mayor Daniel Côté, even though some 500 housing units have been built in recent years.

"Our role will be to sell our subdivision project in compli-

ance with regulations to ensure we rebalance the rental market in Gaspé," says Ms. Bourdages, noting that the vacancy rate is only 0.3%.

The project includes the construction of three streets over 900 metres, water, sewer and storm water systems, pedestrian and bicycle lanes, and retention basins.

Construction is expected to begin at the end of the summer. The streets should be ready for transfer to the town by the end of the fall, with paving scheduled for next summer.

"We'll cover 50% of the cost. The costs still need to be

determined. We're talking about several million dollars. The exact costs will be known once the plans and specifications are completed," emphasized the mayor. The neighbourhood will be accessible via York Boulevard South and Frémont Street. The idea is to create living environments.

Creating 320 housing units in the first phase doesn't scare the entrepreneur. "We're confident because the deficit is so large and has been for so long. We believe that businesses that are unable to attract workers due to a lack of housing will need this infrastructure," says

Ms. Bourdages.

The developer has given itself seven years to see the 320 housing units built, and they've already been approached by other developers. "The segment of the population that has approached us the most is the over-60s who are thinking of selling their house to move into an apartment to avoid worries, people who will have a good retirement. We're realizing that this is a segment, and that's why we're saying we're rebalancing the rental market," says Ms. Bourdages.

A commercial lot was sold to a partner notary firm early in the project.

Once Phase 1 is completed, the town will receive approximately \$800,000 in additional tax revenue.

The town plans to purchase land to create a land reserve. "We intend to acquire \$2 million worth of land that already has a higher market value. We can reserve a portion of it for social housing. We're doing business at the municipal level," says the mayor.

"The more housing we build, the more people will want to come here. I have faith that the 320 units will contribute to the growth of Gaspé," concludes Mr. Côté.

The Gaspé is consulted on the province's energy plans

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region shared its views in Gaspé, on May 23, as part of the Energy Vision Tour, which aims to define the Integrated Energy Plan for the coming years.

Yves Montigny, Member of the National Assembly (MNA) for René-Lévesque and spokesperson for the tour, and his colleague from Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix, met with about twenty participants at the consultation.

"Before even writing anything, we want to take the time to engage with communities, with people on the ground, to get their vision of energy development and ensure that what we write reflects the realities on the ground," notes Mr. Montigny, who was halfway through this consultation tour, which included 16 planned stops.

In the Gaspé Peninsula, the issue of wind power is important. "What role can wind power development play, or



Some 20 people, including elected officials, industry stakeholders, and First Nations members, participated in the consultation.

Photo: N. Sergerie

forest biomass, or other types of energy beyond Hydro-Québec? There's also fossil fuels. In this grand vision of decarbonization, when we want to decarbonize our economy, our energy supply, we want to do it as part of a transition. But before creating a scenario, we want to be able to discuss with citizens how they see it," continues the

Côte-Nord MNA. Regarding the role of regional content in future wind farms, particularly the wind turbine blades from LM Wind Power in Gaspé, the elected official indicated that the discussion will continue.

The latest wind farm procurement process has raised several questions and concerns, particularly from the

mayor of Gaspé, about the future of Quebec's wind industry.

"The key to the energy vision is to listen to people. It's time to hear from them. They will give us their opinions on this. I'll be happy to document all of this, and it will be part of our reflection," said Mr. Montigny.

Several stakeholders have

criticized the Quebec government for granting large blocks of energy to economic projects, some of which have failed, such as Northvolt. Companies that have obtained blocks of energy are not using them at full capacity.

"In discussions with participants, what we're told is that we need to adapt our energy supply to demand. People want to develop economic projects, and we want to adapt to that. There are also established criteria that are often misunderstood. All the energy allocation criteria, in a context of energy scarcity, people say, allocate megawatts while optimizing economic benefits," maintains the MNA for René-Lévesque.

Bill 69, currently under consideration by the Quebec government, aims to integrate energy planning, and this consultation is intended as an upstream step.

Regionally, in addition to industry stakeholders and elected officials, Indigenous communities will also be consulted.

SCFG stands out in North America by winning CN's Short line railroad of the year award

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND - The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) has received Canadian National's inaugural Brandon C. Rudnikoff Short line partner of the year 2025 award.

This award recognizes the railway that has most distinguished itself in North America through its commitment to developing new rail traffic and maintaining strong business relationships.

The award was presented at the Short line Railroad Conference held in Montreal by Canadian National (CN) on May 21.

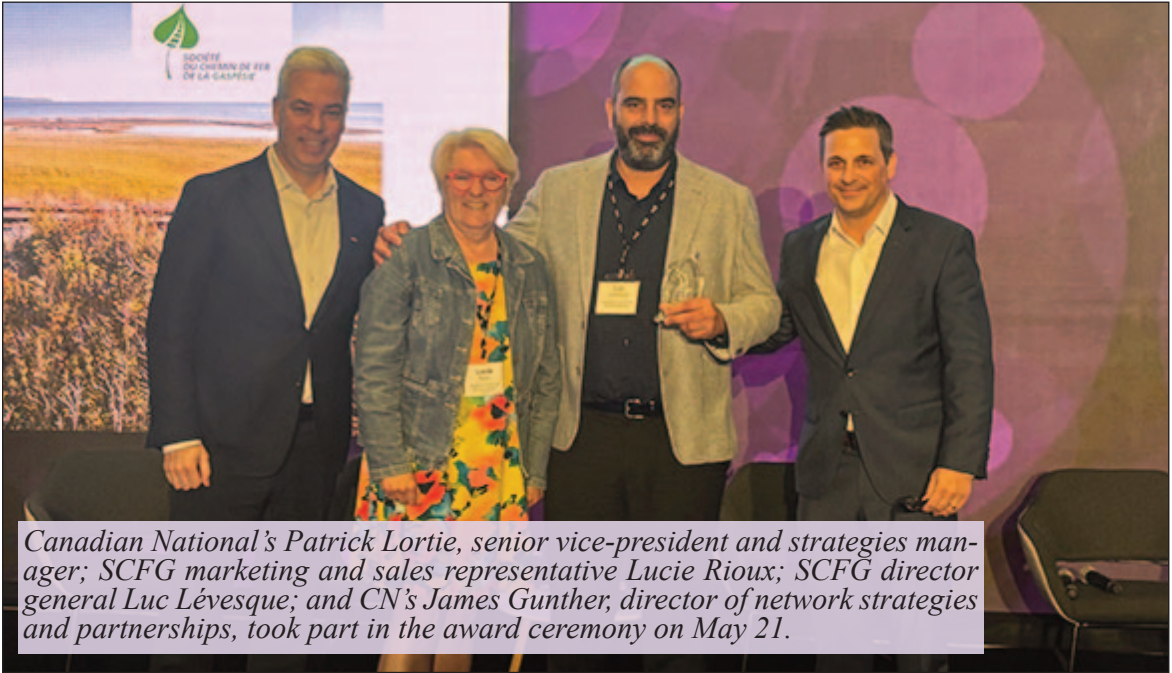
"Considering that nearly 100 short line railroads do business with Canadian National in North America, it is a tremendous recognition to be nominated and recognized for this award! This award is the culmination of more than ten years of work and commitment by a team dedicated and mobilized to develop rail transportation in the Gaspé Peninsula!

Seeing this achievement recognized by such a major partner as CN, and across North America, is a source of great pride," reacts Éric Dubé, president of the SCFG.

The SCFG is one of the very few railways with non-profit status and a regional administration composed of elected officials. This unusual status still allows the SCFG to stand out, and even perform remarkably, among comparable private companies, while prioritizing regional development, adds Mr. Dubé.

Including an annual grant given out by Quebec's Department of Transport, the owner of the Matapedia to Gaspé line, the SCFG generates revenues of over \$20 million annually, more than 90% of which is invested regionally.

"It is a fantastic and unique lever for regional development in the Gaspé Peninsula. Management would like to dedicate this recognition to its entire team, thanks to whom the SCFG was able to achieve this distinction. And of course, all



Canadian National's Patrick Lortie, senior vice-president and strategies manager; SCFG marketing and sales representative Lucie Rioux; SCFG director general Luc Lévesque; and CN's James Gunther, director of network strategies and partnerships, took part in the award ceremony on May 21.

Photo: Courtesy of the SCFG

of this is thanks to CN, our first and major partner in our rail transportation operations," concludes Éric Dubé.

An effort deployed over more than a decade

Luc Lévesque, director general of the SCFG, was asked by CN prior to the award ceremony to determine some elements of its business relation

with Canada's biggest railroad company, which takes all the traffic from the Gaspé Peninsula at the interchange point of Matapedia. CN then delivers it to its final destination, sometimes with the assistance of another railway company.

"The windmill blades, the cement traffic initiated in 2017, the upcoming regular use of the railway between Bathurst to Moncton for cement hauling to Moncton, and some other upcoming ventures were put up and are being organized with the collaboration of CN," explains Mr. Lévesque.

Sometimes, the SCFG carries out technical mandates outside its own line, as shippers want some advice about how to organize the logistics of a hauling opportunity.

"It is currently happening with a lumber company located in the Lower Saint Lawrence region which is about to resume woodchip traffic. We can provide advice about how and where to lay out tracks, about loading operations, the rules applying to such operations and safety measures," stresses Mr. Lévesque.

"Sometimes, organizing such clients will lead to increased traffic for our line, sometimes it will just bring in some consulting revenues but it helps CN. We are a smaller organization with the capacity of being flexible for such projects," he adds.

In 2024, the SCFG hauled 2,066 freight cars between New Richmond and Matapedia. The number will increase in 2025 because at the end of the summer or beginning of the fall, cement will be shipped out from the Port Daniel cement plant instead of being trucked from Port Daniel to New Rich-

mond and then transshipped to railway cars.

The elimination of the transshipment step will make the railway more competitive than the current operational mode. Moreover, CN's decision to haul the cement to Moncton will eliminate a fair share of the trucks currently transporting that commodity. In order to do this, CN will reinstate a regular freight train between Bathurst and Miramichi. Such a train will also bolster the numbers of the current freight train linking Miramichi and Moncton.

Luc Lévesque doesn't know yet how many additional cement cars it will generate for the Matapedia to Port Daniel stretch. "It is a significant volume, based on the number of trucks that are passing on Highway 132 loaded with cement," he says.

Over the last decade, the peak traffic year for the SCFG occurred in 2021, with 4,636 cars. At that time, there was an intense windmill blade traffic between New Richmond and Matapedia. The blades were trucked at a high cost from the LM Wind Power plant in Gaspé to New Richmond. Hauling them by train from Gaspé would have saved a lot of money for LM customers. However, the line was not fit at that time for railway traffic. Its reopening east of Port Daniel remains unknown, time-wise, as Transports Québec is trying to find ways to finish the work for less money than the last calls for tenders revealed.

Windmill blade traffic was stopped in May 2022. Blades are currently transported to the south part of the United States by ships, a mode used between December 2016 and May 2021.



Heron Bay mayor suspended for code of conduct violation

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON: - The mayor of Heron Bay, Normand Pelletier, violated the Town's code of conduct, according to his colleagues, and as a result is suspended for an undetermined period. Mayor Pelletier, pictured on the right, is being replaced by pro-mayor Denis MacIntyre, shown on the left.

The event that led to the suspension occurred during a regular municipal council meeting held on May 20. The exact nature of the code of conduct violation has not been specified by the municipal administration. For now, the only known sanction is mayor Pelletier suspension.

So far, pro-mayor McIntyre indicated that the elected officials were going to discuss a matter related to the code of conduct and that some members had to withdraw from such discussions due to a conflict of interest. Mayor Pelletier and councillor Ken Chartrand left the room when the formal complaint was discussed during the May 20 meeting.

The Heron Bay council meetings have been particularly tense since the summer of 2024, due to the controversial pozzolan mining project currently under evaluation by the Government of New Brunswick. Mayor Pelletier is a very vocal supporter of the project, which is being spearheaded by the Montreal-based company EcoRock Dalhousie.

As of last fall, three municipal councillors were also supporters of the \$300 million initiative, while the other three opposed it. The municipal council is not expected to hold a public meeting in July. It remains unclear whether the code of conduct violation is directly related to the pozzolan debate.

Quebec Court of Appeal orders the closure of all hydrocarbon wells by 2029

GILLES GAGNÉ

CARLETON – In a judgment handed down on May 22, the Quebec Court of Appeal ordered oil companies to close their hydrocarbon wells, a decision that is part of a dispute that has pitted the firms against the Quebec government since 2018.

The companies wanted to keep these wells potentially active pending the end of the litigation, a process that will last at least two more years before a decision is rendered on the merits, unless one party abandons the fight. However, there are no signs that the case will be abandoned.

The Court of Appeal orders the companies to close the wells that pose a health risk to nearby residents between this year and 2027, and to shut down the remaining wells between 2027 and 2029.

The dispute between the oil companies and the Quebec government gradually took shape in 2018 with the entry into force of the Hydrocarbons Act, under the Liberal Party. Its implementing regulations kept the door open for drilling but restricted hydrocarbon exploration and development activities to some extent.

In 2022, the Coalition Avenir Québec government adopted the Act to halt the exploration and production of hydrocarbons. This law prohibited hydrocarbon exploration and development activities throughout Quebec. It revoked the companies' licenses and also led to the establishment of a compensation program, worth \$100 million when the law came into force. The Centre québécois du droit à l'environnement (Quebec



Wells drilled under the Petroleum Resources Act must all be closed between 2025 and 2029, according to the Court of Appeal.

Photo: G. Gagné

Centre for Environmental Law), or CQDE, using the French acronym, has taken up this case, according to its spokesperson, lawyer Marc Bishai.

"Our organization intervened to ensure that the voice of citizens was heard in this case. We believe that a third dimension is important in this dispute. It is the voice of citizens that has changed the perspective of this case over the past 15 years," Mr. Bishai affirms.

"Our role is one of intervention. We represent citizens. Fortunately, the government is defending itself well (...) It's reassuring to see that the government is vigorously defending its law," adds the CQDE lawyer.

The merits of the dispute

The period from 2013 to 2018 was marked by a fairly high-profile case at the time: the lawsuit filed by Gastem against the village of Ristigouche South East. The company alleged that the municipality had untimely and abusively adopted a bylaw to protect its drinking water by prohibiting all oil drilling within one kilometre of an artesian well.

The case was heard at the New Carlisle Courthouse in September 2017. In February 2018, Superior Court Judge Nicole Tremblay, dismissed Gastem's claim and ordered the company to pay \$164,000 to the municipality to reimburse

its legal fees and pay a public relations firm that had assisted it with a grassroots fundraising campaign.

Prior to the New Carlisle court hearings, the Quebec government refused to provide financial support to Ristigouche South East, which had a population of 158. Gastem never reimbursed the municipality.

It was in this context that the government adopted its Hydrocarbons Act, and oil and gas companies holding exploration permits filed their first lawsuit against the Quebec government because of the restrictions it contained. The companies were seeking damage compensations even if drilling operations remained permitted.

These firms, including Gaspé Energies and Questerre, claim to collectively hold 101 exploration and production permits. They also claim to own 53 wells drilled in connection with these licenses. These permits were issued under the Hydrocarbons Act.

The same companies escalated their protest when the Act to halt hydrocarbon exploration and production in Quebec was adopted. This time, they are invoking Section 6 of the Quebec Charter, which protects the "right to the peaceful enjoyment and free disposition of one's property, except to the extent provided by law." The companies allege that they are victims of a "disguised expropriation."

They estimate their potential losses at several billion dollars, the amount that would

have been hypothetically received in sales if major oil and gas discoveries had been made on Quebec soil. The companies are therefore challenging the constitutionality of several sections of this "End of Hydrocarbons Act". Their legal action started in 2022 on that front.

In this same motion, the firms asked the court, as a preliminary matter, to suspend the effect of the sections of the law requiring them to shut down their wells, before the hearing on the merits of the argument, namely the constitutional debate.

The companies did not want to be forced to shut down their wells while the case progressed through the courts. On January 25, 2024, the Superior Court granted them this suspension, a verdict that the Quebec government appealed.

Permission to appeal was granted on April 17, 2024. The hearing was held on October 10, 2024, and the Court of Appeal overturned the Superior Court's decision in its May 22 judgment. The oil and gas companies must now shut down their wells.

No firm in this group has yet applied to benefit from the \$100 million compensation program announced in 2022.

What's Next

Marc Bishai believes that if the procedural steps progress smoothly, the companies and the government should have completed preparing their case and will be ready to request a

hearing date to argue the constitutional question before the end of 2025.

"This hearing on the merits should take place no earlier than 2026 or 2027, and a judgment will, in principle, be rendered within the following six months," he predicts.

It is foreseeable that if either party is dissatisfied with the upcoming verdict, an appeal will follow, he says.

If this eventual judgment concludes that the law halting hydrocarbon activities is unconstitutional, it will be necessary to determine whether the companies are entitled to compensation and damages and, if so, to determine these amounts.

"We must keep in mind that this case is likely to last at least several months, perhaps a few years," concludes Mr. Bishai. "The CQDE's participation in the case stems not only from our efforts to combat climate change, but also from the desire to avoid a significant environmental liability, when we consider old mines and wells," he adds.

Several dozen wells were drilled before the adoption of a Quebec law specific to hydrocarbon exploration and development. Many of these older wells are leaking and the scope of the regulations governing their closure remains unclear. Some of the wells date back to the second half of the 1800s and are still either leaking or emitting gases. Several are located in the Gaspé Peninsula, including within the municipal limits of Gaspé.



Photo: Courtesy of the CQDE

Attorney Marc Bishai affirms that the court case involving oil and gas companies goes beyond the scope of climate change.

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:

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

Damning Auditor General's Report

CISSS is granted a grace period

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) has been granted a grace period until October to address the 64 recommendations proposed in response to the damning report by the Auditor General of Quebec. That report was produced three years ago on five major areas of the organization's management.

In May 2022, the then Auditor General, Guylaine Leclerc, criticized management and governance by making five major findings: lack of rigour in hiring and inadequate management of service contracts; work environment issues; poorly protected personal information; and lack of compliance with governance rules. The auditor noted that the CISSS management was problematic overall, par-



Photo: N. Sergerie

Martin Pelletier, President and CEO of the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS.

ticularly at the management level when Chantal Duguay was President and CEO.

"Four of the five areas are 100% complete. We have met expectations. The fifth area that has not yet been com-

pleted is contract management, although many changes have been made over the past year and a half, we still have some areas to address to meet the VGQ's (Quebec's Auditor General) expectations," says President and CEO Martin Pelletier.

What remains to be done is the response to the logistics action plan, which had to be readjusted.

"Our internal approach, with review processes to ensure that contracts are properly secured, is where it's lacking. There are a lot of contracts we sign each year that are for five years and they aren't in the mix. We see that there are still adjustments to be made to our mechanisms," maintains Mr. Pelletier.

The Auditor General is satisfied with the work accomplished over the past three years.

"We met three times with the VGQ (Auditor General) of office officials, and each time, it was satisfactory," says Mr. Pelletier.

Regarding governance, with the changes implemented with the arrival of Santé

Québec, this aspect has been put on hold while the auditor adjusts to the new way of managing the future.

Mr. Pelletier notes that a great deal of work has been done over the past three years to address the concerns raised by the report. Relations have improved.

"One of my major projects was to ensure that we collaborate. We didn't always agree, but we were able to agree on the well-being of users, and we did so respectfully with the unions and Santé Québec. We talk to each other, and that's where we can find solid solutions. The lines of communication are excellent," notes the CEO.

Patient safety has never been compromised, he says. "I hope that not too late in the fall, we'll be able to close the file once we've provided the latest information," says the President and CEO.

Women's groups say obstetrics improvements are needed

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Women's groups are once again denouncing the situation of understaffed obstetrics departments at hospitals in the Gaspé Peninsula, particularly the one in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

The Haute-Gaspésie hospital has experienced a staff shortage and service disruptions nearly every month for the past two years due to a lack of trained nursing resources available to work in obstetrics.

Committees have been formed in each of the local

networks to find solutions, including training more nurses to work in the obstetrics department.

"But one of the fundamental issues is retention because the working conditions are demanding. We are calling on the Legault government, Health Minister Christian Dubé, and Gaspé MNA (Member of the National Assembly) Stéphane Sainte-Croix because we believe there is undoubtedly a deeper issue, which is to strengthen local services. The citizens of the Gaspésie and the workers are not second-class citizens because we live

in the Gaspésie and we have the right to have local services that operate year-round," says Nastassia Williams, coordinator of the Table de concertation féministe de la Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine, who also speaks on behalf of the Maison des familles Haute-Gaspésie and the Syndicat des infirmières, infirmiers auxiliaires et inhalothérapeutes de l'Est-du-Québec.

The organizations say these service interruptions generate considerable stress for families expecting a child and pose real risks to the health and safety of the mother and baby. In addition to increasing anxiety, these discoveries can lead to unwanted or unnecessary medical interventions, disrupting the safe progress of deliveries.

The Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS) formed committees last December to find solutions after a series of department closures and service disruptions in Haute-Gaspésie.

Discussions on the issue are ongoing, "We have nurses working in other departments who have agreed to work in

obstetrics, sending them to Quebec City for training at the CHU. We're in the process of organizing this schedule," says CISSS President and CEO Martin Pelletier.

He predicts it will take until the fall for the obstetrics department to stabilize. "The medical staff is also stretched thin. We don't want to lose a doctor in the meantime, because otherwise, it would be a different story," says the director.

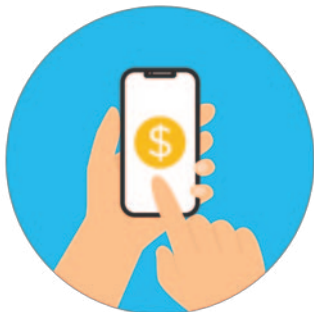
But for women, the stakes are higher. Traditionally female professions are more affected, they say. "This is an

issue we see in the healthcare and education sectors, which are traditionally female professions, where adequate working conditions have not been provided. It's a sector that has been neglected for years. We have people who are burning out, people who aren't being replaced. The day the government considers issues affecting women, whether in terms of services or jobs, as a priority, the issue will decrease and we will have fewer workforce issues," analyzes Ms. Williams, who points out that public services have been neglected for years.



Women's groups want improvements to obstetrics services.

The Gaspé Spec can now accept payment by e-transfer



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Fewer gaps in ambulance services

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPE - Ambulance service gaps have become a rare commodity at the Gaspé Peninsula Integrated Health and Social Services Centre (CISSS).

From a rate of up to 3.5% in the last quarter of 2022, this rate has dropped to 1.56% in 2022-2023 and further to just 0.24% in 2023-2024.

Companies have made significant efforts to hire paramedics or have relied on independent labour to fill positions. "It's difficult to reach 0% because there are situations where there are last-minute illnesses or difficulties replacing someone who was already on the schedule. When we're talking about 0.24%, the efforts have been remarkable, and people have found solutions," says Jean-



Photo: N. Sergerie

There are virtually no ambulance service gaps left in the Gaspé Peninsula, according to data from the Ministry of Health.

François Sénéchal, Deputy Director of Medical and Professional Services at the Gaspé Peninsula CISSS. When a shortage occurs, staff are strategically redeployed

across the territory.

Since 2018, several shift schedules have been converted to hourly schedules. "The argument has always been that it would be easier to

recruit and retain staff when we have hourly schedules because, in terms of personal and social life, it's easier to plan activities. This confirms that the arguments for the conversion were well-founded," says Mr. Sénéchal. The advantages of hourly schedules facilitate redeployment and allow for faster response times because people are already in the ambulance—a response time of less than a minute—while the on-call schedule requires the paramedic to first go to the paramedics station to take charge of the vehicle and then respond to the call, resulting in a response time of approximately eight minutes.

There are still a few on-call shifts available in the Gaspé, however, the goal is to one day see the region covered 100% with hourly sched-

ules.

"For example, if we're talking about Mont-Louis or Murdochville, it's clear that what we have left as on-call teams doesn't have much travel time during the week. If we put these teams on the hour, it would be, in quote, a waste of resources," explains Mr. Sénéchal.

In Gaspé, an on-call team was converted to a 10-hour shift, a change that initially sparked controversy, but has since produced promising results.

Currently, there's a 24-hour team in Gaspé and in Rivière-au-Renard, in addition to the 10-hour shift in Gaspé.

"Based on the volume of activity and our redeployment capacity, we think we made the right decision," concludes Mr. Sénéchal.

Construction of a new daycare has finally begun

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - After nearly four years of significant effort, construction of the Voyage de mon enfance early childhood centre in Gaspé officially began on June 2. The new facility located near Carrefour Gaspé, will offer 100 daycare spaces.

"The preparations were a lot more difficult than initially anticipated. All in all, we're pretty proud of the results,"

notes Executive Director
Gilles Chapados.

The daycare spaces were allocated by the Quebec government on August 21, 2021. "The longest part was finding the opportunity, the land that would allow for this project, which, let's face it, is quite large. Having a site located downtown with public services made it more difficult to find the ideal site," comments the director.

The initiative is part of a

pilot project that was first spearheaded by the Association of Early Childhood Centres and taken over by the Ministry of Families when project costs exploded. “It’s truly a completely prefabricated daycare. It’s a new thing in Quebec. Overall, for now, from a theoretical point of view, and we’ve seen it in practice, it’s much faster and more efficient, even if it comes with its share of challenges. However, there are

several advantages to this type of construction,” maintains Mr. Chapados.

There are still a few details to be worked out. "Building access, managing public services, electricity, and building this project is pretty well organized, but there are definitely technical details to be worked out," says Mr. Chapados.

Habitations Mont-Carleton
has been awarded the contract

to build the modular unit. If all goes well, the building will be completed around November or December with the new centre opening no later than February 2026.

"If people call us, we'll automatically redirect them to the Place 0-5 year old (an organization taking reservations). That's where we'll draw children (waiting list) when we need to fill spaces," says the director.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Since June 2, construction equipment has been present at the site of Gaspé's new daycare centre.



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Gesgapegiag, the backdrop of Bon Cop, Bad Cop

Gilles Gagné

GESGAPEGIAG – Between June 2 and June 11, Gesgapegiag was the backdrop of part of a television series, Bon cop, bad cop, which is a continuation of two movies bearing the same title, shot in 2006 and 2016.

The project was an idea that came from exchanges between Gesgapegiag fishing camp owner Quentin Condo and film co-producers Anik Jean, who comes from Bonaventure, and her husband Patrick Huard. Both are regular customers of Quentin Condo's fishing camp and they became friends over the years.

Patrick Huard has Gaspesian roots as well. His father was born and raised in Paspébiac before moving to Montreal. In Bon cop, bad cop, Patrick Huard plays the bad cop part. He is named David Bouchard, a rule-bending, francophone investigator for the Sûreté du Québec. Colm Feore plays Martin Ward, a by-the-book anglophone Ontario Provincial Police detective. As the action progresses, the bilingual detectives must resolve their professional and cultural differences, their bigotry and prejudices.

The 2006 movie's revenues topped \$12 million, a lot by Canadian standards, most of it in Quebec. That initial film was also one of the first bilingual movies in the country, as it is shot in both languages.

Some Gesgapegiag citizens play roles in the series that will be aired on Crave in 2026. The scenario evolves around the disappearance of a Native chief.

SPEC will run a report on the filming in its next issue.

Educators reluctantly accept Quebec's offer

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The approximately 300 educators from the 12 early childhood centres represented by the CSN have largely accepted the agreement reached with the Quebec government on May 5.

The regional vice-president of the CSN's Health and Social Services Federation, Gaétan Leblanc, indicates that the unions accepted the agreement with a similar rate to the national one, set at 58%.

"Since it's a national agreement, we're focusing a lot on the national result. There's dissatisfaction among workers. We want to continue the fight and not target individuals," explains Mr. Leblanc.

The agreement contains salary increases of between 17.4% and 19.4%, in addition

to an increase in the entry-level positions of qualified and specialized educators, which helps narrow the gap with the public sector for most job titles.

It also includes gains such as regional disparity bonuses, a recognition bonus for experienced workers, a recurring service recognition bonus, and an improved work availability bonus, as well as an improvement in group insurance and the addition of four hours for kitchen management.

But the mixed results also leave room for disappointment. "The recognition of experienced educators was not properly recognized. The gap between workers and those in the school sector affected the agreement. But at least we didn't have any setbacks," notes Mr. Leblanc.

The wage gap between an

early childcare worker in a daycare setting versus a school setting in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands is estimated at between \$4 and \$5 an hour. It can reach as high as \$10 in certain regions of Quebec.

The previous collective agreement expired on March 31, 2023. The new five-year agreement was reached after 13 days of strike action.

"What we must remember from these negotiations is that it was the exemplary mobilization that made it possible to move a government that was insensitive to the concerns of childcare workers. We succeeded in repelling most of the employer's demands for reductions in our working conditions and in obtaining certain gains," explains Stéphanie Vachon, childcare worker representative for the FSSS-CSN.

Continued from page 4

than before.

In the meantime, in Canada

Such American constraints will undoubtedly have an impact in Canada. More environmentally friendly, the northeast part of the U.S. will check with Quebec and Ontario in an attempt to find clean or cleaner electricity than that coming from fossil fuels.

At the same time, Alberta premier Danielle Smith, who doesn't believe in climate change despite the rising effects of forest fires in her province, or in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, will want to feed oil and gas south of the border, thus worsening an already accelerating problem.

In that fog, we don't hear much about saving energy. Yet, the cheapest form of energy is the one saved, the one we don't have to produce. We collectively prefer managing crises, it seems.

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Ashley Renouf
418-752-5995 Ext. 107
ashley@casa-gaspe.com

LET'S CELEBRATE CASA'S LEGACY AND
TOAST TO THE NEXT 50 YEARS!

Page 12, June 11, 2025 - Spec

During SPEC's third year of operation the publication rate increases, yet topics remain very diversified

GILLES GAGNÉ

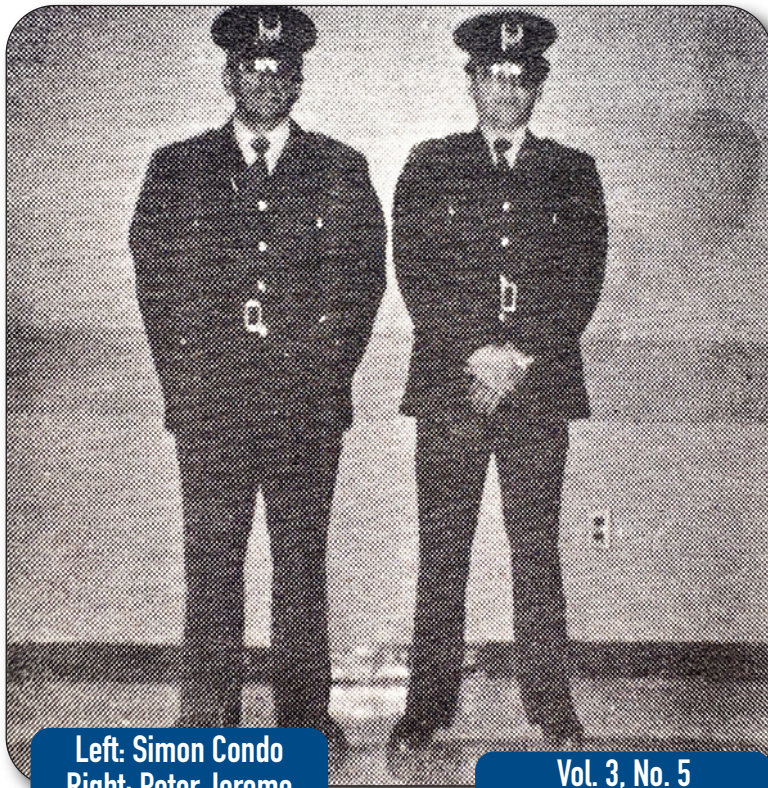
NEW CARLISLE – During its third year of existence, the SPEC team was able to increase to a certain degree its publication rate. In fact, the employees were still not reaching the initial goal of delivering a newspaper every second week. However, in the last eight months of the year, 11 issues were released, compared to 13 in the full years of 1975-1976 and 1976-1977.

The first paper of May 1977 cannot be found in the "big blue books" that hold most of SPEC's early archives.

**Vol. 3 No 2
May 30, 1977**

- In this issue we can read that "Fishermen organize themselves" in the Anse-à-Brillant-Douglastown sector. "A petition taken over a year ago by a group of fishermen in the Anse à Brillant-Douglastown area has finally paid off. The group of 34 fishermen have received a verbal notice from (Member of Parliament) Alexandre Cyr that a budget of around \$74,000 will be given for cleanup operations of the Anse à Brillant wharf. Built in 1938, the wharf is now in bad condition and several boats have been damaged this year," reports the paper.

Further details reveal that



**Left: Simon Condo
Right: Peter Jerome**

Vol. 3, No. 5

the work, including the addition of 190 feet of breakwater and removal of accumulated rock and debris, will take three years to complete.

The petition that led to the project was spearheaded by Leonard Langlois and Aaron Drody. It is interesting to note that the project was initially turned down by the federal Department of Public Works, which had planned to take the wharf off the map.

- In that same issue, Gary Briand, in an article entitled "The TV question," explains the attempts made by some members of the community to get the CBC Montreal signal instead of the Maritimes one.

- SPEC readers send in many letters to the editor, sometimes denouncing the Parti Québécois program. A content contributor, Lloyd Burrows, runs a four-page article on the "United church on the Gaspé coast. Wade Gifford writes swing into spring" about golfing.

- There is a full-page ad announcing the closure of Eugene Stanley's clothing store in Barachois.

**Vol. 3 No 3
June 28, 1977**

- We learn that the Sûreté du Québec has just hired a female police officer, Hélène Guay,

aged 22, from Lauzon, near Quebec City. She will be based in Chandler.

- We also see that Herbie Sweetman, from Port Daniel, has been waiting for a year and a half for his permit to operate a sawmill. The Quebec government claimed there is not enough wood in that area.

- Letters are still numerous, again covering the consequences of the PQ election, but other subjects as well.

- There is a long article about "René Lévesque", the man who loves the Gaspé Peninsula and the sea, is featured.

**Vol. 3 No 4
July 18, 1977**

- The number of deadly accidents during this era remains staggering. In the three weeks since the last issue of the SPEC, seven fatalities occurred, three in one drowning incident, and four in road accidents

- There is photo and brief caption of Pierre Elliot Trudeau paying a short visit to Forillon Park, where he praised the virtues of that attraction, to which he was closely tied, including the expropriation process. Was such a brief coverage of Canada's prime minister visit tied to the expropriation controversy, and did Mr. Trudeau avoid meeting the local press to bypass questions about Forillon?

- The SPEC also reports that Jon Erickson, the American long-distance swimmer who won the 1976 14-mile race between Grande Anse, New Brunswick, and Paspebiac, will be one of the six athletes to take part in the August 7 competition.

- David McDougall runs an in-depth write-up about "Douglastown before 1800."

**Vol. 3 No 5
August 15, 1977**

- There is a short article entitled "How to get your SIN", as in social insurance number, a Canada-wide identity reality

that has been taken for granted since the 1980s.

- Another article makes people aware that there is a new police force in the Gaspé Peninsula, that of "Maria", to designate the Gesgapegiag of today. Peter Jerome and Simon Condo are hired. Officer Jerome worked for the RCMP between 1974 and 1976, and took the oath to serve in Maria in December 1976. Simon Condo had graduated in May 1977 when hired. The announcement came from a new commission called the Amerindian Police, based in Pointe-Bleue, Lac-Saint-Jean. Pointe-Bleue is now called Mashteuiatsh. There is a photo showing the new officers, based in the community centre.

- A former Gaspesian named John Tennier sent a very long letter expressing his worry about the state of the region's economy.

- Donald Miller, a founder of the SPEC, leaves the Gaspé Coast and is warmly thanked in the paper.

- Another American, John Kinsella, who became a world-wide legend in long-distance swimming, won the 14-mile race between Grande Anse and Paspebiac. The previous year's winner, Jon Erickson, finished fourth and Cindy Nicholas, a 20-year-old Canadian, impressed through finishing in sixth place. Exactly a month after the 14-mile race, she became both the first woman and youngest swimmer to complete a return crossing of the English Channel, setting a new world record of 19 hours and 55 minutes. She unfortunately died in 2016 due to liver failure.

**Vol. 3 No 6
September 12, 1977**

This issue shows a cartoon illustrating people's adaptation to the switch from miles



Vol. 3, No. 5

At least 15,000 persons attended the swim cross of the Baie des Chaleurs at the Paspebiac festival

SPEC's 3rd Year: May 1977 to ...

From Page 13

to kilometres per hour on Canadian roads.

- A Rosebridge truck driver, Irving Lévesque, complains about the cheap rates he gets from the Gaspesia mill when he hauls pulp to the Chandler plant. Meanwhile, the SPEC team, after running a message to the effect of getting more messages from readers, runs four pages of letters!
- Port Daniel's fisherman Romuald Cormier hauls a 1,036 pound tuna during the Gaspé-Port Daniel International Tuna Tournament, a smashing success overall. Lynn Walker and Lester Dow take second and third place.
- Ken Annett publishes a "Gaspé of Yesteryear" article from the Legends of the St. Lawrence.
- Wilfred Hocquard, president, reports on the Shigawake Agricultural Fair while Karen Jones runs a fiction write-up called "Margaret and the mountain."

Vol. 3 No 7

October 3, 1977

- Readers are informed about recent "CN Hearings," supervised by the commissioners of the Railway Transport Committee's branch of the Canadian Transport Commission. The topic makes the front page photo and an article inside. A CN representative explained to the regional stakeholders why the company then a public corporation, wants to axe its Matapédia-Gaspé passenger train. Up to 40 briefs are submitted to the Railway Transport Committee. CN refuses to divulge the amount of losses sustained on the Gaspé line with its passenger service, despite requests

- to that effect. Gaspésians suggest the implementation of a service offered by another entity. Canada was months away for the 1978 foundation of VIA Rail.
- Donald Bourgoïn is hired as an advertisement agent for SPEC in Gaspé.
- An article reports that the "line road" is finally paved in Bougainville
- There are intense talks about the renewal of the collective agreement at Gaspé Copper Mine in Murdochville. The company stresses that the production cost is higher than the market price of copper while the union representative, Michael Arsénault, now known as Michel, argues that Gaspesian workers earn between \$2,000 and \$2,900 annually less than their New Brunswick and Montreal colleagues.
- In a spread with pictures, Bernard Nadeau and Pierre Provost present their project to renovate the historical Paspebiac buildings.

Vol. 3 No 8

October 24, 1977

- There are titles on the front page, a rare occurrence: *Gaspé Micmacs want a reserve, Quebec's flag and New Carlisle, A new airport for the coast?*
- The first title refers to the fact that despite having been recognized in 1973, the Mi'gmaq of what later became Gespeg don't have a reserve like Listuguj and Gesgapegiag.
- The New Carlisle flag controversy derives from the regulation adopted by the provincial government stating that the Quebec flag has to appear on the mast of town halls. Some citizens are angry because a municipal council decision, not a unanimous one, opted for the Quebec flag only.

- The Canadian Legion suggests raising the Quebec and Canadian flags and it ends the controversy.
- The Gaspé airport is assessed for a runway expansion and six scenarios are considered. However, none of them satisfies the lengthening of the runway from 4,000 to 6,000 feet because of safety issues, namely the 3% descent angle, unreachable due to the mountains around the airport. A seventh scenario is suggested, moving the airport.
- This SPEC edition features an article about the Grande Rivière forest fire of 1965, which destroyed 40,000 acres of woodland.
- A long article written by Arthur G. Legros is entitled "Refutation of an old Fantasy", an attempt to clear Jersey-born businessman Charles Robin's tough reputation.

Vol. 3 No 9

November 14, 1977

- This issue of the SPEC bears three titles, including two that sound contradictory, "Gaspésians say no to independence" and "Parti Québécois most popular". The titles seemingly reflect the provin-

Vol. 3, No.7

THE END OF AN ERA: Work on the "Line Road" (Bougainville) completed recently. A contract to pave the road was award only after a citizen's committee sent several delegations to see their local "Member" and they blocked the highway to protest government inaction.

See you at the fair!

Bonnie Hayes, left, and Shelly Duguay of Shigawake, with their flower displays.

Vol. 3, No.6

Vol. 3 No 10

December 5, 1977

- An article covers the visit of Union Nationale leader Rodrigue Biron. The article entitled "PQ is Bad but better than Liberals", covers Mr. Biron's public meetings with Member of the National Assembly for the Gaspé riding, Michel Lemoignan. The Union Nationale died a few years later and Rodrigue Biron was recuperated by the Parti Québécois, becoming an Industry and Commerce minister.
- The SPEC runs an article and six pictures of Remembrance Day. Since 1975, the regular collaboration of Dave Doherty on Veterans' topics is impressive.
- This issue includes a rare peak in the north side of the region. It is called "The early settlements of Grande-Vallée and Rivière-Madeleine: A look at the Caron family."

Vol. 3 No 11

December 19, 1977

- The Volume 3, number 11, dated December 19 issue of the SPEC came only two weeks later. It looks like the staff was a bit tired. The content includes a Christmas story, "The strange happening at the house next door" and letters to the editor.

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Sea-Coast Publications Inc. - The Gaspé Spec - 50th Anniversary

In perspective...

• Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE – Gaspésians are essentially polite fighters, but they are determined ones. Reading the May to December 1977 editions of the SPEC is a testimony to that reality.

The fight to preserve the Anse-à-Brillant wharf was quite necessary, considering that 34 commercial fishermen were based there 48 years ago! The fact that civil servants had decided to take it off the map is mind-blowing, by 1977 or 2025 standards, given the distance between that wharf and the closest ones, either southeast or northwest.

It is just as mind-blowing to see that it took two full years to pave the Bougainville road, now the main road between Gaspé and Percé when people have a business meeting. Paving that road could surely have been carried out faster. Paving is not rocket science.

The fight to preserve CN's passenger train service in the fall of 1977 was the first chapter of a battle that is still ongoing with VIA Rail: convincing a public corporation to provide a reliable link between rural areas that are deploying constant efforts to get to other regions, and allowing visitors from elsewhere to get here using modern means of transportation.

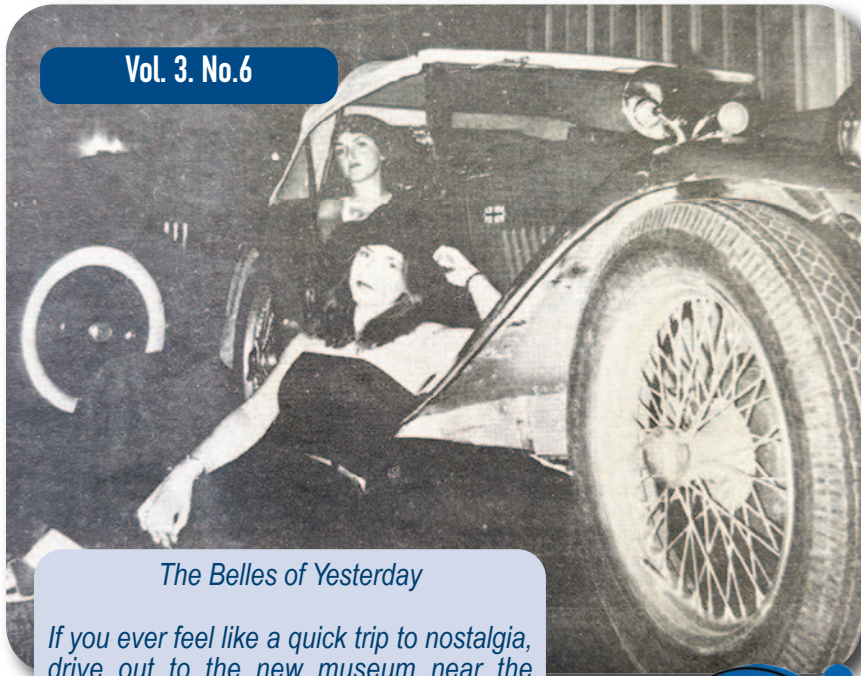
family allowance up

The increase of 27% in this month's family allowance cheques are a compensation to make up for the new tax on children's clothing.

Spokesmen from the ministry of Social Affairs say that the provincial government will not make a profit from the clothing tax and if the total amount of money received exceeds a certain level, then further increases will be given in future family allowance payments.

Vol. 3, No. 2

Vol. 3, No.6



The Belles of Yesterday

If you ever feel like a quick trip to nostalgia, drive out to the new museum near the chalets du Baril in Percé.

It's called: "Les Belles d'hier et d'aujourd'hui" and owner Pierre Melancon will show you his collection of vintage automobiles, firearms, clothes and furniture.

The oldest car on display is a 1915 Ford. There are firearms dating back to 1760 and antique money.

Vol. 3, No.3

1977
Excerpt

The Gaspesian section of the Quebec Fish and Game Federation has suggested that permits for hunting moose and deer be given to groups of two or three hunters rather than individually and that permits cost more.

1977 SPEC STAFF

Lynden Bechervaise
Co-Chairman

CASA MEMBERS
Gary Briand, Douglastown

Gerard Vallieres, Gaspé

Peggy Patterson, Murdochville

Betty Brown Flowers, Secretary Treasurer

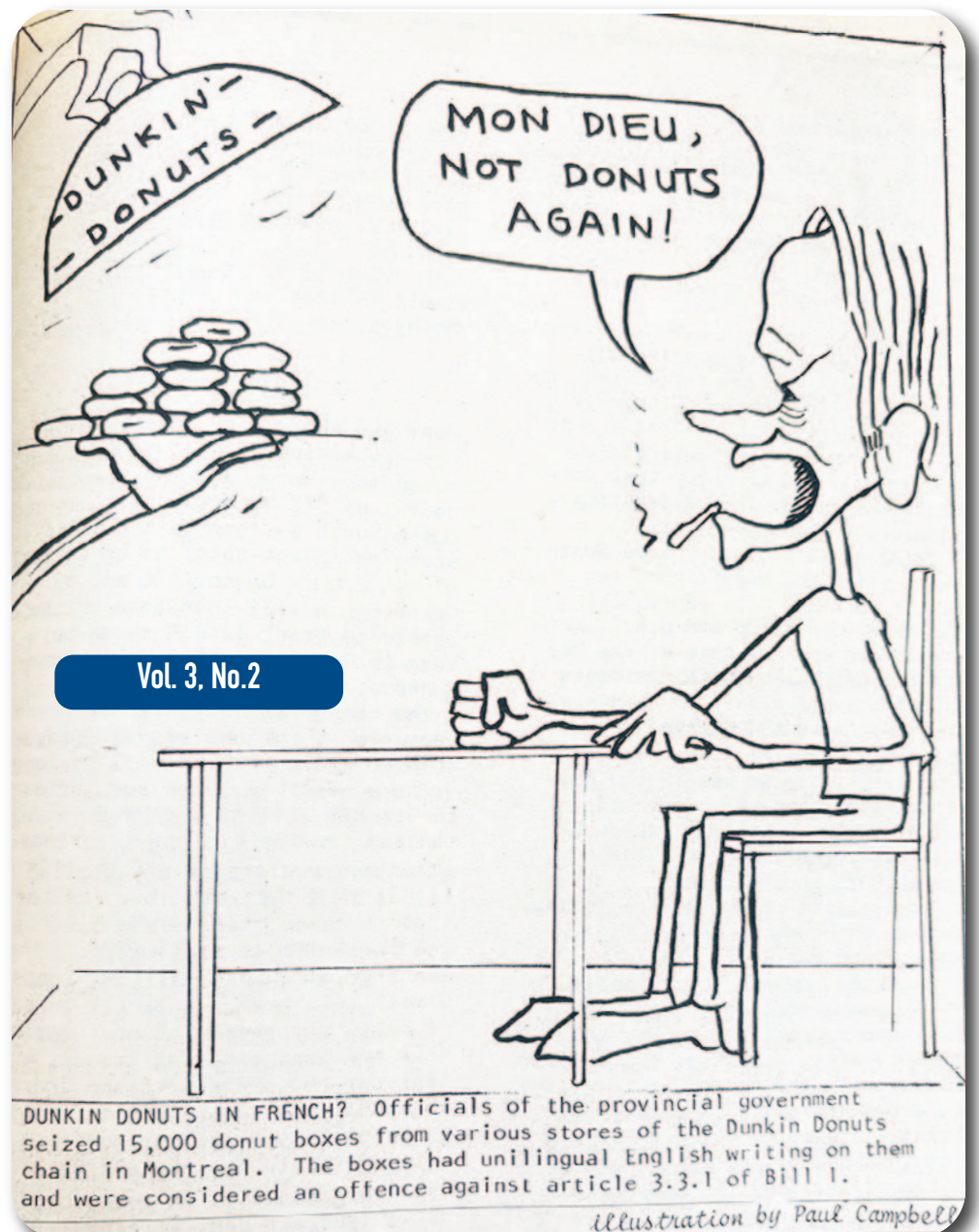
Sharon Farrell, Animator

Delton Sams, Co-ordinator

Donald Bourgouin, Advertising Representative

Printed by Miramichi Web

Vol. 3, No.2



free milk for school children

Preparations for distributing free milk to school children this September are being undertaken by the provincial department of Agriculture.

A special budget of \$2 - million has been earmarked for the project. This year, only children enrolled in kindergarten and elementary schools will be included.

Over the next few weeks, functionaries of the Agriculture Department will be visiting school boards across the province.

The government will insist that school boards purchase milk in their own region which will allow farmers to profit from the project.

Vol. 3, No.7

From our archives...

Artist sculpts “biggest ever” salmon

A New Carlisle artist is in the process of sculpting a cedar replica of what is unofficially considered the biggest Atlantic salmon ever taken by rod and line.

Noted author, angle and sculptor Jean-Paul Dubé is carving the monstrous fish, estimated by Fisheries and Oceans Canada biologist to have been 61 inches long and weighed close to 60 lbs., for New Brunswick sport fisherman Mike Crosbie.

Crosbie caught the salmon on the Restigouche River last

June. Because New Brunswick laws forbid any salmon which has spent more than one season in the ocean to be taken in, Crosbie had to return it to the river and must now content himself with photographs and a sculpture of his exploit.

The record will never be official because the fish was never weighed.

“When I made the first drawing based on Crosbie’s photos, I just couldn’t believe the size of it,” says Dubé, whose own record for fishing salmon stands at 31 lbs.

Dubé estimates the male fish was 12 years old, about 95 by human standards. Its long, hooked lower lip, mishapen head and red splotchy discoloration indicate it was in the process of spawning and had probably spent a long time in the river.

“I told him, ‘You’re going to have a hard looking fish,’” states the sculptor.

It will take Dubé about a month to finish the project. He says he will have to spend an entire day on the scales alone.

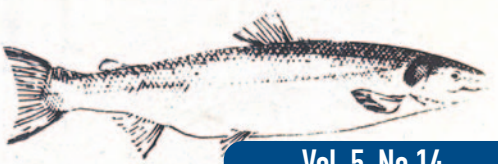
Four figure fish

“The hardest part for me is not sculpting, but painting,” admits Dubé. He won’t reveal how much he’s charging Crosbie, but allows that it’s “in the four figure range.”

The artist has written eight

books on salmon and has spent many years carving birds and ducks. He only took up carving salmon about two years ago and is one of the few artists in the world who does this sort of work. His first creation was an eight foot high piece consisting of a log-mounted warden holding a 30 lb. fish, currently on display in the lobby of the Matapedia Hotel in Restigouche.

Last December he completed a 44 inch carving to commemorate a salmon caught recently on the Grand-Cascapedia River by a woman from Mississippi.



Vol. 5, No.14

THE SALMON YOU BUY MAY SEND YOU TO JAIL

Under a recent amendment to the Quebec Wildlife Conservation Act, the purchaser of an illegal salmon is as guilty as the poacher -- and subject to the same penalties.

Quebec Wildlife Conservation Act.

1.1 It is unlawful for any person to sell an Atlantic salmon that he/she has caught unless this salmon has been caught under a commercial fishing license.

1.2 It is forbidden to have in one's possession any Atlantic salmon caught by any person unless this salmon has been caught under a commercial fishing license or by means of angling.

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Volume 15, Number 10.

Reservations on the Pabos River

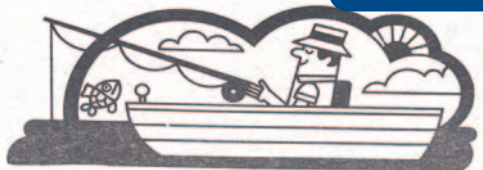
Salmon fishing got underway June 1, 1980 on the Pabos River. The Fish and Game Association of Anses Inc. is currently available to make reservatins and can be contacted by phoning 418-689-2829. Reservations can be made from 9:30a.m. seven days a week. The welcoming booth for the ZEC (Zone d'Exploitation Contrôlée) des

Anses is situated 13 km west of Chandler on route 132.

How to Make Reservations:


Reservations are made 48 hours in advance and telephone calls will be taken from all localities. Occasionally available pools can be reserved 24 hours in advance. All reservations not made 48 hours in advance of the actual day of fishing can be made on the spot at the ZEC booth. Noteworthy is the fact that in those areas where access is unlimited fishermen are obliged to make reservations following the above mentioned procedures.

Vol. 6, No.13



“This project has been made possible by the Community Media Strategic Support Fund offered jointly by the Official Language Minority Community Media Consortium and the Government of Canada.”





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Sea-Coast Publications Inc. - The Gaspé Spec - 50th Anniversary

River Lodge now officially open in Cascapedia-St-Jules

Former bar transformed into welcoming spot for sports fishermen, workers and family reunions

GILLES GAGNÉ

CASCAPEDIA-ST. JULES – After nearly four years of renovations, Dorothy MacWhirter and Russell Campbell officially opened the River Lodge on May 27 with a well-attended open house event. The former bar and motel units have been so extensively rebuilt, one could easily mistaken them for a brand-new construction.

The main building contains four large apartments, including a basement unit designed to comfortably accommodate up to 12 people. During the summer and fall months, Mexicans workers employed by A&R Decorations, another company owned by Dorothy MacWhirter and Russell Campbell, live in that basement apartment.

The owners did not only rebuild the hotel and the motel units; they brought in brand new furniture and appliances, barring very few exceptions, like a few chairs and some utensils acquired from the owner of a closed restaurant in Nouvelle.

The renovation project took shape to fill another need, the necessity to house those 11 Mexican workers hired by A&R Decorations, a wood-working and wreaths-making business located along Road

299, a few kilometres south of the River Lodge.

“It was so hard to find anywhere to rent. We really struggled to find a place. We thought we would have to buy a house. There was this place here. The roof was finished (needing replacement) and the basement was never finished,” explains Russell Campbell.

The choice of quality

The couple acquired the former hotel, which was inactive between 2013 and 2020. Almost four years of work later, the place is hard to recognize.

“Every unit is furnished, there is wi-fi, satellite TV, a washer and dryer in every unit. When you own a business, like some sports fishermen do, you need to be connected. In the case of the basement, everything is doubled. There are two bathrooms, two washing machines and two dryers because you are supposed to have a set for every team of six workers, and we have 11,” explains Mr. Campbell.

An inspector visited the place to see if it respected the norms implemented for foreign workers. “The inspector asked me if he could take shots of the basement, so that he could show them around as an example,” Mr. Campbell adds



Friends and guests joined Russell Campbell and Dorothy MacWhirter for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Photo: G. Gagné

with pride.

Did they keep a bar in the building? “There is no bar. You can bring your own beer,” he simply replies.

The units were gradually opened starting around mid-summer last year. “We haven’t really done much publicity about it and they are booked solid for this summer. The best advertisement is word of mouth. In the winter, that big basement unit could be booked by families looking for a place to gather,” he adds.

The smaller motel units are especially popular with sports fishermen. In fact, they bear

names that are reminiscent of salmon fishing or Grand Cascapedia River pools, like Brash Pile, Van Allen, Judge and Lazy Bogan. They carry signs made by Miguasha-based sign designer and maker Bill Boudreau, who used to live in Maria. “Bill is a real artist,” stresses Russell Campbell.

When asked how much the couple invested in the River Lodge and if operating a business processing wood was a big plus, he hesitates a bit. “We don’t really know; a lot. I would say between \$700,000 and \$800,000. Wood was only a small part of the investment. The cupboards, the ceilings,

the lighting, the plumbing, the electricity took a big part of what we invested,” he points out.

Russell Campbell was glad to find ways to use some wooden pieces that would not qualify for standard products, such as using “crooked wood” in a beautiful way, notably for the guards and bed parts, to such an extent that he now receives compliments about such moves.

“La mode is using real wood. As far as I am concerned, wood is always in style, even when it is crooked wood. You must only find the right place,” he concludes with a smile.

Some remarkable facts about salmon:

- The name salar comes from the Latin salio which means “to leap”. Atlantic salmon can leap up waterfalls 4.5 meters high (15 feet).
- The largest Atlantic salmon ever caught on a fly in North America weighed 32.6 kg (72 pounds).
- Atlantic salmon can travel up to 100 km per day in the ocean.
- Atlantic salmon lay 1,500-1,800 eggs per kilogram of body weight.
- Female Atlantic salmon build their nest (redd) and cover their eggs using their strong tail.
- Atlantic salmon scales can be ‘read’ much like the rings on a tree. The scales are used to determine the fish’s age, growth and how many times it has spawned.
- Fin tissue can be used to determine where Atlantic salmon were born.

Source: DFO




River Lodge

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418-7392-5079
cascapedia.ds@globetrotter.net

Wishing all Cascapedia River camps, employees and clients a safe and bountiful salmon season

“The rhythm of a river is the heartbeat of the earth.”

Photo: Ksenija



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Cascapedia-St-Jules, Quebec
418-392-5079
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New Fishing Lodge Brings Passion, Tourism, and Community Spirit to Cascapedia-St-Jules

MARY ROBERTSON

CASCAPEDIA-ST. JULES - The grand opening of the Gaspé Coastal Fishing Lodge on May 16 was an exciting event for its founders, Sarah Nellis, Andrew Murphy, and all who worked hard for more than a year to turn an abandoned old building into a new fishing lodge on the Grand Cascapedia River.

It was also a reason for the community to gather at the Lodge and see the renovations on what was once a local landmark. Fishing enthusiasts and the local community were given tours of the new lodge and told about the historical significance of the Nadeau family and their contributions to the town more than a century ago.

Originally from Bromont in the Eastern Townships, Andrew first came to the Bay of Chaleurs in 2018 to explore the possibilities for striped bass fishing in the area. By chance, he met Sarah, a salmon-fishing guide, who grew up in Cascapedia-St. Jules. Together, they shared their passion for fishing and realized that they wanted to build a life together in Sarah's hometown.

Andrew started Gaspe Coastal, a guiding operation that initially focused on striped bass. His efforts

helped to introduce and grow the bass fishing industry in the region, something rarely seen in Eastern Canada. Sarah later became a partner in the business, and over time, they expanded their offerings to include Atlantic salmon fishing adventures. It wasn't long after that they started to work on a business plan to build their own fishing lodge.

"We always knew a fishing lodge was part of the long-term plan," says Sarah. "Our home was already a lodge of sorts, with guests coming and going all summer long. Now, we've created a space that welcomes guests more formally but still feels like home."

Their lodge in the centre of Cascapedia-St-Jules was built by Edmund Nadeau, whose father, Peter, had been a successful entrepreneur in the early 1900s in Grand Cascapedia. Lovingly restored and redesigned, the lodge now offers occupancy for 20 guests, with 10 guest rooms, five bathrooms, and luxurious bedding. It is decorated in a warm, lived-in decor that includes everything from a Montreal Canadiens jersey to vintage fishing reels and antlers. "We built the kind of lodge we would want to visit," she says. "A place with world-class angling, delicious food and wine, and an atmos-



Photos: Mary Robertson

Sarah Nellis and Andrew Murphy inaugurated the Gaspé Coastal Fishing Lodge on May 16.

phere full of personality."

Their guiding team is young, dynamic, and deeply passionate about fishing and hospitality. With an experienced chef preparing gourmet meals and a program that blends luxury and wilderness, the lodge is already making waves among anglers from

Canada, the United States, and Europe.

While Atlantic salmon remains a major draw, the couple emphasizes the potential of striped bass fishing. "Striped bass are often misunderstood," explains Sarah. "They're a native species and a true conservation success

story. Developing this fishery could bring enormous economic benefits to our region."

With an eye on future expansion, including possibilities like hunting and backcountry skiing, the couple remains focused on offering fishing adventures. "We want this lodge to be more than just a business. In the off-season, we hope it becomes a community hub - a place where locals feel just as welcome as guests from away," she underlines.

When asked about why they chose to build their lodge in Cascapedia-St. Jules, Sarah says, "I feel like this place is special. We both felt that it was important to bring the old Nadeau House back to life and to give as much, if not more, back to the community that I've gotten so much from. And Andrew, although he's not from here, he really loves this place, and it's our home!"

Sarah and Andrew got married on May 31, in what they described as a "beautiful and joyful celebration." What began as a fishing adventure has turned into a heartfelt business venture and a new chapter for a young couple, whose love of fishing, nature, and the community of Cascapedia-St. Jules has given them many reasons to build an exciting future together.

This summer, learn about the rich heritage of the Cascapedia River

PENNY MACWHIRTER

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES - When visiting Cascapedia-St-Jules, be sure to stop by the Cascapedia River Museum, where visitors of all ages are bound to be impressed. "The Museum offers guided tours in which visitors can discover the rich history of the Cascapedia River and learn about the fascinating life cycle of the Atlantic salmon," says Julie Schlie of the Cascapedia River Museum.

The museum was initially established to preserve local heritage, both the artifacts and the oral history are the foundation of the salmon fishing culture of the area.

The museum is fortunate to share the same building as the Sipuminu, formerly known as the Cascapedia Society, which manages the Cascapedia River.

Two local historical buildings (Campbell Brothers, later J.A. Campbell and sons, and the Clapperton Store) were restored to house the two facilities. Back in the day everything that the fisherman, camps, and locals needed, from licensees to clothing, could be purchased at these stores.

The Cascapedia River Museum is open from June 2 to September 12, Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

"The fishing season has started with some high water but salmon catches are being reported. Last year was a little challenging so everyone is hoping that 2025 will bring tight lines to more anglers on the Cascapedia River, as well as all the surrounding rivers," Darlene Sexton, of Sipuminu



Photo: Ksenija

Located at 275, Route 299 in Cascapedia, the Cascapedia River Museum will intrigue you with exciting stories of the legendary Cascapedia River.

A busy summer ahead for Forillon Park

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The summer tourist season, which began on May 30 for Forillon Park, is off to a good start, with overnight stays booked so far 23% higher than those recorded at the same time last year.

More than 18,840 overnight stays have been booked since the reservation centre opened on February 5.

"If you look at our popular ready-to-camp sites in July and August, they're practically full. The same goes for our electric campsites," notes Forillon Park manager, Mathieu Côté, Parks Canada's Gaspésie Field Unit Director. There's still room for unserviced sites.

For those looking for ready-to-camp sites, there are still good dates available in June, September, and October. The season continues to stretch out.

"We feel there are a few more reservations in June. We

expect the tourist season to start fairly early, but it all depends on the weather. Those who want to come to Forillon should check the booking sites because they fill up quickly," notes the manager.

The new season brings its share of new developments, including a major conservation project for the first of Grande-Grave's four heritage homes. Work began on the Joseph-Gavey House on May 12.

"This is the beginning of the work. For safety reasons, there was a weakened barn. We had to hold discussions over the past few months with the group (Regroupement de personnes expropriées de Forillon) and the families involved. We had to deconstruct the barn and we committed to rebuilding it, keeping as much of the material as possible," explains Mr. Côté.

A dome will be placed over the house to protect it from the weather during the outdoor construction. Interior work

will begin later this year.

"It's a complex project. There's heritage, conservation, and visitor experience, because we're making heritage accommodations. There's also a relationship project with the community and the families. We want to commemorate the families who lived there," explains Mr. Côté.

In November 2022, the federal government announced nearly \$9.8 million in support, focusing on four wooden heritage houses in the Grande-Grave area: those of Élias Gavey, Daniel Gavey, Joseph Gavey, and Charles Philipp Bartlett.

Last year, work to finalize access roads to the houses and water research to drill a well for the houses was completed.

The restoration and development project in the beaver pond area is nearing completion. The installation of furniture and the addition of interpretation and signage panels will complete the develop-

ment of the three new trails in the area during the season.

While these final steps are being finalized, visitors can enjoy the Le Pic-bois, Le Ruisseau, and Le Castor trails, which are now listed on the Forillon National Park map.

"The trails will be inaugurated on July 19, but they are accessible. One of these trails connects the Visitor and Discovery Centre to the waterfall trail," says the director.

The asphalt on the old Route 132 has been removed. "We're talking about six kilometres of road where we've removed culverts, restored waterways, and removed the asphalt. We're in the final phase with the planting of 15,000 trees. We've also saved a kilometre of road," notes the director. "In the context of a national park, leaving it as is was out of the question," adds Mr. Côté.

Several cultural and sporting events will also fill the park's activities, including the

inauguration of the trails on July 19; the Mawiommi, the pow-wow of the Micmac Nation of Gespeg, on August 9 in the North sector, near the reception and discovery centre; the sunrise show with Sara Curruchich on August 10 at Cap-Bon-Ami in partnership with the Festival Musique du Bout du Monde; and the Ultra Trail Forillon, a trail running event by Événements Gaspésia, which will return for a third year from September 19 to 21.

Heritage sites including the Blanchette House, the Dolbel-Roberts House, and the Hyman & Sons General Store will come alive starting June 20. Food and sports concessions will gradually open between now and then.

Over the past 15 years, more than \$100 million has been invested in the park to bring it up to date. "There are several smaller projects we are carrying out internally to maintain our infrastructure,"

A trio to launch the 2025 summer tourist season

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - The 2025 tourist season was launched on June 4 in Percé before some 150 people who were keen to mark the occasion.

This year, Gaspésie Gourmande and Culture Gaspésie are joining forces with Tourisme Gaspésie major to kick off the start of the summer with a major event in Percé.

This launch comes at the same time as CAA-Québec published its annual survey showing Quebecers intend to vacation within the province. Gaspésie ranked second in the survey, at 18%, just behind Quebec City and its surrounding region, at 21%.

"We were eagerly awaiting this survey. The feedback from the field is very positive. Reservations are going well. It's clear that the heart of the tourist season, the two weeks of construction and the two following, are very busy. What's fun to see is that people are coming earlier," notes Stéphanie Thibaud, marketing director of Tourisme Gaspésie.

Ms. Thibaud notes that tourists are already present in the region, an observation

made by the mayor of Percé, who says local business owners are optimistic.

"They're all very optimistic. Reservations for accommodations and campsites are apparently higher than last year at this time. From the top of my town hall, I can see tourists boarding the ferries to Bonaventure Island. That bodes well," notes Daniel Leboeuf. Tourisme Gaspésie is investing \$900,000 in traditional media between March and October, a sum that rises to \$1.3 million when content production is factored in.

"We're targeting the Quebec market, our main clientele. We're targeting New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. We're going to reach a large target group: families, semi-retirees, younger people traveling as couples or with young children. We're going to adapt our message for the different seasons," explains Ms. Thibaud.

Last year, the summer season totalled nearly 700,000 visitors, but Tourisme Gaspésie isn't setting a specific target for this year.

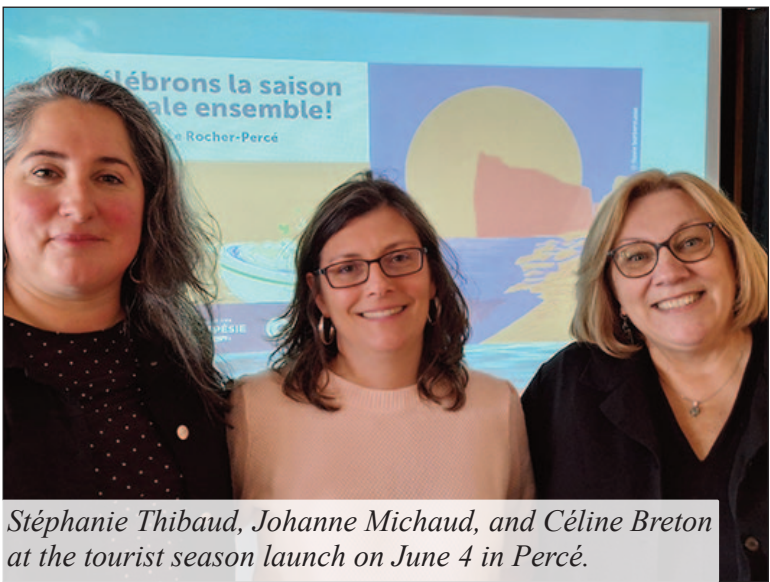
The region's accommodation offering has increased by 20% since 2020. "It's 20% in establishments but also in

campgrounds. We have room to welcome people and we have new attractions to discover. An extra night, an extra activity, an extra restaurant—that's what adds value to a trip to the Gaspé," says the marketing manager, who insists there are still places available in the region in July and August.

Taking advantage of the launch of the tourist season, Gaspésie Gourmande presented the 20th edition of its magazine, which showcases regional gastronomy from every angle.

"The first edition of this tool was an 8 1/2 x 11 page that we folded in three," recalls Johanne Michaud, director of Gaspésie Gourmet.

Gourmet tourism is thriving. "There's a surge in local purchasing with what's happening in the current context. Our members are preparing for the coming summer. We're expecting a year that may be more extraordinary than 2020. People have a taste for the authenticity we offer them, that businesses offer them." When you walk into a store, the producer is there, you know the product, you see the field behind it. It's not all rosy, but I think food tourism is thriving in the Gaspé," says Ms. Michaud.



Stéphanie Thibaud, Johanne Michaud, and Céline Breton at the tourist season launch on June 4 in Percé.

Photo: N. Sergerie

The region has chosen to offer a comprehensive food tour rather than short tours in other regions.

"When we do our magazine guide by MRC, people, if they only come to Baie-des-Chaleurs or Haute-Gaspésie, they get a lot. They can't see everything. I don't think it's a challenge. It's dynamic everywhere," she says.

A cultural and food tourism offering could be developed, as the three organizations have partnered for the season launch. "There are some great avenues we could explore. There are already collaborations with Culture Gaspésie. We could work

together more," says Ms. Michaud.

At the same time, the Gaspésie Arts Circuit is celebrating its 30th anniversary, a circuit that operates year-round, unlike other regions.

"We're very proud that this initiative is still going strong. The idea was to allow artisans to market their products together," says Culture Gaspésie director Céline Breton, who is pleased with this partnership for the season's launch.

"We all complement each other in the tourism offering. When tourists arrive, they want

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VIA Rail explores “alternative return-to-service” scenarios in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ – After more than ten years of stating that passenger rail services to Gaspé would only resume once the entire railway line was refurbished, VIA Rail is now exploring “alternative return-to-service” scenarios for the Chaleur train.

Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Catherine Blouin tabled a motion on May 27 in the National Assembly, calling for the return of passenger rail services to New Carlisle as soon as possible. The motion, which was unanimously supported by the elected officials present at the time of the vote, calls for the return of the passenger train to New Carlisle as soon as possible, noting that the rail line would be operational to Port-Daniel-Gascons in the coming weeks.

In addition, the motion called for the establishment of a shuttle between New Carlisle and Gaspé. The motion was brought to Ottawa on May 29 by Alexis Deschênes, the Member of Parliament for the riding of Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj. However, the government remained very vague about its intentions.

In an email dated May 30, “VIA Rail has always affirmed its commitment to restoring service in the Gaspé when the tracks are safe and allow competitive travel times to Gaspé,” noted the public corporation. VIA stated that it had begun work to prepare for a possible return to service, in collaboration with the Quebec Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility, and based on its timelines for track refurbishment to Gaspé by 2027.

“When the provincial budget was tabled on March 25, 2025, VIA Rail learned, at the same time as the Gaspé population, that the refurbishment work on the section between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé was postponed to the planning phase, with no new timeline to guide further efforts,” states VIA.

It was from this point on that the carrier's thinking seemed to have taken a new turn. “Faced with this major change, and still firmly committed to restoring rail service for Gaspé residents, VIA Rail must now return to the drawing board to explore alternative return-to-service scenarios,” ex-

plains the company's communications department, adding, however, that it is too early to comment on the form or parameters of these scenarios.

“(This is) music to my ears. This is a first for me to hear this type of comment,” says Ms. Blouin, who notes that she has been working on the file for a long time. She points out that collaboration between VIA Rail and Quebec is very good.

“To see it written in black and white that it was pushing them to return to the drawing board. There is no reason why the passenger train should not run to New Carlisle. It gives us hope,” adds Ms. Blouin, who also notes that this opportunity must be seized and serious negotiations should begin. “This is a good indication because until very recently, the position has always been that there would be no return until the rail service was operational all the way to Gaspé. There is an opening, and I welcome it. I intend to collaborate with VIA Rail if they need anything,” says Bloc Québécois MP Alexis Deschênes, who will continue to put pressure on the carrier.

“We're right to ask. Everyone is talking to us about the return of the train. It's an essential service that we want. So much the better if there's a change of tone from VIA Rail. It's the bare minimum we're asking for,” he adds.

A rumour is circulating at the provincial level that the carrier is toying with the idea of separating the Ocean train and the Chaleur train, which would run independently between Montreal and Matapédia.

VIA, however, did not mention such a scenario in its email. The Coalition of Gaspésians for the Return of the VIA Rail Train believes that studying alternative scenarios for the Gaspé will put pressure on Quebec to refurbish the rail line to Gaspé.

“The more people take the train, the more pressure there will be on the government to complete the section. It's important that VIA Rail return to explain these alternative solutions,” says coalition spokesperson Micheline Saint-Onge.

The coalition is ready to work with VIA Rail on the next steps, relaying the messages received from meetings held in recent months between Mata-

pédia and Port-Daniel-Gascons and those to come in Rocher-Percé and the Côte-de-Gaspé.

Is the motion the key?

Everything seems to be moving forward since the motion by the MNA for Bonaventure, who indicated that regional connections were at the heart of VIA Rail's mandate.

“The Matapédia-Gaspé regional connection is essential to serving the communities of the Gaspé. That the National Assembly request Via Rail to restore at least rail service to New Carlisle as soon as possible and to implement a shuttle to provide a connection to Gaspé,” states the motion read by the elected official.

The Coalition of Gaspésians for the Return of the Passenger Train is pleased with this stance taken by elected officials in Quebec City, as the group has been struggling since January to secure such progress.

“In April, we sent a specific letter to the two provincial MNAs, Ms. Blouin and Mr. (Stéphane) Sainte-Croix, and



Photo: N. Sergerie

Bonaventure MNA Catherine Blouin tabled a motion calling for VIA Rail to return to the Gaspé Peninsula.

to the Minister of Transport, Geneviève Guilbault, asking them to take a position and take action and request a motion to support the project,” says Coalition spokesperson Micheline Saint-Onge.

A meeting with the MNA Blouin, her Gaspé riding col-

league Stéphane Sainte-Croix and a representative from the Ministry of Transport was held on May 15.

“We are extremely pleased that this has produced results that have been expected since 2013,” added Ms. Saint-Onge. “We are now waiting for the next steps. June, July 2025 is not far off. We're continuing the process to get the train back this summer,” she explained before VIA's letter.

A major factor holding VIA back from its return is the lack of rolling stock, in addition to stations, track safety, and staff. “What we learned from the meeting on May 15 is that there's a committee in place with VIA and the Ministry of Transport. I don't know where VIA is at,” notes Ms. Saint-Onge.

“The only problem VIA had was with rolling stock. But a lot of pressure was taken off that file because new cars were delivered to the Quebec City-Windsor corridor. The ones that were removed need repairs, but that frees up 160 cars. I can't believe there wouldn't be a few cars that could come to the Gaspé,” she suggests.

diversify its activities while pursuing sustained growth.

This ability to adapt and diversify is one of its greatest assets, allowing it to weather more difficult times with resilience and vision.

Furthermore, the Paul-Hachey Award, presented to a chef working in the Gaspé Peninsula who uses products from the Gaspésie Gourmande line with pride and conviction, is awarded to Samuel Laverrière, chef and co-owner of Littoral Bistro Gourmand, located in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts. A 2016 graduate in French cuisine from Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, he arrived in Haute-Gaspésie in 2021, where he discovered a different reality, far from the abundance of readily available products to which he was accustomed.

He learned to work with the seasons, adapt to market availability, and adjust his menus to better showcase local products. “Through his authentic approach, his creativity, and his respect for the product, Samuel Laverrière perfectly embodies the spirit of the Paul-Hachey Award and contributes to promoting the Gaspésie gourmet scene, one plate at a time,” notes Gaspésie Gourmande.

TOURISM:

Cont'd from page 19

to eat well, see shows, and visit attractions. If we all work as a team, we can create a great tourist experience,” says Ms. Breton.

Marketing is geared toward young people using social networks. “We have to reach them where they are,” explains Ms. Breton.

The circuit includes 36 artisans. “Since we are a tourist region, it allows these artists to make a living from their art, unlike in other regions,” says Ms. Breton.

Awards

Tourisme Gaspésie took advantage of its meeting to highlight the contribution of two artisans in the tourism industry. The owner of Manoir Belle Plage in Carleton-sur-Mer, David Comeau, received the 2025 Excellence Tourism Award, a repeat for the Comeau family, as his father has already received a similar award.

“The importance of making tourism more sustainable, of adapting to local people, Mr. Comeau is an example,” says Joëlle Ross, director of Tourisme Gaspésie.

RéGÎM ends 2024 fiscal year with a deficit

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé Peninsula-Magdalen Islands Inter-municipal Transport Board (RéGÎM) has an operating deficit of \$206,000 on a budget of nearly \$5 million for the 2024 fiscal year.

Nevertheless, this is still better than the projected deficit of \$596,000. "It's still good news under the circumstances. The deficit is being absorbed by unallocated surpluses. The total surplus is \$1 million. However, we won't be able to operate with a deficit for several years," notes the President of the RéGÎM, Daniel Côté.

The board must find new sources of revenue to continue

operating. One of these new sources is the imposition of a vehicle registration tax, a very complex issue within the organization's operating model.

"We're facing major legal and administrative challenges because a structure like the RéGÎM doesn't exist anywhere else in Quebec. We're not covered by the law. Our approach isn't included. We're trying to find a way through to see if we're eligible. But until then, we have to live with the revenue we have," says the president.

By law, only a MRC can apply for a gas tax. Since the RéGÎM is a regional organization bringing together the six MRCs in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, the

laws and regulations are not set up to recognize such an organization.

In addition, revenues from the gas tax continue to decline. "Revenues are down by \$100,000 once again. In 2023, it was \$1.3 million. In 2024, it was \$1.2 million. This is a significant trend. For five years, we've been losing \$100,000 a year on gas (tax). This increasingly complicates the RéGÎM's operations and finances," calculates the president, who is also the mayor of Gaspé.

According to Daniel Côté, the registration tax alone would be the best source of revenue. "Even if we increased user contributions—often, it's the simple solution—it would-

n't generate \$500,000 in new revenue. We've seen a sharp increase in ridership in recent years; we've seen revenue increase by \$72,000 to \$76,000. That's nothing. It's kind of the principle of public transit. If we increased the cost to users to the actual cost, no one would get on board," emphasizes Mr. Côté, noting that there are no miracles to be done even if Quebec has increased its share of public transit.

In its annual report in April, the RéGÎM noted a 9% increase in public transit ridership, which reached 93,044 passengers. The rise in fuel prices has resulted in a 30% increase in contract costs with carriers.

"How do we get out of this? New sources of revenue, otherwise we'll review the entire project, but it will be difficult given that people want more services," says Mr. Côté. Revenues from bike sharing, car sharing, and advertising, for example, have little impact. "They're just small change, a few tens of thousands of dollars a year. We can't rely on that alone to ensure the future of public transit," says the president, who still dreams of developing transportation since the public's appetite is there. "We can't develop it further with the revenue we have," says Mr. Côté.

RéGÎM ended 2023 with an \$18,000 deficit and 2022 with a \$500,000 deficit.

Calls for tenders for work at the Rivière-au-Renard wharf

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Calls for tenders are underway to repair the main breakwater at the Port of Rivière-au-Renard, which was heavily damaged by two storms in December 2022 and November 2023.

The federal government launched the process following an announcement last July by the former Liberal Minister for the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands, Diane Lebouthillier, of a \$50 million investment in 13 small craft harbours, including the one in Rivière-au-Renard. In addition to the breakwater, the wharf's subsidence will be repaired, along with dredging work.

According to estimates, the work could cost around \$10 million, though Ms. Lebouthillier declined to provide specific figures so as not to hinder the calls for tenders.

If all goes smoothly, work could begin this fall and be completed next year.

All plans and specifications were ready last year, and the call for tenders was the final step before the project could move forward. The Town of Gaspé adopted several resolutions in early 2024 calling on federal government to undertake urgent work. The calls for tenders were scheduled to close on June 4. In 2023, the wharf welcomed 70 vessels, and the value of landings reached \$26 million.

Chandler Wharf

Another call for tenders issued by the federal government is a cause for concern for the future of the Chandler wharf, as the town plans to turn it into a recreational and tourist destination.

Despite an online call for tenders for "Engineering

Services - Demolition of the Chandler Wharf" posted by the federal Department of Public Works and Government Services, the mayor of Chandler Gilles Daraîche assures the public that the wharf is not slated for demolition.

"Our project is well underway. Before demolishing the wharf, we will be consulted. We will have our say. Our project is beautiful, it is ready, and it is built. Some things still need to be fine-tuned. But our project is real and it is continuing," said Mr. Daraîche.

The mayor noted that Transport Canada visited the site a few weeks ago and officials saw the development potential in the town's proposal. The department had asked the town to develop a business plan.

The town of Chandler plans to revitalize the entire area between the wharf and the marina to make it more welcoming. In 2016, an assessment suggested a \$19 million project, and in 2019, nearly \$40 million for a renovation. Current estimates suggest the cost could approach \$60 million.

The wharf was closed in 2016 for safety reasons related to its dilapidated condition. The infrastructure was inaugurated in 1970 to meet the needs of the former Gaspésia paper mill, which closed in 1999.



The Rivière-au-Renard breakwater no longer plays its role in the event of a severe storm.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Percé wants to protect the beaches in its historic heart

Nelson Sergerie

PERCÉ - The Town of Percé is asking the Quebec government to take action to protect the Anse du Sud and Anse du Nord shorelines, two areas vulnerable to severe storms that have wreaked havoc for over a decade in the municipality's historic heart.

Extensive protection work was carried out in 2017 at Anse du Sud following successive storms since 2010, which finally destroyed the old promenade. The beach replenishment method was chosen to combat the destructive elements.

Subsequently, adjustments had to be made to ensure its sustainability by adding pebbles. In 2022, work was completed, and corrective work was planned for 2024.

"One of the things I've done since taking office is to reexamine the Anse du Sud and Anse du Nord files. A request was submitted for Anse du Nord, and since there wasn't any progress, I was told by the Ministry of Public Security to officially resubmit an application so that the process can begin. We won't take any chances," said the Mayor of Percé Daniel Leboeuf.

For Anse du Nord, the request for financial assistance will be made under the disaster prevention program. According to the elected official, it is important to act before it's too late.

"These are programs like the ones we saw in Sainte-Flavie. Let's not wait for the sea to tear everything away." We can do beach replenishment or riprap to protect the 16 or 17 homes and businesses in this area. There's also the town's fire station and filtration plant at the end of the cove. If there's too much damage on that side, it compromises the village's safety," says the elected official, noting that Maria received significant funding to protect 2.5 kilometres of its vulnerable shoreline.

The council adopted a resolution to this effect on June 3, as well as for Anse du Sud, in which an official request was made to the Quebec Ministry of Public Security to proceed with the beach replenishment work.

"The replenishment was scheduled over several years and is still not complete. We're ringing a bell, a little reminder to the ministry, and we'll follow up," explains Mr. Leboeuf.

Replenishment was planned for 2024 in certain areas in particular. "We remind them that they have to get back to work, otherwise it will all go downhill pretty quickly," the mayor concludes.



Anse du Sud beach on June 4.

Photo: N. Sergerie

SPOTLIGHT ON BUSINESS:

Rail GD delivers, and gets new business

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – New Richmond's rolling material repair shop Rail GD, delivered VIA Rail coach, number 8131, at the beginning of May. The coach was in for some upgrading work. That unit (left picture, leaving the shop on May 6) was built in Philadelphia by Budd Company in 1947. It had three American owners, including Amtrak, before being acquired by VIA Rail in 1989.

A week later, Rail GD received two generator cars (right picture) from British Columbia-based Rocky Mountaineer, which operates a luxurious tourist train in Western Canada (Alberta and British Columbia) and the



State of Washington. Rail GD director general Gabriel Bélanger cannot disclose for now the details regarding the type of work that will be carried out on the two cars, as the

contract with Rocky Mountaineer has not been signed yet. The cars were brought to the Rail GD on flat cars. Units 9487 and 9488 were built in 1948 by Pullman and acquired



Photos: G. Gagné

in 1990 by Rocky Mountaineer.

Rail GD employs between 30 and 40 people, depending on the contracts at the time. Since May 2024, the company

has been working on the thorough upgrading of two Tshiuetin Rail Transportation passenger cars. Tshiuetin is an Innu First Nation firm based on the North Shore.

A memorial to remember Dylan Samuel Francoeur and Gabriel Noël

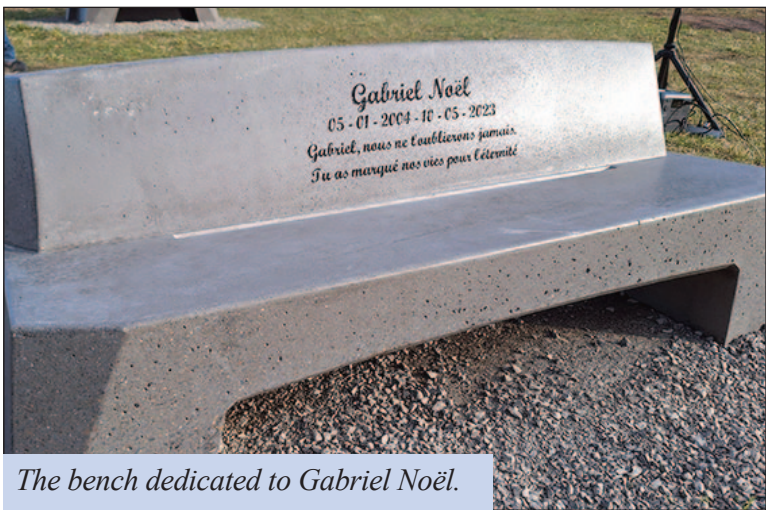
NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Two benches and a concrete ping-pong table were installed at a site frequented by young people in Rivière-au-Renard in tribute to Gabriel Noël, 19, and Dylan Samuel-Francoeur, 18, who lost their lives under tragic circumstances on May 10, 2023, in Rivière-au-Renard.

The memorial was spearheaded by Guy Maloin, a resident of Gaspé. The gesture involved an investment of nearly \$25,000 by the Town of Gaspé and was timely, as it marked the two-year anniversary of the tragedy which shook not only Rivière-au-Renard, but the entire region. "When it happened, Guy immediately thought of the young people, the community, and told himself that this shouldn't be forgotten and that it should be engraved somewhere. So he launched a project with the Town, which was involved in it. They built furniture that will be eternal, like our love for them," says Jessica Samuel-Francoeur, Dylan's sister.

"What they did for us is wonderful, but especially for Dylan and Gabriel," adds Ms. Francoeur. The Town didn't hesitate to get involved in the project following meetings with Mr. Maloin and the municipal civil service.

"We came to the conclusion



The bench dedicated to Gabriel Noël.

Photo: N. Sergerie

that we could do something different. We thought the ping-pong table would be great for young people, giving them a gathering place and honouring the memory of Dylan and Gabriel," explains Rivière-au-Renard Councilor Jean-Michel Noël.

According to Ms. Francoeur, there are only three or four waterproof concrete ping-pong tables in Quebec. "It's a powerful symbol at Antoine-Roy School. It was ideal for that purpose, and it's a new infrastructure. We thought it was good, given the circumstances," the councillor added.

Dylan's bench reads, "Unjustly taken from life, your memory and your love remain eternal in our hearts." Gabriel's bench reads, "Gabriel, we will never forget you. You have marked our lives for eternity."

A somber ceremony was held on May 9, attended by ap-

proximately hundred people, including municipal officials, and the victims' friends and family, to mark the installation of the infrastructure in memory of the two young people. The family had already established a small memorial at the site of the tragedy, between Rivière-au-Renard and Anse-au-Grif-

fon, two years ago, installing two benches and two crosses engraved with their names and decorating the site with flowers.

"It's a small comfort to know that people support us and that people still go there to pay their respects. It warms our hearts because people loved them and continue to love them forever," says Ms. Francoeur.

Following the tragedy, two arrests were made. Marc-Jules Chouinard, 50, faces two counts of second-degree murder, criminal harassment, death threats, criminal negligence causing death, and possession of a weapon with intent to commit a crime.

His son, Simon Dufort-Chouinard, 20, is charged with first- and second-degree murder.

Two years later, the pro-

ceedings are still at a standstill. The Superior Court trial of Marc-Jules Chouinard is set for March 9, 2026, at the Percé courthouse. The trial date of Simon Dufort-Chouinard remains to be determined.

"It makes no sense. It's ridiculous. It's making fun of us, the victims, because the murderers still have no compassion to this day. We're heading to trial, possibly in 2026. It's disgusting. It's disgusting because we'll be three years away at the time of the trial," denounces Ms. Francoeur.

"We're surviving. Our lives will never be the same. At first, I wondered if we'd ever come back from this, and after two years, I know we never will. There will always be a break, a void in our lives," says Ms. Samuel-Francoeur, her voice trembling.

May's weather was average

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Mother Nature delivered a perfectly average month of May in the Gaspé region. According to Environment Canada, the average temperature was 8.7°C, 1.1 degrees above the normal average of 7.6°C. Although there were three days that came close to breaking high temperature records, they didn't quite reach the mark.

Precipitation levels were also near normal. A total of 90 millimetres of rain fell at the Gaspé airport, representing 98% of the typical May average of 92 millimetres. Just a trace of snow, less than 0.2 centimetres was recorded, well below the normal five centimetres for May. During the winter a total of 326 centimetres of snow fell overall in Gaspé, short of the usual average of 385 centimetres.

Meanwhile, summer started early with three warm temperature records broken in the region on June 4. According to preliminary data from Environment Canada, the temperature at the Michel-Pouliot Airport in Gaspé soared to 29.8°C, beating the previous record of 26.7°C set in 1972.

In New Carlisle, the thermometer climbed to 26.9°C, breaking the 1974 record of 23.9°C.

Grande-Vallée also saw a new high, with temperatures reaching 27.1°C, surpassing the 24.1°C record set in 2014.

Announcements



Obituaries

COULL: Fay

On Wednesday, April 30, Mrs. Fay Coull passed away at the age of 78. She was the wife of Omer Lemieux.

She leaves to mourn her husband Omer, children Edgar and Wendy, grandkids, brother and sisters, as well as brothers and sisters-in-law, nephew, cousins and friends.

The service will be held on June 30 from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Valère Fortin funeral home.



SULLIVAN: Leah

March 13, 1975 - November 12, 2024

It is with immense sadness that we share the death of our dear daughter Leah who passed away peacefully at Maria hospital surrounded by her family at the age of 49 years and 8 months. She is survived by her parents Henry and Stella (nee Lemieux) and her cherished brother Patrick (Heidi), as well as many aunts, uncles, cousins and friends.

Listening to country music was one of Leah's greatest passions whether it was CD's, music videos, going to concerts or tuning in to live music streams on her tablet. Aside from her love for her four-legged companions she also enjoyed listening to Curling and you could bet that at 2 p.m. her television was tuned to General Hospital.

From her sparkling blue eyes to her beautiful smile Leah left a lasting impact on all who were lucky enough to meet her. Among many things, she will be remembered for her remarkable ability to remember everything from dates, phone numbers and directions to keeping us all on track for our meetings and appointments.

The celebration of Leah's life will be held on Friday, June 27, 2025, at the Catholic Church in St. Godefroi.

Visitations will take place at the church from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. followed by the funeral service at 2 p.m.

We will carry you in our hearts until we can hold you in our arms.

*We hold you close within our hearts,
And there you shall remain,
To walk with us throughout our lives,
Until we meet again.*



In Memory



BILLINGSLEY: Albert

1923 - 1982

BILLINGSLEY: Constance

1930 - 2021

Those we love

*Those we love don't go away;
They walk beside us every day.
Unseen, unheard, but always near.
Still loved, still missed and always dear.*

Loved by all: George, Jack, Landis, Cindy, Jan and Todd xxoo.

MUNRO-WALKER: Ila

April 16, 1943 - June 14, 2022

*Wonderful memories woven in gold,
This is the memory I tenderly hold.
Deep in my heart, a memory is kept,
To love, to cherish, never to forget.*

Three years have passed since I lost you. You will always hold a special place in my heart, husband Ray.

Obituary: 150 words - \$50
150-250 words - \$55
250+ words - quote will be provided

In Memory: 150 words - \$35
150-250 words - \$45



**June 18 at 4 p.m. to be
in the June 25 issue**

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Name of Graduate:
Daughter/Son of:
Grandchild of:

"Message of congratulations for graduate from family"

Achievements: Brief description of academic, extracurricular, awards or other accomplishments:

Future Plans: Brief description of education, career or other lifestyle plans.



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June 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

Special days in June

- 15 - Fathers Day
20 - First day of summer
21 - National Indigenous Peoples Day
24 - Fête nationale du Québec

PORT DANIEL:
Three Star Golden Age Family Lunch
June 15: A family lunch will be held from 12 (noon) to 3 p.m. Hotdogs, chips and drinks at the Golden Age building. Come out and have some fun!

SHIGAWAKE:
Shigawake Music Festival and Agricultural Fair
June 14: Father's Day lobster supper, sitting one will begin at 5 p.m. and sitting two will begin at 6:30 p.m. with music following at 8:30 p.m.
June 28: Extreme cowboy (AM) and gymkhana (PM).
July 3: Thirsty Thursday with Jaepe Careno, tribute to Johnny Cash 7p.m. to 11 p.m.

HOPE TOWN:
Sports Club
June 20: Gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. at the Hope Town Community Centre.

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

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

NEW CARLISLE:
New Carlisle Legion
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 begin-

ning at 7 p.m. for \$10.
Saturdays: Pool beginning at 8 p.m. \$1 per game.
September 2: General meeting at 6 p.m. at 1 Mount Sorrel, New Carlisle.

NEW CARLISLE:
St. Andrew's Anglican Church
St. Andrews church Spring potluck supper has been postponed until July 19.

NEW RICHMOND:
La Boutique
La Boutique is open for the season.

NEW RICHMOND:
Yard Sale
July 5: A community yard sale will be held at 462 Route 132 East, New Richmond from 8 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. Those wishing to participate are welcome. Bring your table and set up.

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

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:
50+ Club
Tuesdays: Weekly bingo every Tuesday at 6:30 p.m. \$10 for three cards. Extra cards are \$1 each.
June: No meeting.
June 15: A Father's Day

UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN
Sunday, June 15
10 a.m. Service
Sunday, June 22
10 a.m. Service

brunch will be held from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. Cost: 13+ \$16, 7-12 \$10, and 0-6 is free.
July: No meeting.
September 20: A Harvest Bingo will begin at 1 p.m. - until finished, doors open at 12 p.m.
September 21: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
October 19: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
November 16: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.
December 21: Annual General Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

ROTARY CLUB WINNERS
The winners for May 1 to 3 are: Jocelyn Guité, Langis Arseneau and Donald Boudreau.

The winners for the week of May 4 are: Josée Poirier, Magalie Lavoie, Jacques Cyr, Dorine Moses, Hélène Forest, Vin-

PARISH OF GASPÉ
Sunday, June 15
St. Andrew's - York
9 a.m. Confirmation Service
Tuesday, June 17
St. Paul's - Gaspé
7 p.m. Sung Holy Eucharist
Sunday, June 22
St. Matthew's Peninsula
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

cent Poirier and Gaspésie Diesel.
The winners for the week of May 11 are: Roger Beaudry, Jean-Eudes Cormier, Paulette Holmes, Donna Murphy, François Brousseau, Judy T. Sexton and Marc-André Savoie.
The winners for the week of May 18 are: Monique Litalien, Céline Duchemin, Magalie Bujold, Sarto Perron, Jean-Claude Boudreau, Jérémie Berthelot and Kimberley Meikle.

The winners for the week of May 25 are: Réjean Bujold, Charles Murphy, Hélène Forest, Catherine Cyr-Wright, Collette Normandeau, Bernard Doiron and France Gagné.

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND
Sunday, June 15
10 a.m. Service
Sunday, June 22
10 a.m. Service

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
Trinity Sunday, June 15
New Carlisle
9 a.m. Holy Eucharist
Port Daniel
11 a.m. Holy Eucharist
National Indigenous Sunday of Prayer June 22
New Carlisle
10 a.m. Morning Prayer
Shigawake
10 a.m. Morning Prayer



Announcement Deadlines:

June 18 for the June 25 issue
July 3 for the July 9 issue
July 17 for the July 23 issue

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RECIPES

Page 25, June 11, 2025 - Spec

Celebrate Father's Day in unique ways

Father's Day is a celebration of dads near and far. Falling on the third Sunday of June each year, it presents an opportunity for families to come together and put the spotlight on fathers who work tirelessly for their children and provide them with love and support. Father's Day also is a chance to honour the men who serve as father figures or play special roles in people's lives.

It's easy for families to fall into a routine when it comes to celebrating Father's Day. Certainly dinner and gift-giving is traditional, but there are additional ways to provide Dad with the day he deserves. Explore these creative options.

Scavenger hunt

Drag out the suspense of Dad getting his Father's Day gift by hiding it and requiring him to go through a series of clues to find it. When writing up the clue cards, spouses and children can reference particularly happy moments or things around the house that are representative of Dad's love. For example, a clue may read, "Here's where we like to snuggle together to watch our favorite show."

Take it outdoors

June weather tends to be pleasant, and that means Father's Day celebrations can be held outside. Everyone can select a spot that Dad loves to visit, whether it's a hiking trail or a local park, and then plan activities around the chosen location.

Go on an adventure

Father's Day can be spent



engaging in something the family has never tried before that may be exciting for Dad. Maybe he's always wanted to go off-roading on quads or try his skills at hatchet-throwing? The family can get together and choose an activity Dad will find engaging and that everyone can enjoy.

Make it a beach day

Dad might just want a break from the hectic pace of life on Father's Day. This is the perfect opportunity to head

oceanside. For those who don't live by the coast, a river or lakefront spot can be an ideal alternative. Frequently these are touristy areas, so it could be relatively easy to find an eatery where everyone can make a reservation for lunch or dinner after enjoying a relaxing day with waves lapping the shore.

These are just a few clever ways to celebrate Father's Day. Families can choose activities that honor fathers and ensure he is feeling all the love.

Happy Father's Day

June is the sixth month of the year, and it brings with it a special occasion: Father's Day. A father weathers all seasons, through the ups, the downs, and everything in between. His efforts may sometimes go unnoticed or unpraised, yet he can be one of the most valuable assets in a family or within his small-town community.

Fathers often teach us important life lessons, providing a foundation of trust, openness and honest communication, whether gathered around the kitchen table or sitting together in the living room.

Many times, a father encourages us not to give up on our goals, but to stay strong, healthy and positive. A father once said, "Remember that God will provide you with comforting answers, but faith can be a masterpiece of hope, desire and patience." This Father's Day, the best gift we can give is to strive to be a good father.

Ken Ross

Father's Day around the world

Many countries around the world celebrate Father's Day, but not all of them do so in June. The most common date for Father's Day celebrations is the third Sunday of June, when the U.S. and Canada celebrate the holiday. In 2025, that day will be June 15. Many European countries with sizable Catholic populations, such as Spain, Italy and Portugal, celebrate Father's Day on March 19, which is known as St. Joseph's Day on the Catholic liturgical calendar. St. Joseph was the husband of Mary and the foster father of Jesus Christ, so he is widely recognized as the pa-

tron saint of fathers. In Scandinavian countries, Father's Day is the second Sunday in November, which many believe to be an attempt to boost the economy during a month when retail businesses are not particularly busy. In Germany, Father's Day is tied to Ascension Day, which comes on the fortieth day of Easter. Australia and New Zealand celebrate dads on the first Sunday of September, while Brazil celebrates Father's Day on the second Sunday of August. No matter when Father's Day falls, the holiday marks a great time to show dads just how special and loved they are.



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FATHER'S DAY

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Father's Day
June 15

Celebrate Dad!

CARREFOUR GASPÉ

Family Ties hosts community art workshops

DAVE FELKER
Project Coordinator

The Family Ties “Do you see what we’re saying?” project is underway. The project, funded through Canadian Heritage involves gathering expressions that are part of the heritage of the English-speaking communities on the Gaspé Coast. Although some of the expressions are being used less and less over time, the project will ensure that unique, locally used idioms are documented, while also highlighting current colloquialisms.

During workshops held in the MRC of Bonaventure, participants have the opportunity to learn a whole range of art skills taught by local artists in order to illustrate Gaspesian expressions. To date, participants in Shigawake, New Carlisle, New Richmond and Cascapédia have learned learning wood carving, photography, mixed media and embroidery.

Feedback from the workshops has been extremely positive, with attendees men-



Arianna Major's wood carving at a workshop given in New Carlisle by Melissa Belanger.

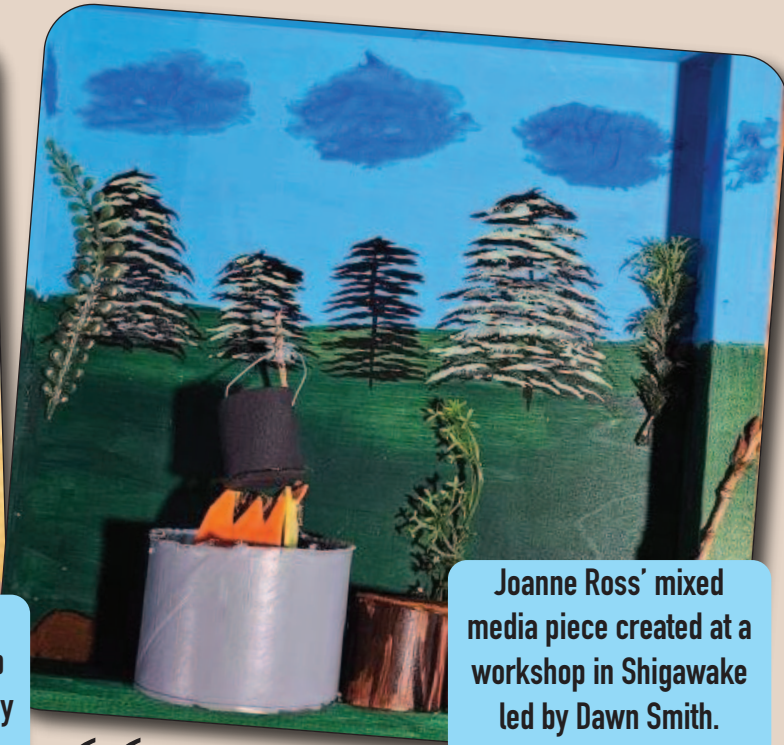
Photo: Dave Felker

“God bless your cotton socks.”

tioning how much they enjoy, not only trying out new art techniques, but also getting together and socializing. There will be additional mixed media and embroidery workshops to come, as well as printing, painting, maquette making and

more.

The English-speaking community is obviously proud of their heritage judging by the number of people who have already contributed to this project. In addition to looking at phrases collected in publications such as Art Campbell's book *Mots and Phrases of the Gaspé*, people have made contributions of the expressions they and their families use.



Joanne Ross' mixed media piece created at a workshop in Shigawake led by Dawn Smith.

Photo: Dawn Smith

“Boilin' the kettle”

These include, “Girl you are slower than molasses trying to climb a hill in January” and “Son, I purtinear put her in the ditch this morning boys”.

Ironically, a few participants show up for workshops not knowing the expression they wish to portray and will then look at another person's

work and say something like, “Girl dear, that's some kind of a beauty you're workin' on there.” Sometimes it's better just to let it come naturally!

Those interested in taking part in any of these exciting workshops can check out the Family Ties Facebook page for more information. You are also invited to add your favourite expressions to the Facebook post.

ELECTORAL MAP:

Cont'd from page 6

“The judgment that will be rendered will be important, crucial for the future. We will wait for the judgment to be rendered. Considering the nature of the judgment, we will see what options will be presented to us. Our intention remains the same: to impose the known framework for the next election and promote new inputs on regional representation. The process is underway; we are awaiting the judgment,” stated Gaspé Member of the National Assembly Stéphane Sainte-Croix on May 23.

In December, Judge Annie Breault of the Superior Court of the District of Terrebonne partially granted the interlocutory injunction requested by elected officials from the Laurentides and Centre-du-Québec regions and ordered the Commission on Representation on the Electoral Map to continue its work, but maintained in force for the time being the Act that halted the revision of the electoral map.

The court allowed the Director General of Elections, or Quebec's Electoral Officer, to complete its work and eventually file a second report, as required by the electoral law,

should the court rule that the Act adopted in May to suspend the electoral law was invalid.

The MRC group pointed out that the electoral map on the table was highly detrimental to the principle of effective representation, directly impacting the representation of the Gaspé Peninsula in Quebec's democratic institutions.

The group made representations to the court on November 28, 2024, to become a stakeholder in the case.

It should be mentioned that the Commission suggested merging the ridings of Gaspé and Bonaventure, 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 riding of Matane-Matapédia, 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%, respectively.

Gaspé ranked third among the least populous ridings, behind the Magdalen Islands, which has exceptional status, and Ungava. According to projections of the number of

voters based on data from the Institut de la statistique du Québec, the gap compared to the average in Gaspé should soon surpass that of Ungava.

In 2017, the commission maintained the negative ex-

ceptional status for Gaspé and granted the same status for 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 Central Quebec.




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