

50 years of CASA celebrated at AGM and gala

GILLES GAGNÉ

PASPEBIAC – CASA, the Committee for Anglophone Social Action, is celebrating its 50th year of activity in 2025. Its June 29 annual general meeting (AGM) was marked by interesting results, as the activities of the organization continues to grow. The AGM was followed by a celebratory supper to highlight this important milestone.

Financially, CASA's 50th year was stable, according to financial controller Johnny Legrand. The sources of revenues fell from \$1,734,076 to \$1,587,233, a decrease of \$153,157. It was in a large part attributable to a decline in government grants, which dropped from \$1,617,719 to \$1,514,977, a reduction of \$102,742. Miscellaneous revenue sources also decreased, from \$116,357 to \$72,256, which explains the rest of the decrease.

Despite the revenue drop, Johnny Legrand pointed out that CASA was able to maintain an almost balanced budget, with a very modest deficit of \$1,965.

"Just to give you an idea, the deficit represents about one tenth of 1% of our total budget," mentioned Mr. Legrand at the annual meeting.

In the category of expenses, the salaries and employee benefits fell from \$1,096,076 in 2023-2024 to \$1,041,929, a decrease of \$55,853. The building upgrade budgetary item also fell, and sharply, as 2023-2024 had been a particularly active year in that area. The amount earmarked for that item went from \$70,501 to \$1,365. The third sharp drop in expenses happened in the capital assets acquired through current revenues, excluding building upgrades. It went from \$73,638 to \$8,670, a reduction of close to \$65,000.

Mr. Legrand remarked that CASA's mortgage will be



Photo: Gilles Gagné

CBC show host Alison Brunette interviewed former CASA leaders Don Miller, Lynden Bechervaise and Wade Gifford on the sidelines of the June 29 gala.

paid off within the next four or five years.

A year ago, CASA had posted a slight surplus of \$8,278.

Messages from the president and executive director

CASA's president, Fred Kirch, took the occasion provided by the annual meeting to communicate an optimistic message regarding the evolution of the organization at the regional level.

"Over the past five decades, CASA has worked to promote and enhance the social, political, economic and cultural well-being of the English-speaking minority. From addressing education and health care needs to fostering economic development and cultural preservation, the organization has evolved to meet the needs of the community while also building bridges with the Francophone majority and its indigenous neighbours," underlined Mr. Kirch.

He also praised the contribution of CASA's staff, directors and volunteers. "The

with the same resolve and vision that have defined its journey in the past 50 years."

Executive director Allen Richards took the opportunity to reflect on "how far we have come," he said.

"From humble beginnings, CASA has grown into a strong, responsive and deeply-rooted organization. Since 1975, we have evolved to meet the changing needs of our community, always with the same mission at heart: to support, represent, and uplift the English-speaking Gaspésians we serve. CASA has also been a leader across the province for groups of dedicated community members looking to organize and serve their citizens. We are proud of the knowledge, expertise and capacity we have built over the past five decades," specified Mr. Richards.

The early years

SPEC asked Don Miller, one of CASA's founders, to describe briefly, the context of 1974-1975 for the anglo-

phone population.

"As you know, the political situation in Quebec was changing significantly with the emergence of the Parti Québécois. The only English news for most households at that time was coming from Campbellton, Bathurst, and Charlottetown and none of it addressed what was happening in Quebec. The Anglophone population on the coast was spread out from Gaspé to Matapédia and existed in small pockets separated by larger Francophone communities and had very little contact with each other. Those conditions were certainly the catalyst which led to the birth of both SPEC and CASA in 1975. CASA in the early days was very different from today's CASA. The organization has grown in so many directions with so many mandates and it makes me so proud to have been there at the beginning," explains Mr. Miller.

The next issue of SPEC will feature additional coverage of CASA's 50th anniversary, notably through pictures.



As part of their 50th anniversary celebrations, CASA staff helped organize the Canada Day events in New Carlisle. More photos on Page 16.

Photo: S.D. Captures

No financial strategy for Percé tourism sector

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

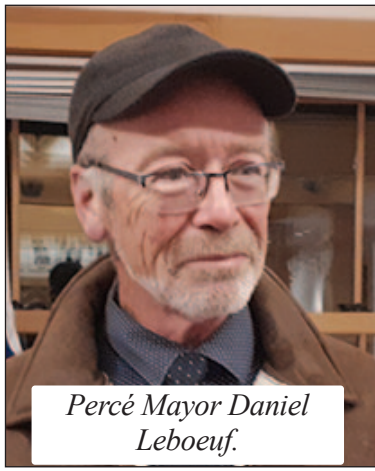
PERCÉ - Discussions between the Town of Percé and business owners who wanted to meet with the town council last winter to find a solution for financing tourism infrastructure have still not begun.

A tourist tax was introduced on May 1, 2022, and the court ruled it illegal in June 2023 because it did not comply with the enabling powers prescribed by the Cities and Towns Act relating to municipal taxes.

The court concluded that the framework allowed a municipality to enter into an agreement to make a third party the collector of the tax, but that this role of collector could not be imposed, which exceeded the powers granted.

The Town of Percé had initiated proceedings in the Court of Appeals, but the council backed down in June 2024.

"We did not receive any feedback from groups of merchants, hoteliers, and restaurateurs who wanted to propose alternatives to the fee as it was proposed," says Mayor Daniel



Percé Mayor Daniel Leboeuf.

Photo: N. Sergerie

Leboeuf.

"It's unfortunate because we could have made progress before the tourist season. We'll wait for them. It's their industry, so they need to find a way to promote it and come up with the means to do so," adds the mayor.

Mr. Leboeuf believes that this issue could become part of the public debate during the upcoming municipal election campaign this fall.

"It's not in my program. I'd rather wait for their suggestions," says the mayor, who will be seeking re-election in November.

"Percé devotes a significant portion of its budget to hospi-

tality and infrastructure that must be maintained by a small population. It's considerable. The industry has to do its part," the mayor continues.

The tourist tax originally proposed by former mayor Cathy Poirier added \$1 to purchases of goods and services over \$20, with some exceptions, and \$1 per night to help maintain tourist infrastructure. The town estimates that infrastructure costs \$800,000 per year to maintain.

In 2022, \$155,000 was collected during the tax's only

year of application.

Financial statements presented in August.

On June 30, the town filed its 2024 financial statements, meeting the legal deadline, during a special council session.

The accounting firm's documents were submitted to the town over the last week of June.

"We received them at the last minute. That didn't give us time to review the results. A surplus has been identified, and we want to understand where it

came from before presenting it to the citizens," explains Mr. Leboeuf.

When asked to comment on the size of the surplus, the mayor remained vague.

"It is higher than last year's. It's not necessarily because we charged too much in taxes. There are many factors involved. We will demonstrate this on August 5," is all the mayor would say.

The town of Percé recorded a surplus of \$551,669 for the 2023 fiscal year, out of a total budget of \$8,042,843

Unemployment rate drops

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The unemployment rate in the Gaspé Peninsula and Magdalen Islands stood at 11.0% in May, down 1.4% from April.

According to Statistics Canada, 38,100 people were employed last month, compared to 36,000 in April, an increase of 2,100 over one month.

Of that total, 31,000 were working full-time and 7,000 part-time, representing increases of 1,900 and 100, respectively, compared to April.

The number of unemployed individuals dropped slightly, from 5,100 to 4,700 during the same period.

This situation can be explained by a significant increase in the labour force—that is, the number of people working or actively looking for work—which rose from 41,100 to 42,800.

In May 2024, 36,200 people were employed. The unemployment rate at that time was 9.5%, but the labour force was much smaller, at 40,000 people.

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Harbour Authorities of the Gaspé Peninsula

Two Super C employees in Chandler prevent fraud against a customer

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER—The vigilance of two employees at the Super C supermarket in Chandler prevented a woman from losing \$5,000 when she was targeted by a Grandparent Scam.

The attempted fraud occurred in recent weeks, when there was a wave of similar scams and fake representatives in the Chandler and Gaspé area.

"The woman wanted to send money to another country for her granddaughter. She wasn't 100% sure why she was sending the funds. All she knew was that it was for legal fees," says Léa Roy, an administrative assistant who was working at the cash register when the woman made her request.

The woman wanted to send a total of \$5,000 to five different people outside the country. "It didn't make any sense. I asked her if she had spoken to her granddaughter. We spoke to her and managed to convince her that it was a fraudulent transfer. After that, we directed her to the police station, as we always do when this happens," adds store manager Simon Roy-Grenier.

The victim was not easily persuaded.

"At first, she didn't agree. She really wanted to send the



Photo: N. Sergerie

From left to right: Captain Marc André Jodoin, Sergeant Guillaume Parisé, Pabos Station Chief, Simon Roy-Grenier, Director of Commerce, Léa Roy, Administrative Assistant, Sergeant Isabelle Cyr, Local Community Policing Coordinator, Lieutenant Christian Carignan, Operations Officer.

funds. She couldn't believe it and didn't understand how it could be so realistic. We never know if they're going to go somewhere else or to the police station. Obviously, she didn't make the transfer, and that's a good thing," adds the manager.

The Sûreté du Québec praised the actions of the two employees who prevented the customer from losing a large sum of money.

"This is becoming more and more common in our area. It's a collective responsibility.

We are stepping up our prevention efforts. The Super C employees were on the front line," explains Sergeant Isabelle Cyr, local community police coordinator at the Sûreté du Québec station in the Rocher-Percé MRC.

"This is to highlight their kindness and dedication," she stresses, explaining the reason for awarding the employees with certificates.

No arrests have been made in connection with the case.

The investigation is ongoing.

New wave of vandalism in Chandler

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - There have been about 10 vandalism incidents since late spring in Chandler, a situation once again denounced by Mayor Gilles Daraïche.

In recent years, similar incidents occurred, but this year, some of the incidents are especially troubling. "We can't accept racist messages. We're for culture, we're for a growing population. We're happy to welcome people from all over the world. We won't come and spread racist messages in Chandler. That's not true," the mayor states bluntly.

Surveillance cameras had been installed to monitor public places. "We're going to add some at the Town Hall. We're also going to add some



Photo: Town of Chandler

The graffiti was found on the footbridge near the Bourg de Pabos.

in strategic locations. We're targeting those (locations). They will be installed soon," notes the mayor.

The town will meet with the Sûreté du Québec to determine the best course of action to resolve the situation.

The police have launched an investigation, but so far, no arrests have been made.

The mayor says he has forwarded surveillance camera footage to the Sûreté du Québec in an effort to advance the investigation.

Police report

Paspebiac's Jessy Duchesneau's death was accidental, according to Coroner's Office

After several months of investigation, the Coroner's Office concludes that Jessy Duchesneau's death was accidental, "probably asphyxiation by drowning." The cold November 2023 weather and alcohol consumption may also have contributed to the death of the 19-year-old young man, according to coroner Nancy Gilbert.

Jessy Duchesneau, who resided in Paspebiac, was reported missing on November 4, 2023, while visiting Quebec City with a group of friends.

The day before his disappearance, he attended a party and went to bars in Quebec City's Lower Town, among other places. Around 3 a.m. on November 4, he left the bar without warning his friends, also from the Gaspé.

They began searching for him after receiving no news.

The Quebec City Police Service (SPVQ, or Service de police de la Ville de Québec) was notified of his disappearance a few hours later. A major search force was then deployed, including members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Sûreté du Québec, and the Canadian Coast Guard.

A Québec City police command post was set up in the Saint-Roch neighbourhood for several days to search for Jessy Duchesneau. Various resources were deployed for the search, including canine squads, divers, nautical searches by inflatable boat, helicopter, and foot patrols. Despite the extensive media coverage surrounding his disappearance, Mr. Duchesneau remained missing after several days of searching, the coroner reports.

The investigation retraced the path taken by Jessy Duchesneau on the night of November 3-4, 2023. The search, using various surveillance cameras located here and there, identified four locations in Lower Town where the 19-year-old man had gone on the night of November 4.

According to information gathered by the coroner, Jessy Duchesneau traveled along the Saint-Charles River. He fell into the icy water near the Joseph-Samson Dam.

After months of searching and the involvement of numerous volunteers, his body was found in April 2024 on the banks of the Saint Lawrence River near Saint-Michel-de-Bellechasse.

An autopsy was performed on April 22, 2024, at the Laboratoire de sciences judiciaires et de médecine légale in Montreal, where forensic and legal medicine tests are performed. The tests found no pre-existing traumatic or anatomical injuries that could explain or contribute to the death, the report also states.

Everything indicates that intoxication, in addition to possible hypothermia, had an impact on Mr. Duchesneau's death. Unfortunately, in the absence of witnesses, many questions remain unanswered, and unless new information is obtained or a witness comes forward, elements surrounding his death remain unanswered, writes coroner Nancy Gilbert in her document.

The police investigation and the entire investigation rule out the involvement of a third party in this death, notes Mr. Gilbert, judging the death of the 19-year-old man to be accidental.

Jessy Duchesneau was still studying at Bonaventure's trade school in the fall of 2023.

Kevin Plante found guilty of sexual assault and pimping

Judge Richard Côté, of the Quebec Court, recently found Kevin Plante, a 43-year-old man from Gaspé, guilty of sexual assault and pimping. The verdict was rendered in June. The Quebec Court judge had taken his decision under advisement following a nine-day trial at the Percé courthouse.

A charge of drug trafficking was dropped during the trial. The victim was under 16 years of age when the events occurred. Judge Côté gave a greater weight to the testimony of the victim than that of the accused. On the other hand, he rejected the testimony of Josiane Dufresne, because she attempted to protect Kevin Plante. Sentence will take place on September 25, also at the Percé courthouse. A pre-sentence report and a sexology assessment will be prepared for that date.



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

New Hydro Québec president expected to accelerate pace of projects realization

Since July 2, Hydro-Québec has a new president and chief executive officer, Claudine Bouchard, who has worked for the public utility over the past 25 years. It is far from a surprise that Michael Sabia's successor comes from the organization, since his June 11 departure for Ottawa left very little time to fill the position.

Fifteen months from an election that their party could lose, premier François Legault and Economy, Industry and Innovation minister Christine Fréchette had to find a replacement quickly and a person who could buy the utility's recent orientations and visions.

Finding the successor within the organization doesn't require a long training process, which facilitated Ms. Bouchard's nomination. She was already executive vice president, as well as chief operating and infrastructure officer since September 2023. She had occupied five positions as a member of senior management.

Her knowledge of Hydro-Québec is deep and started when she was a young adult, as she worked as a tourist guide explaining how electricity is produced. She also worked outside Montreal for the utility, notably spending three-and-a-half years in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, as well as additional albeit shorter stays in other regions in matters related to customer service.

Claudine Bouchard was leading the modernization and development of Hydro-Québec's energy system and was one of the architects of the Action Plan 2035. She is created as one of the people behind the plan to improve service quality that reduced the number of outages by 50% in 2024. She now says that the next goal in quality service consists of reducing the time of power outages.

She is also fired up about another aspect of the Action Plan 2035, the decarbonization of Quebec and the will to make it more prosperous, a position that takes a big space in François Legault's mind.

Other way bigger plans

Now, the Legault government entertains far bigger plans for Ms. Bouchard. The Coalition avenir

Québec has adopted a strategy involving Hydro-Québec and requiring the public utility to add 10,000 megawatts of new electricity production to its grid by 2035, and double the current output of close to 40,000 megawatts by 2050.

This 2050 plan will require investments of \$200 billion. It will require the signature of a thorough agreement with Newfoundland and Labrador for the addition of a power dam on the Churchill river. A tentative agreement was signed last year in that regard but the details remain to be finalized.

In order to achieve all the projects, 55,000 workers will be mobilized by 2033, a huge hurdle in a province already characterized by a labour shortage. Claudine Bouchard sees that labour shortage as a challenge and explains that there is time between now and 2033.

She is right, but most of those workers will require specialized skills, which adds weight to the challenge.

Moreover, through allowing private companies to develop wind energy production projects to fill their own needs and that of neighbouring firms, which are conditions encompassed by Bill 69, Hydro-Québec will be in competition with those private firms in labour recruiting.

The private electricity producers are not supposed to serve more than their own needs and that of certain immediate neighbours, argues Claudine Bouchard, and will therefore avoid building power transport lines, a field that will subtract a bit of competition. She also stresses that most of the 55,000 new jobs will not be occupied by Hydro-Québec but by construction subcontractors.

Outsiders hardly stay long

The decision to hire someone from the organization, even if Claudine Bouchard's credentials are not contested, was also influenced by the fact that outsiders like Sophie Brochu and Michael Sabia have left Hydro-Québec after slightly less than three years in her case in two years in his, at the helm of the utility.

Sophie Brochu's departure was never explained at length. She claimed that she was a sort of architect and that her mandate to draw the guidelines of the strategic plans leading to the 2035 and 2050 goals was done by the winter of 2023, and that it was time to leave.

However, her departure came after her statement to the effect that Hydro-Québec would not become the "Dollarama of electricity" in North America, while François Legault was intimately tied to cheap

power rates, especially for big industries. She ran the corporation officially between April 2020 and April 2023 but she announced her departure in January 2023 and was hardly active towards the end of that winter.

Michael Sabia's case is different, although his departure announcement came as a huge surprise. On July 7, he started as clerk of the Privy Council, which is the highest civil servant job in Canada. In fact, he is prime minister Mark Carney's closest collaborator. It is far from Mr. Sabia's first high responsibility at the federal level, having served with Paul Tellier in the 1990s at the helm of Canadian National during the rationalization of the railway giant operations.

Increasing the projects delivery pace

Claudine Bouchard wants to accelerate Quebec's decarbonization, given that 50% of the energy consumed in the province comes from fossil fuels, which generate pollution, contribute to global warming and cause respiratory illnesses, among other problems. Aside from the Gull Island project in Labrador, she doesn't mention other power dam ventures to reach the goal of 10,000 additional megawatts installed by 2035.

Like Michael Sabia, she wants to consult Indigenous communities for the erection of power lines and the business opportunities that will arise from the construction of wind farms and the Labrador dam.

She wants to further improve the relations with the First Nations, she assures, through listening more to their needs earlier in the planning process. She considers this as the "starting point of economic reconciliation."

This way of doing things, she says, might accelerate the delivery rate of projects, considering that avoiding conflicts will facilitate the signature of agreements.

Will households be assured, like François Legault affirms, of an upward limit of 3% in power rate increases? She stresses that it is possible. Most experts say that Hydro-Québec will have to increase that ceiling rate limit in order to find the funds required to invest \$200 billion between now and 2050.

During the first interviews she gave following her nomination, Claudine Bouchard failed to mention the importance of energy savings. Yet, it is recognized as the cheapest way to put more electricity on the grid.

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Snow Crab in the Gaspé Peninsula: High Prices Offset Falling Quotas

GILLES GAGNÉ

PASPEBIAC – If someone had dared, in early March, to suggest that the 2025 snow crab season would turn out to be highly satisfactory for fishermen and processors in the southern Gaspé Peninsula, they would certainly have been met with skepticism.

At that time, the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans was to announce, a 33% quota cut for the southern Gulf, based on stock assessments from the previous summer. Meanwhile, Donald Trump was threatening to impose tariffs on just about everything that moved, although he never specifically mentioned fisheries.

Crab fishermen, operating between the southern coast of the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, finally managed to get off the American radar and more importantly, they have taken advantage of the scarcity of crustaceans on the markets to see their landed price almost double between 2024 and 2025.

"The catch rate was the same as in 2024, even though the quota was reduced by 33%. We're questioning the stock assessment conducted in 2024 [...] The early start helped the fishermen enormously. They had almost all caught their quota by the beginning of May. Right whales weren't a factor this year. We didn't hear anything about them during the season. That made a big difference," explains Daniel Desbois, president of the Association des crabiers gaspésiens.

Since 2018, the presence of right whales in the Gulf has often disrupted the crabbers' activities.

The 33% quota reduction followed another, of 29%, imposed in 2023. The accelerated pace of catches at sea has also greatly helped crab fishermen control their costs.

"Fishermen made fewer trips at sea. Some of them had finished their season after three trips. This significantly reduces operating expenses," emphasizes Daniel Desbois, thinking of fuel and bait in particular, the cost of which has increased exponentially since 2020.

A high price, without a tariff handicap

The real bonus of the season, however, came from a

price well above pre-season expectations. It ranged from \$7 to \$7.50 per pound in the southern Gulf, depending on the type of shellfish preservation offered by the crab fishermen at sea. Boats equipped with an ice hold generated a price around \$7, while those equipped with a water hold, in which the shellfish remain in their element, received \$7.50.

In 2024, the average price was a tad over \$4 per pound.

No processor had guessed at the beginning of March, at the Boston Seafood Show, the major worldwide spring gathering of plant owners and wholesalers, that the price would reach such a threshold.

Gaspé plant owners were aware that Newfoundlanders would benefit from a major quota in 2025, at just over 60,000 metric tons, or nearly 140 million pounds. This is three and a third times more than the 18,334.49 metric tons granted to the southern Gulf of St. Lawrence. Gaspésians get about 30% of that quota.

On the positive side, Bill Sheehan, vice-president of the E. Gagnon et Fils plant in Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé, knew that certain factors favoured fishermen and processors, including the lack of frozen product inventories in North America.

"Demand was stronger than expected, especially at the beginning of the season [...] We have almost nothing left to sell as of now, maybe 1% of what we processed. Newfoundland came onto the market after us. We knew the market was empty at the beginning of April. The season went quickly. We didn't feel the 33% drop in the catch rate," says Mr. Sheehan, echoing Daniel Desbois.

Another market condition, the difference between the American and Canadian currencies, boded well for the 2025 season, points out Bill Sheehan, but the threat of import tariffs by the United States kept all Canadian commercial fisheries on alert.

"The exchange rate was a little more favourable this year than last year, and the market was empty. The exchange rate fluctuated during the season. It depends on the timing, with all the instability created by Donald Trump. It's at \$1.36-\$1.37 (Canadian to the American dollar.) We had \$1.42, but it didn't last. It's 5 cents less now. That's 30-40 cents less once the product is processed. The in-

stability created by all these factors affects us directly," says Bill Sheehan.

The inescapable American market

In a context of close geographical proximity and a tradition of trade, it would have been difficult to avoid selling to the American market, even with 25% tariffs, especially those imposed at the last minute.

"At 50%, it might have been different. It's a lesson for the future. I've been in the fishing industry for quite a long time. It's easy in the United States. A trucker can leave Sainte-Thérèse [de-Gaspé, near Percé] and go to Boston on the same shift. What's hap-

pening is a lesson. Our company has done trade missions abroad. There are programs, governments are listening. We're going to do more missions in Europe and Asia," analyzes Bill Sheehan.


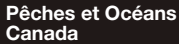
The presence of slightly more enterprising Japanese buyers than in recent years has served as a lever for crab prices in 2025, he adds, but not enough to reverse the trends of the past 20 years.

"Even when sold in Canada, crab is traded in US dollars [...] We weren't affected by the tariffs. We sold at least 80% of our products to the United States. For Japan, it was maybe between 10 and 20%, especially since the Boston show. I haven't looked at the figures yet, but it's better

than last year because we didn't know what would happen with our neighbours to the south. Tariffs were potentially imposed, then lifted. At 25% [like most of the goods targeted by Donald Trump], that's not nothing," explains Bill Sheehan.

Quebec's annual crab landings, including those of the North Shore and Magdalen Islands, brought in a tad over \$100 million in 2024 and it could be close to that in 2025.

Lobster landings, also including those from the Magdalen Islands and the North Shore, now exceed \$200 million per year in value. The overall value of lobster catches has been surpassing that of the snow crab since 2020 inclusively in Quebec.

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to load dredged material in the following harbours in the Gaspé Peninsula for the purpose of disposal at sea at the disposal sites mentioned below, and by the following methods: suction dredge, excavator or hydraulic dredge and towed scows.


Harbour	Quantity in cubic metres (m ³) place measure	Disposal site	Proposed dates for loading and disposal activities
Sainte-Thérèse-de-Gaspé (48.41500° N. and 64.39433° W. NAD83)	8 000	ST-4 (48.39000° N. and 64.38670° W. NAD83)	From October 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026
Gascons-Chapados (48.18933° N. and 64.28950° W. NAD83)	5 000	G-5 (48.18000° N. and 64.83333° W. NAD83)	From October 11, 2025 to October 10, 2026

For further information regarding these activities, please contact:

Maxime Doyon
Project Technician
Small Craft Harbours
Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Quebec Region
104 Dalhousie Street
Québec, QC
G1K 7Y7
maxime.doyon@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

The public may raise environmental concerns related to this notice or obtain information on the permit issuance process by contacting the nearest Disposal at Sea Program regional office:

Environment and Climate Change Canada, Quebec Region
Environmental Protection Operations Directorate
Disposal at Sea Program Coordinator
105 McGill Street, 4th floor
Montréal, QC
H2Y 2E7
Tél.: 438-342-1563
immersionqc-disposalatseaqc@ec.gc.ca



The Charles-Robin heritage barn could be restored

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

PERCÉ - The Festival Les Percéides de Percé is considering a project to restore the historic Charles-Robin heritage barn, better known as the Percé Art Centre. Built in 1780, the structure could be brought back to life at an estimated cost of \$5 million.

The federal government has taken the first step by granting \$2 million to the festival.

This grant, from the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings program, will enable the organization to restore the building to its full cultural purpose and help strengthen the resilience of the local community through a major infrastructure project,

once other funding sources have been found.

"It's ambitious, but it's a great big project. In the evolution of our organization after 17 years of activity and eight years at the art centre, we have reached a point where we need to renovate the premises again," says board chair Benoit Pilon.

Three years ago, a strategic development plan was drawn up, which included the desire to establish a permanent home.

"But there are challenges. It's an old building. It's not insulated, and so we started looking for programs," says Mr. Pilon.

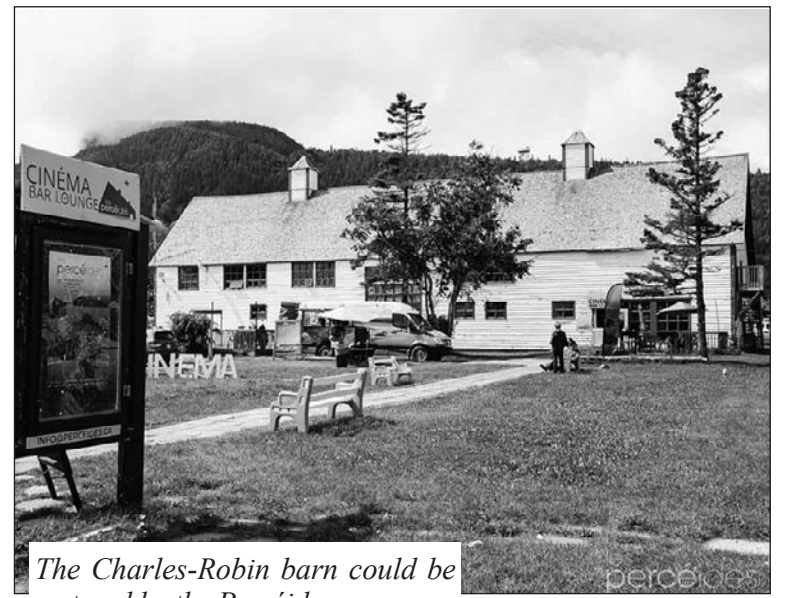
The first thing to do is to stabilize the building, which has virtually no foundation. "We'll have to take a look be-

fore putting millions of dollars into a building. The architects will determine whether the foundation is sound and adequate. Then we can have fun inside, which will become a game room. The entire interior space will become a complete reflection area," Mr. Pilon continues.

Les Percéides currently leases the site, but the lease is about to expire. Two options are being considered: purchasing the building or securing a long-term lease.

This investment would be a consolidation of the building.

"For now, we are only open in the summer. In fact, in our strategic development (plan), we had planned to create a community art centre for and by the community. Our



The Charles-Robin barn could be restored by the Percéides.

Photo: Facebook

wish is for it to be open year-round," he says.

The future plans include a café, a kitchen, a community bar, and a movie theater.

Ultimately, the architectural project will reveal the

splendor of this barn, whose nave "recalls the structure of an overturned sailboat," as Gaspé artist and visionary Suzanne Guité, founder of the Percé Art Centre, wrote in the 1960s.

Fewer reports to DPJ in Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The number of reports received and those retained by the Direction de la protection de la jeunesse (DPJ) in Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine declined in 2024-2025 according to a document presented on June 19.

The number of reports retained fell from 678 in 2023-2024 to 519 in 2024-2025. The theme of the latest annual report is "Protecting children collectively."

"It's really about how, beyond a report, we can protect children. Every action is an important action for children, and as a DPJ, we really wanted to mention that DPJs alone can't protect Quebec's children," explains Michelle Frenette, Director of Youth Protection and Provincial Director for Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

Without denying that in recent years, the DPJ has experienced some bad press, Ms. Frenette maintains that every day, every member of her department offers the best.

"We must always strive for improvement, and that's what we wanted to demonstrate in this strong message of wanting to succeed in order to do better for Quebec's children," continues the director.

Although the number of reports is down 11% this year, the long-term trend over the past decade remains upward.

"What's interesting for us is the decrease in the number of assessments and retentions," says the director. The decline

rate is 24%.

A number of measures may have helped reduce the number of cases.

"For the past two years, we've been implementing a field verification program. These are interveners who can make a few small interventions as soon as a case is reported. Sometimes, we can deploy an intervener who will do one or two small meetings with families and link up with other services, which can make a difference in the region," explains Ms. Frenette.

A great deal of awareness-raising is done on the front line, notably involving schools and a community committed to its children.

By MRC territory, the number of reports accepted dropped significantly in the Côte-de-Gaspé (from 146 to 78), Avignon (from 110 to 56) and Gesgapegiag (from 33 to 14).

In the other MRCs and Listuguj, the data remain stable.

"It's hard to explain year-on-year decreases or increases. Sometimes, it's due to more team awareness, or events in the MRCs. Sometimes, it's more complete teams on the front line or at school level, where there are more interventions," says the director.

Urgent and semi-urgent cases are responded to immediately. For less urgent cases, response times have been reduced from 20 days to 14 days.

"We're mostly within our response times. We have less than 20 children on our waiting list, and they're on schedule. This is excellent news for our



Michelle Frenette.

Photo: N. Sergerie

region. We're trying to keep the number of children on the waiting list to a minimum, with a firm enough rhythm to provide services on time," says Ms. Frenette.

Neglect remains the leading reason for referrals at 33%, followed by psychological abuse at 26%. These proportions have

remained fairly stable year over year.

Under the Young Offenders Act, a decrease of six interventions was noted, from 121 to 115 cases. Of those involved, 98% of young people followed their sanctions.

"The three main offences are assault, breach of probation and theft. Sometimes mischief. We want to work with teenagers as teenagers. We want to work on accountability, rehabilitation and reintegration. Recidivism rates are very low," explains the director.

In recent years, a number of vacancies have arisen, putting pressure on the staff who remain in the field.

"When it comes to reporting, assessment and orientation, our team is almost complete. We still have some good news on that front. We still face challenges in applying

measures, particularly in the Bay of Chaleurs and Haute-Gaspésie, where we have a little more difficulty following up on families," she explains.

Finding bilingual workers to serve English-speaking families in the Bay of Chaleurs remains a challenge.

While other parts of the healthcare system have faced budget cuts, the DPJ has so far been spared.

"Everyone will have to look at efficiency. We're managing public funds and we have to be constantly improving. Now, we have to make sure we sit down together, and that's where the decisions will have an impact, and as DPJ, it's clear that the interests of the children will be the first thing we bring to the table, to avoid having a direct impact on their safety, their development and the services offered," calculates Ms. Frenette.

MRC	RETAINED	NOT RETAINED	TOTAL
Bonaventure	110	170	280
Avignon	56	173	229
Haute-Gaspésie	102	253	355
Côte-de-Gaspé	78	268	346
Rocher-Percé	104	286	390
Îles-de-la Madeleine	14	105	119
Gesgapegiag	14	30	44
Listuguj	45	40	85
Grand total:	523	1,325	1,848

SOURCE : Direction de la protection de la jeunesse Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

Delayed Opening at Demeure Toi

JEAN-PHILIPPE THIBAUT

GASPÉ - Autistic adults in Gaspé who were scheduled to move into their brand-new living space with Demeure Toi in mid-July will have to wait at least until the fall due to lack of funding.

"Yesterday (June 23), we informed our candidates, who have been in preparatory activities since March, that their entry will be delayed. We've just caused them stress and anxiety," deplores Claudine Dupuis, president of Demeure Toi, a play-on-words name that means house, you and roof, in French.

The non-profit organization is behind the vast project for an adapted and inclusive living environment for 11 autistic adults in downtown Gaspé. The former Colombian Centre—which for many years housed the Ardoise bar, near the Cathedral—was demolished in 2023, and construction began last year. The project is estimated to cost nearly \$9 million.

Lack of Funding

Except the funds needed for its operations have not been forthcoming. In a June 23 public statement that caused quite a stir, Demeure Toi explained

that it received a promise in August 2024 from Minister Lionel Carmant, responsible for Social Services, for a recurring budget of \$318,242 per year to support the residents' needs.

This was reportedly confirmed by Gaspé Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Stéphane Sainte-Croix.

The money is used, in particular, to hire service coordinators and clinical staff, as well as for continuing education.

"It's not an apartment building. Autistic adults can't get home alone with their luggage. They need to be prepared with an intervention plan," explains Claudine Dupuis, who has been actively involved in this project as a volunteer since 2015.

The service agreement proposed by the CISSS de la Gaspésie, however, would only be for \$50,000 per year, which is considered largely insufficient and, more importantly, does not fulfill the promise, the non-profit organization laments.

In 2022, a grant of up to \$3.65 million was awarded to Demeure Toi to enable the housing project to be carried out. This was part of a Canada-Quebec agreement concerning the Rapid Housing Initiative concluded between the Société



Photo: Jean-Philippe Thibault

Claudine Dupuis says the delay causes stress to residents.

d'habitation du Québec and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

A year later, an additional \$5.3 million was added, since the building was beyond repair and would have to be demolished and rebuilt rather than renovated. "It's paradoxical to have a grant of nearly \$9 million, but on the other hand, we're not able to raise the money to offer the services," notes president Dupuis.

Miscalculation?

According to Demeure Toi, the low amount received com-

pared to the expected amount is explained by the tenant service needs assessment tool, which is actually a tool for people with reduced autonomy that produces results that underestimate the specificities of autism.

"The CISSS assesses our future residents for functional autonomy needs. We feel that it doesn't measure the autistic dimension; the challenges they face, such as disorganization and anxiety. It's the financial vehicle that's not good. They take it in an envelope based on certain criteria, and we don't fit into that," explains Claudine Dupuis.

The news broke out four weeks before the official opening, expected on July 20.

Unique project

The Demeure Toi project is tailor-made to meet the specific needs of autism, promoting autonomy and socio-professional inclusion. The concept is unique in Eastern Quebec.

"They don't arrive here with their suitcase playing video games. They engage in a process to create a life project and develop their autonomy. For that, we need preparatory activities; getting them moving before entering, then we update these activities and support

them in their process," explains Claude Dupuis.

The nearly completed building includes 12 supervised housing units, a unit for a resource tenant, a studio for an educator present on weekends, as well as community spaces: a communal kitchen, lounge, sensory stimulation room, multipurpose room, calming room, satellite office, and administrative office.

The facilities will be open in 2026 to non-residents with autism and their families, to strengthen community inclusion. "We want to demonstrate that with rigorous and consistent support, we can bring them elsewhere. Some already work part-time. It's a forgotten clientele. We wanted to make a difference and show that we were going to succeed..." concludes Claudine Dupuis.

She doesn't rule out the possibility that the building may never open if funding isn't forthcoming, and that the announced reduction in funding is a direct consequence of healthcare budget cuts.

Demeure Toi also points out that the promised funding was supposed to be allocated three months before the opening, but that nothing has been forthcoming yet.

Demeure Toi: The CISSS has the required funds

JEAN-PHILIPPE THIBAUT

GASPÉ - Following Demeure Toi's public announcement regarding the annual funding of its activities, the CISSS de la Gaspésie still intends to reach an agreement.

"The CISSS de la Gaspésie has the necessary funds earmarked for this type of accommodation project," Cassandra Lévesque, Assistant to the president and acting communications manager, immediately stated in an email exchange.

She also emphasized that no specific amount has been proposed to the organization so far. Demeure Toi mentions a proposal for an annual amount of \$50,000. Their expectations were more in the order of \$318,000.

Cassandra Lévesque notes that financial assistance was granted in 2024 to hire a project manager.

"Our institution has collaborated transparently for many years with the Demeure Toi organization, notably through regular meetings, coaching,

and support in their efforts [...] Since the beginning of our approach with Demeure Toi, it has been planned that the funds granted to the CISSS de la Gaspésie should help improve and diversify the residential offerings for people living with autism spectrum disorder in the Côte-de-Gaspé region."

The agreement yet to be concluded should thus make it possible to provide residential services, explains the CISSS de la Gaspésie. This "is consistent with the clinical profile of the clientele and the funding required to provide them with residential services."

The amount remains to be determined. Cassandra Lévesque emphasizes that the goal is to enable people living with autism spectrum disorder to integrate into a living environment that meets their needs, in a supervised setting that offers them personal assistance services, the necessary help with domestic life, civic support, and presence and supervision.

The CISSS de la Gaspésie

already offers various services to these people, such as support and guidance in achieving lifestyle habits, developing and resuming lifestyle habits, as well as support for partners.

MNA more than speechless

The Gaspé riding Member of the National Assembly was left more than speechless by Demeure Toi's statement regarding the lack of funding requested by the organization.

Stéphane Sainte-Croix immediately clarified that no promise of recurring funding of \$318,000 was made during a meeting in August 2024 with the organization, minister Lionel Carmant, and himself.

"Contrary to what was reported, there was no promise of an agreement. There was a recognition of the needs, and we responded. We listened, we clarified the needs, we identified the measures, we capitalized on the budget, and we disbursed it to the CISSS."

The money is there, based on the needs identified through the project," assures Mr. Sainte-Croix.

What calculation?

It's hard to explain why Demeure Toi projected such a sum of \$318,000 when the funding criteria have been standardized by the Ministry of Health, especially since the potential beneficiaries have also been known from the start, he adds.

"Here, it says that the CISSS's offer doesn't match the assessment of their request, but these are the same criteria that have been in place since the first day of the project's development. How do we arrive at \$318,000?"

"In other words, they estimate the needs at approximately \$25,000 per person, but where does that come from and based on what? Is it projected, real, desired? We'd also like to have honest answers to that. If they've been targeting \$25,000 per person

since day one, but the client profile assessment brings us to \$5,000, they should have known this earlier than June 23. I'm a bit stunned," specifies Mr. Sainte-Croix.

Criteria

Demeure Toi explained in its open letter that the service agreement proposed by the CISSS de la Gaspésie offered \$50,000 per year through the Iso-SMAF assessment. The Iso-SMAF profiles represent a management system focused on classifying (from 1 to 14) users' needs based on their autonomy. This tool produces results that underestimate the specificities of autism, Demeure Toi argues.

"If it's a fight to change the criteria, that's a different ball game," says the MNA. "The ministry will not disregard its own rules to meet a need deemed unrecognized. The Demeure Toi project is anticipated and legitimate. We've worked hard on it along the

Cont'd on page 9

Gesgapegiag students enjoy hands-on side of their carpentry training

GILLES GAGNÉ

GESGAPEGIAG – Seventeen Gesgapegiag adults completed their carpentry training program on June 26, after having built houses for the community and brought improvements to their “classrooms” which is literally an outside or construction site school.

Thirteen people completed a three-year technical program, while four others finished the one-year program.

The outside classrooms include a small sawmill, a trailer and a little chalet now surrounded by brand-new storage sheds.

The construction site approach characterizes that carpentry training, a joint program spearheaded by the Gesgapegiag Regional Adult Education Centre and the First Nations Adult Education School Council.

It is a pilot program, with Gesgapegiag being the first community to benefit from it so far.

The newly built sheds contain some equipment, including a planer, freshly sawed lumber that has to dry, tools and space to build housing sections, such as roof trusses.

By the fall, when some members of the group, those who did not graduate on June 26, will resume their training, along with newcomers, they will be more efficient. Autonomy is the name of the game here, from the forest to brand new housing units for the community.

One of their teachers, Gildas Aubineau, a carpenter and woodworker who moved to the Gaspé Peninsula in 2024, points out that the students’ background varies

widely.

“Some of them just entered adult life, while others are in their thirties, or their early forties, trying something new, earning skills and competences that will give a new orientation to their life. I have seen clear progress from the students over the year, in carpentry but also in their confidence level for the other walks of life,” says the teacher, who is originally from France.

The students talk

James Bernard tried other jobs before starting the carpentry training in 2022. “I first took a forestry (course). I was a brush cutter when I was 19. That carpentry training is the time I find something I stick to. We are paid to do that. We are in the positive,” he says with a grin.

While entering the sawmill, he stops. “That’s where I started. I spent a year at the sawmill. I got bored of it. I thought at the time that “now, it’s time to do real carpentry.”

“The sawmill training is a good asset though. I have a certificate to work in a sawmill. We were trained on good equipment. I see sawmills that look like an old Honda. This is a Cadillac,” concludes James Bernard.

Nearby, Castor Malette, who just finished his second year, still enjoys milling and he might never get bored of it.

“Before taking carpentry, I had two jobs, landscaping and snow removal. Since I have taken carpentry, I found a passion I never thought I had. I found milling. I really have an affinity with this part of the training. I really enjoy this course. Overall, I really enjoy every benefit I get. As for



Photos: G. Gagné

Castor Malette, Muin Jerome, James Bernard and teacher Gildas Aubineau show the quadruplex they have built over the year. It will be completed at the end of the summer.

milling, at first, it was intimidating, but once I got the hang of it, it was fine,” he says.

Muin Jerome says that the carpentry program “really changed my life. I was not doing anything. Now, I have got this program. It is the first time in my life that I have committed to something I like, something that makes me progress. It is a very cool process, from basement to roofing. I really enjoy roofing,” he stresses.

David Condo finished his second year on June 26. He has previously worked as a flagman along highway 132 for two years. “It was my brother that mentioned that program to me. What interested me was the no-class aspect, the hands-on side of it. I jumped at the opportunity, at all the aspects of it. I enjoy dry-walling. I got introduced to it by this program,” he explains.

Evan Jerome finished his third and last year of the program. “I did every single job in

the area. This is the first one I really want to invest in. My particular thing is blueprints. We were building chalets, two-bedroom houses during my training. The biggest project we were involved in was the quadruplex, located in the community,” he underlines about a building situated on Amu street.

Epanow Joseph is another proud carpentry student, who just completed his first year, after doing some landscaping

work. “I like to install doors and windows, basically framing. That is how I would put it. I like the hands-on side of what we do, instead of going through books. You learn it all, real fast. We built that quadruplex from basement to the roof,” he affirms.

The outdoor carpentry/construction site classrooms of the Gesgapegiag program are located about one kilometre from highway 132, through Droken road.



PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that Sea-Coast Publications Inc., publisher of The Gaspé Spec, has adopted the following amendment regarding the retail price of the newspaper:

1. Considering that The Gaspé Spec is now published on a **biweekly basis**;
2. Considering that each biweekly issue contains **as much content as two former weekly issues**;
3. Considering that the previous price for weekly issues was **\$2 per copy** at counter sales points;
4. Considering that the **costs of producing a biweekly issue are not covered** by the current price of \$2 per copy;

It is hereby resolved that the new price per issue sold at counter sales points shall be \$4.
This new rate will take effect as of **July 23, 2025.**

The resolution was:
Proposed by: Greg LeBlanc
Seconded by: Steven Parent
Adopted unanimously on June 26, 2025

We thank our readers and partners for their continued support and understanding as we work to ensure the long-term sustainability and quality of The Gaspé Spec.

Signed,
The Board of Directors
Sea-Coast Publications Inc.



Some units built by the students are already inhabited.

A \$30 Million Puzzle at the CISSS de la Gaspésie

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The CISSS de la Gaspésie has proposed a \$566 million budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, which began on April 1. It's a balanced budget, but it faces a major challenge to achieve it because cuts will be required to do so.

President and CEO Martin Pelletier indicates that it's a closed budget.

"In the measures we've tabled, there's a budget restriction target of \$30 million, but there's a \$20 million measure regarding the liberation of independent workers, which will be difficult to achieve," emphasizes Mr. Pelletier.

There remains \$10 million to be found: \$1 million will come from the closure of var-

ious collection centres located in leased spaces, such as the one at Place Jacques-Cartier in Gaspé, which had drawn criticism.

However, the three collection centres in Baie-des-Chaleurs will remain open, as the CISSS has no availability in its own premises.

Among other cost-saving measures, tightening working hours is expected to contribute to the savings goal.

"There are measures to review work teams at the clinical and administrative levels, even though our supervision rate is very low. There are measures that provide for non-replacements. Posted positions will not be (filled). Ultimately, there will be fewer hours worked in the coming year to raise this \$10 million outside of independent



Photo: N. Sergerie

Martin Pelletier, CEO of the CISSS de la Gaspésie.

labour," explains Mr. Pelletier.

There is no question of reducing services at the 24/7 emergency departments of CLSCs in communities like Grande-Vallée, Murdochville,

and Paspébiac.

Even though the CEO has been firm on this point since last fall, elected officials, particularly in the Estran sector, remain concerned, especially since there are strong protests for similar emergency rooms in Trois-Pistoles and Pôhénégamook, in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region.

"We're not touching these emergency rooms. There's no provincial signal to close smaller emergency rooms. We have specific characteristics that make us more isolated than elsewhere. It's harder to say we could close these emergency rooms. And when we consider a nighttime closure, a doctor often comes in for 24 hours as a backup. The staff we would save at night and who would be redeployed means we're not really saving

money. It would take a total closure to save money, and that's out of the question. It's a question of access to care across our vast territory, something we're trying to explain to head office," Mr. Pelletier reaffirms.

The debate over recognizing the specificities of the Gaspé remains an ongoing battle.

"The idea is to have basic services throughout the territory for 80,000 people with four local networks. To make this efficient, it would require one hospital for 80,000 people. There are places where we can do better and with new clinical practices. We must adapt to this, but the fact remains that there are basic services that require a cost to maintain," Mr. Pelletier explains.

Moose declining in Forillon National Park

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The number of moose in Forillon National Park has decreased by half since 2017, according to the latest aerial survey conducted by park managers in February 2025.

In 2017, the moose population had reached a peak of 34 moose per 10 square kilometres, equivalent to 800 moose, prompting discussions on how to curb the population, which was putting its habitat at risk due to overpopulation.

The 2020 and 2024 inventories concluded that there were 22 moose per 10 square kilometres. The latest inventory showed a rate of 17 moose per 10 square kilometres, representing approximately 400 moose.

"The target for an ecosystem like ours is between 10 and 20 (moose per square kilometre). We are within the target range for a healthy ecosystem. The closer we are to 10, the better. But we are in a situation that is less problematic than we were at the end of the 2010s," says Mathieu Côté, manager of Parks Canada's Gaspé management unit.

"It's difficult to explain this fluctuation. We are seeing a significant decline, but it is not cause for concern. Our long-



A moose in Forillon Park.

Photo: N. Sergerie

term concern was that if we had remained at 35 per 10 square kilometres, there would have been significant impacts on the forest ecosystem. At 17, we are continuing to monitor the situation, but we are less concerned," notes Mr. Côté.

The park has been tracking the moose population since 1970. The population continued to grow until it peaked in 2017, and since then, the situation has been stabilizing.

"Over the past six years, we have been monitoring the situation more closely. We are continuing to do so, and we are pretty much back to where we were in 2009," notes the manager.

It is difficult to explain what might have happened. "It is possibly multifactorial. There are natural variations. When it reaches a peak and becomes very dense, it often declines," says the manager, who remains cautious.

Given this situation, conservation hunting to control the population is ruled out in the short term. "We don't need to intervene. We're going to let nature take its course. We're going to monitor the situation closely," he says.

Additional aerial surveys are not planned in the short term. Monitoring will be done using cameras deployed throughout the park.

DEMEURE TOI:

Cont'd from page 7

way. But if the rules of the game aren't working along the way, we should have said so beforehand. We could have worked on those rules, that's for sure; that's our job. But that was never part of the discussions".

Deadline

Stéphane Sainte-Croix wants to be clear and reiterates that the money has been allocated; that the total budget for the needs estimated for Demeure Toi by the ministry is allocated to the CISSS de la Gaspésie.

However, the precise amount of this budget was not known at SPEC's deadline.

"The perception is that the money isn't there. It's there, the check is there. I'm sure of that," Mr. Sainte-Croix adds.

"I agree with this fight, but it shouldn't be waged in the negotiation of an agreement at one to midnight. These discussions haven't taken place in five years. Why wasn't this raised sooner? Now we're being told we're not doing our job, but are we just hoping for it or are we complying with the applicable standards?" "I have a bit of a problem with that," concludes Stéphane Sainte-Croix.



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Surpluses in Gaspé, Chandler, and Bonaventure

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Town of Gaspé has a \$3.1 million surplus for the 2024 fiscal year on a \$40 million budget. However, the town did draw \$1.3 million from the surplus to balance the 2025 budget.

Additional revenues of approximately \$2 million were added: \$900,000 came from the strong real estate market, including property taxes and renovations carried out on buildings last year, and a retroactive payment of \$500,000 in lieu of taxes since 2022 for the construction of the new Ministry of Transportation service centre, making up the bulk of the additional revenue.

In addition, the milder winter and unfilled positions within the municipal administration generated savings.

The debt increased from \$45 million to \$51.6 million.

"I asked our auditors if there are any red flags we should be seeing. Are we investing too much? Is the debt too high? Is the surplus too high? No. All the signs are green, according to our auditors. I'm reassured," says Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté.

For its part, Chandler recorded a surplus of \$681,000 on a budget of \$13.5 million.



Photo: Google Maps

The Town of Gaspé has a \$3.1 million surplus for the 2024 fiscal year on a \$40 million budget.

With that amount the town's accumulated surplus will almost reach \$1 million, something not seen in Chandler for a very long time.

"This hasn't been seen in a long time. We're proud of our work. We made big decisions. We turned services that weren't profitable into profitable," says the Mayor of Chandler Gilles Daraïche.

The elected official points out that in 2022, there was only \$130,000 in the accumulated surplus.

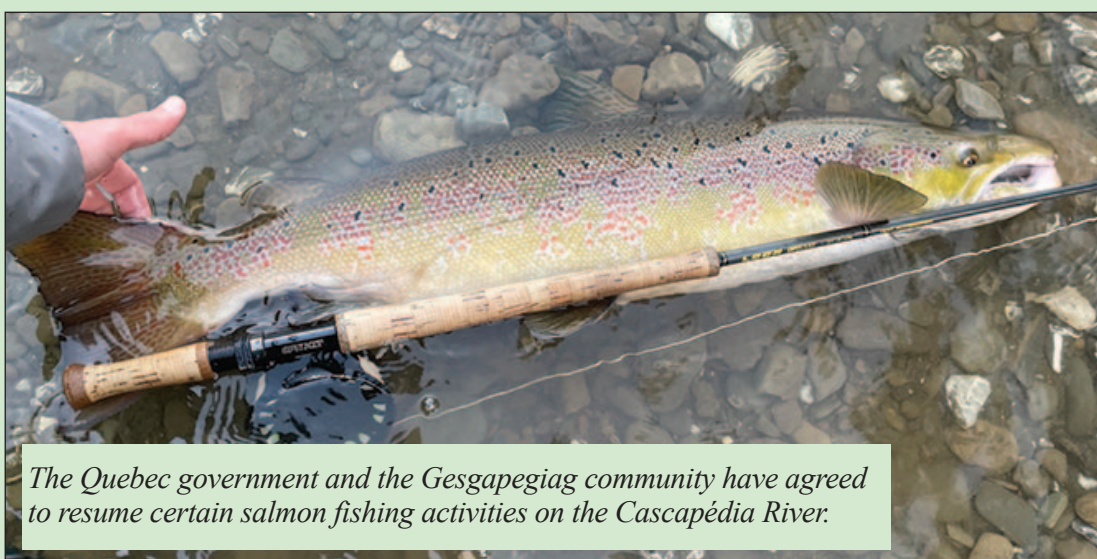
"We also have a working capital of \$600,000. There are certain projects that we don't need to borrow for. The winters are less harsh, so we're saving on equipment. Building permits brought in an additional \$78,000," ex-

plains Mr. Daraïche.

A turnaround in Bonaventure, brings about a surplus of \$136,000 on a budget of \$7 million for the 2024 fiscal year. In 2023, the town recorded a loss of \$119,000. The unallocated surplus now stands at \$222,504.

The town's total debt stands at \$24 million. However, the portion attributable to citizens, the net debt, is \$14.2 million, an increase of \$913,000 compared to 2023.

The Mayor of Bonaventure, Pierre Gagnon believes the town's financial situation has greatly improved over the past year, thanks to tighter spending controls, reduced investments, and a diligent search for government assistance.



The Quebec government and the Gesgapegiag community have agreed to resume certain salmon fishing activities on the Cascapédia River.

Photo: Archives

Salmon: agreement between Quebec and Gesgapegiag

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - The Quebec government and the Gesgapegiag community have agreed to resume certain salmon fishing activities on the Cascapédia River, in accordance with the terms of the community fishing license.

The conservation of the species was at the heart of the discussions, as Minister Ian Lafrenière noted during his visit to the community a month ago.

Net fishing is a cultural practice for the Mi'gmaq. In addition to preserving the species, passing on knowledge to younger generations was also a concern.

Fishing took place on June 18, 19, and 20.

Discussions for a multi-year agreement are ongoing and could help ensure predictability for all users of the river.

Gaspesian berries on grocery shelves

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINT-SIMÉON - Gaspé strawberries are now available on grocery store shelves in Bay of Chaleur and the Chandler area.

"The season has started. We've had strawberries in the store for a few days now, and it's a start. The season has started. We still have flowers in the fields with the later strawberries. There's an abundance right now," says Pierre Bourdages, co-owner of Ferme Bourdages Tradition in Saint-Siméon.

And the beginning of the season promises a good harvest for 2025.

"It should be a good season despite the late start, with the excess water and cool weather. The heat is now here. The rain caused a bit of a delay," notes the farmer.

"We're supplying the markets. We're starting on the south side: Chandler, Carleton. We're moving forward gradually. We don't have large volumes at the moment. You'll see strawberries in your grocery stores in the next few days," says Mr Bourdages.

Consumers in Gaspé will therefore have to wait a few more days before they can enjoy this purely Gaspé product.

The increase in the minimum wage and the rise in input costs such as transportation are affecting the

cost of strawberries.

"The price is jumping because we have no choice," says Mr. Bourdages.

However, it is still possible to find cheap strawberries in large chains, with consumers seeing prices as low as \$2.50 for a one-litre basket.

"It's a loss leader. Retailers will set aggressive prices to attract customers by selling at a loss," he notes.

In Ontario, during the week of June 25, a basket sold for \$6.

Strawberries from Île d'Orléans have been sweet and juicy so far this year.

Those from the Gaspé Peninsula should follow the same trend.

"They will be excellent. We mustn't forget that we have different varieties, but the temperature, climate, heat, and sun make all the difference in the final taste. It helps a lot with the sugar in the strawberries," he explains.

With the sun and heat of the last few days, the fruit should taste great.

Ferme Bourdages Tradition has about 120 workers in the fields picking. Of these, one-third are from Mexico.

"We have about ten who were expected on July 2, and about twenty the following week. We're going with the arrival of the fruit in the field. As it ripens, we'll need workers. In total, we'll have 44 foreign workers," says Mr. Bourdages.

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

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

CITQ 085164

Pace of publication maintained over a pivotal year

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – The year 1979 was pivotal for the Gaspé SPEC as well as for the region’s anglophone community. The 1980 referendum on Quebec’s sovereignty was knocking at the door and at the same time, the quality of some federal services, notably from the newly-founded VIA Rail, was deteriorating.

Over that year, the SPEC experienced changes within its news editing team.

about the SOQUEM search for oil in the region. There is also an article pertaining to the talks about separating the Gaspé Peninsula from Eastern Quebec, as Rimouski gets everything.

- As for VIA Rail, comments will come in March, but changes are supposed to be implemented in April!
- The strike in Murdochville could be settled over the spring since two other plants owned by Noranda Mines are also negotiating.



Vol. 5, No. 7

Vol. 5 No 1 January 12, 1979

- In its volume 5, number 1 edition, dated January 12, 1979, readers see that the Gaspesia Teachers Association took out a large ad to denounce the discrepancies in the state of the region’s schools.
- News editor Delton Sams writes about the new year’s resolutions: the paper will buy equipment to improve its look. The editorial and content will be more outspoken and informative. The paper is going through an Audit Bureau of Circulation process, which will translate into more ads. He deplores the situation of transportation in the region, air services, roads and the railway.
- John Martin writes about Maria Reserve’s successful bid to land its own school. We learn that Gaspé will get the regional airport, not Chandler. Ken Annett runs a long Gaspé of Yesterday article. Litres are replacing gallons at the pump and VIA Rail’s management thinks of replacing a conventional train with Budd cars, with a snack service and no sleepers.

Vol. 5 No 2 January 25, 1979

- In the 1979 number 2 issue, dated January 25, the headlines are: “110 years later and still no oil,” “Murdochville labour talks halted,” “VIA Rail refuses to comment on changes” and “Gaspé South Telecasting Syndicate: may hike out of CBC.”
- There is a long article

Vol. 5 No 3 February 9, 1979

- In number 3 of SPEC, dated February 9, the headlines are “Paspebiac Fish Company to join herring fleet”, “Education: a serious problem on the North Shore,” “Study recommends Dash 7,” “Gaspesians favour two Official languages” and “Only few Gaspesians talk back.”
- Regarding Official languages, 450 questionnaires were distributed in the region. While anglophones represent 15% of the population, they made 35% of the respondents, an overrepresentation. Up to 275 Gaspesians favoured two official languages.

Vol. 5 No 4 February 23, 1979

- In the number 4 issue, released on February 23, the headlines were “Tournament roundup,” “Indoor Farmers in Port Daniel,” “Governor general to visit the coast” and

“Mines Gaspé: situation more serious.”

- There is a short article about the next solar eclipse, which took place on April 8, 2024! Delton Sams’ editorial is his last, as he deplores the closure of SPEC’s board decision to concentrate its office activities in New Carlisle.
- The “Indoor farming” recounts the arrival of Ontarian father and son Don and Mark Clinton, who are starting greenhouse farming in Port Daniel. “A place is what you make it!”, says Don Clinton.
- The tournaments headline refers to the Murdochville and Gaspé hockey meets, covered over four pages.

Vol. 5 No 5 March 8, 1979

- In number 5, issued on March 8, the headlines are “Airport blockade in Gaspé” and “Industrial Fire: 40 jobs lost.” The blockade is organized by citizens who want to

be served by jet planes. The fire deals with the destruction of the Sandy Beach shipyard. Inside, Gary Briand explains the centralization of SPEC’s office in New Carlisle due to financial constraints.

Vol. 5 No 6 March 22, 1979

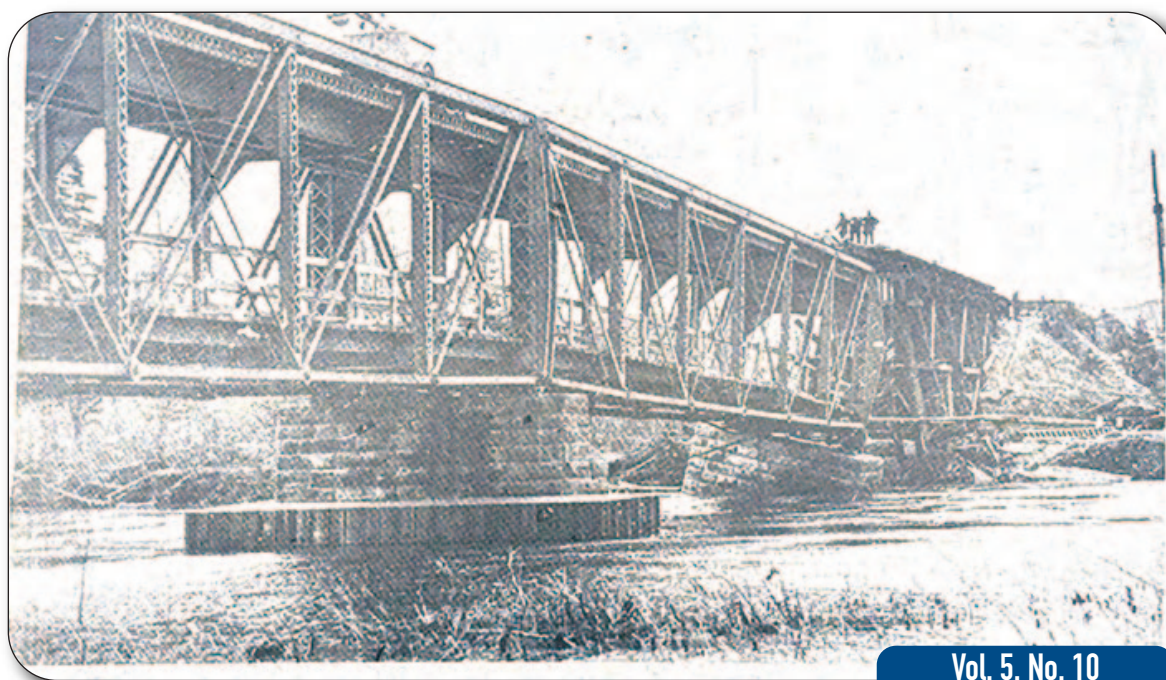
- In the number 6 issue of the paper, dated March 22. “Douglstown Irish celebrate,” “Survey Radio-Gaspésie” and Magdalen Islands seal hunt” are the main titles.
- The survey reveals that only 14 anglophones consulted feel well served by Radio-Gaspésie, while 124 are not satisfied.
- Interim editor Lynden Bechervaise writes the editorial, entitled “Regional transportation: a mess.” A letter written by Mike Henderson defends the decentralization position of Delton Sams regarding SPEC.

Vol. 5 No 7 April 6, 1979

- The number 7 issue of SPEC, released on April 6 features “Spring thaw causes flooding” and “Quebec City air crash involves Gaspesians” as headlines. The F-27 March 29 crash claimed 17 lives, including two Gaspesians. The Cascapedia river debacle caused a major flood. Other rivers also overflowed.
- Inside, readers learn that farmers between Douglstown and Fontenelle found their UPA union branch. The SPEC runs the third publication of Introduction to Economic Life, an instructive series that continues for many weeks.

Vol. 5 No 8 April 19, 1979

- In 1979’s number 8 issue, dated April 19, the main titles are “JP Dubé wins national award,” “Paul Arsenault elected as PC candidate for



Vol. 5, No. 10

Next page

Pace of publication maintained over a pivotal year

Gaspé county” and “Moïse received the visit of the Provincial Police.” The Moïse sect topic was covered by David Ramier in his editorial. As for Jean-Paul Dubé, a New Carlisle born in Matapedia, a lawyer who carves wood and a writer who has released a book, “Save our Salmon” (S.O.S.), one of his art pieces won an award at the Toronto Sportsmen Show.

**Vol. 5 No 9
May 4, 1979**

- In the number 9 issue, dated May 4, readers learn that upon lobster season start, the price is \$1.70 per pound, compared to 30 cents in 1950. Alexandre Cyr will run again for the Liberals in Gaspé. The Progressive Conservative Party chooses a Madelinot for the Bonaventure-Magdalen Islands riding, Gilbert Carbonneau.

**Vol. 5 No 10
May 18, 1979**

- In the number 10 paper, dated May 18, a second Cascapedia flood is reported. As a consequence, trains and cars are not running on the Cascapedia-St. Jules bi-level bridge. The Royal Viking Line brings a cruise ship to Gaspé. Two Gaspé Cegep students are honoured, Karen Legresley and Judy MacDonald.

**Vol. 5 No 11
May 31, 1979**

- The number 11 paper, issued on May 31, follows a federal election won by the Progressive Conservatives of Joe Clark, but Liberals Alexandre Cyr and Rémi Bujold are elected in the region with margins of 3,000 and



Mr. Ken Annett.

Vol. 5, No. 22

4,000 votes, respectively. A hit-and-run causes the death of 15-year-old Kevin Rowsell in Gaspé Harbour on May 26; the police are trying to find the driver. New Carlisle group opposes highway changes, as widening Church and Main would make them worse U-turns than they already are. VIA Rail finally returns to a conventional train, for now.

- David Ramier writes a long article about Micmac names, part of our Gaspé Heritage. A coyote is shot in Capdes-Rosiers on October 8, by Claude Cloutier.

**Vol. 5 No 12
June 14, 1979**

- In the number 12 issue, released on June 14, the main titles are “Softball league begins in Gaspé” and “Gaspé Coast not remote enough to avoid nuclear fallout.” The nuclear topic was triggered by an experimental balloon that flew between Byron, Illinois and

New Carlisle to measure how airborne radioactive particles travel. It was found by Jerry Imhoff after a 1,300 mile-flight.

- Brenda Lemieux writes a commentary on Kevin Rowsell’s hit and run death.
- Dave Doherty submits a text about a New Carlisle war time air crash, April 21, 1942, at the corner of Normandy and Billingsley streets. Three army officers died. The Lockheed Hudson Bomber, was travelling between Presque Isle, Maine, and Prestwick, Scotland, via Gander, Newfoundland.

**Vol. 5 No 13
June 28, 1979**

- In the number 13 issue, dated June 28, the main headline is “3rd annual Fastball Tournament in New Carlisle,” “82nd Anti-Tank Battery Reunion,” written by George H. Sams, held in New Carlisle, and “Disastrous fire hits Mur-

dochville,” where seven business, 21 apartments and a private house were destroyed.

- The police report is particularly bleak: a train kills five people in Pointe-à-la-Garde, 11 road deaths took place over the last 15 days, and a man was beaten to death.
- Brenda Lemieux reports on Fisheries civil servants from Quebec City who don’t want to move to Gaspé, and writes a long article about the end of the eight-month strike in Murdochville; 1,550 union workers are back. The three-year agreement received only 60% of support.

**Vol. 5 No 14
July 12, 1979**

- The number 14 paper was issued on July 12 with the “New Carlisle Festival,” “Murdochville Fire update” and the “Return of the Sputnik,” as headlines. The Sputnik is the name given by Gaspésians to the automotive Budd cars used to replace the conventional train. David Ramier’s editorial, entitled “Two cheers for Quebec: income supplement” praises the Parti Québécois government on measures to increase people’s disposable income.

**Vol. 5 No 15
July 26, 1979**

- The issue number 15 of 1979 was released on July 26. The headlines read “The Homecoming – another success story,” “Paspebiac plant may re-open” and “Fort Ramsey reunion.” The homecoming occurred in Wakeham-York, and the Paspebiac fish processing plant could be operated by the Carleton Fisheries Co-op. The Fort Ramsey reunion is sched-

uled for August 3-5. Inside: the paper runs a huge letter written by Roger Lemelin, federalist president of daily newspaper La Presse.

**Vol. 5 No 16
August 9, 1979**

- In issue number 16, released on August 9, the front page titles are “Kinsella wins again” and “Vets leave Douglstown.”
- Veterinarians Bill Johnson and Suzanne Marcil leave only four months after setting up their clinic. He told Brenda Lemieux that the lack of support from the community and the business sector, banks included, explain the decision to move to Howick.
- Chicago’s John Kinsella wins the Grande Anse-Paspebiac “14 miles” in 6 hours, 25 minutes and 36 seconds. He also won the sprints before and after the main event, and \$6,400. Argentina’s Claudio Plitt took eight more minutes. 5,000 people gathered to see the race’s finish.
- Roger Lemelin’s part two of his plea for Canadian unity is published. In an ad, SPEC is looking for an editor-writer. Many historical articles are in, including one describing the region’s 19th century search for oil. In community news from Maria (Gesgapegiag); Roger Martin, Arnold Martin, Eldon Gedeon and Donat Jerome operate a salmon pool according to an agreement with Quebec’s Department of Fisheries.





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More of 1979...

Vol. 5 No 17
August 23, 1979

- The number 17 of the paper, dated August 23 mentions “Dr. Camille Laurin to visit Gaspé” and “Bonaventure Liberals honour Ryan” on page one.
- Mr. Ryan urges people to work together calmly and resolutely to keep Canada united, writes Irene Dallain. Joan Dow invites English-speaking Gaspésians to attend Camille Laurin’s symposium in Gaspé on September 8-9. “If we don’t show concern by our presence, Dr. Laurin and his government will assume that Gaspésians have no problems.”
- Brenda Lemieux writes a follow up on the veterinarians’ departure. Gordon Drody sums up the situation: there was enough work for one vet taking care of small animals but not enough for another vet looking for farm animals.
- Doris and David McDougall write about Gaspé’s first bank and the Free Port.

Vol. 5 No 18
September 6, 1979

- In SPEC’s number 18, dated September 6, “70 years of exhibits and still Fair’ing well” about the Shigawake Fair, “CHNC’s founder dies” and “Anglophones given opportunity to air grievances,” are the headlines. The paper runs three write-ups before the upcoming visit of Camille Laurin, the father of Law 101 Charles Houde, a dentist, founder of CHNC in 1933, CKNB in 1939, CKBC in 1953 and CHAU in 1959, passes away. Stephen Tribble writes a long article entitled The Return Migration of Gaspésians.

Vol. 5 No 19
September 20, 1979

- In number 19 of SPEC, dated September 20, “Meeting with Dr. Laurin”, “Wallaby seen on coast, SPEC offers \$300 reward,” and “Home and School Seminar” are featured on page one. Inside, the police



Vol. 5, No. 22

report mentions that only one fatality was registered along the coast roads during the last two weeks.

- SPEC interviews Camille Laurin, Quebec’s minister of State for Cultural Affairs: SPEC: One of the workshops today voted on a resolution to repeal Law 101. The motion was defeated by a 26-5 margin in favour of recommending specific amendments (...). How do you react to this acknowledgment of the linguistic and cultural policies in Quebec?
- Dr. Laurin: The only thing that I will have to say is that Bill 101 was enacted for general popular reasons that reflected the needs of the total population of Quebec. I can understand that for the English-speaking population of Gaspé, it’s a little bit difficult to understand but I think when a government passes legislation, it has to balance the interests or the needs of every quarter of the population.

Vol. 5 No 20
October 4, 1979

- The number 20, dated October 4, issue of SPEC features: “Will this happen again?”, about a possible teachers’ strike, and “Optimist Summer project,” about a fitness trail developed in New Carlisle.
- In the editorial, Lynden

Bechervaise criticizes VIA Rail for downgrading service. Passengers will waste three hours because the Gaspé train goes to Campbellton instead of stopping at the Matapedia station. There is a two-hour wait in Campbellton before boarding a Montreal-bound train. He also deplores the lack of sleepers on the Gaspé-Campbellton train and poor food service. June recommendations of the Railway Transport Committee were ignored. The new service should start on October 28.

- William Jerome writes a letter to the editor to denounce a situation he and a friend experienced in a New Richmond hotel. They were refused to be served because they were Indians, the word used by Mr. Jerome.

Vol. 5 No 21
October 18, 1979

- The headlines of number 21, dated October 18 are “René visits Bonaventure Co.,” “Teachers prepared for strike action” and “New faces at SPEC-CASA”.
- The teachers want more than salary hikes of 0.5, 3.5 and 3.5% over three years. They deplore the workload increase and the loss of some rights.
- René Lévesque’s homecoming is marked by meetings in New Carlisle, Carleton and

- “Rescue at Lighthouse Point,” written by Debby Goddier describes the October 10, 1976, salvage of a Yugoslavian cargo ship off the coast of Metis Beach.

Vol. 5 No 22
November 1, 1979

- The SPEC’s number 22, dated November 1, features follow ups on page one. In “RTA may be forced to reopen VIA issues,” we learn that VIA, amidst criticism, changes its schedule, leaving Gaspé 90 minutes later to cut waiting time. Passengers disembark at Matapedia instead of Campbellton. Still, the train is shorter, without all the services. RTA is the Rail Transportation Agency.
- Irene Dallain mentions that a Roch “Moïse” Thériault follower, Gabrielle Nadeau, 21, from Beauce, died. She was suffering from multiple sclerosis.
- A man from Cap-des-Rosiers, a francophone who simply signs The Grumbler, writes a regular column in SPEC explaining why he is a federalist.
- Inside, one can read that

Page 14

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And more 1979...

Ken Annett retires from Education, CHAU celebrates 20 years and that Shigawake's Billy Sullivan had a great season riding horses.

1743-1805.

Vol. 5 No 24
November 29, 1979

- The number 24 paper, dated November 29, shows on page one "Gaspé Shipyards rebuilds," following its destruction by a fire.
- In "New industry on the Coast," readers learn that a seaweed processing plant might open in Paspébiac, creating 27 jobs. A Detroit businessman is behind it. In "Teachers reject government offer," we see that 91% of them refused it. Meanwhile, Royal Viking Line will stop in Gaspé in 1980.
- In "Paspébiac boy still missing," the paper specifies that Martin Corbet, 17 from Paspébiac, was last seen in Bartibog, New Brunswick, on November 15.
- Cynthia Dow writes a commentary about the decline of VIA Rail services

Vol. 5 No 25
December 20, 1979

- The last issue of the year, number 25, dated December 20, goes over 44 pages. The main news is entitled "Investigation of RCMP demanded in the case of Martin Corbet." "The family is asking for an inquiry into the methods used by the RCMP in the search for young Martin Corbet, 17, lost in the woods at Bartibog. (...) They feel that what should have been a life saving operation was bogged down with inefficiency and red tape, becoming a mere waste of time." He is missing since November 15.
- In "No grant for SPEC," Lynden Bechervaise, says that after reassuring comments from Camille Laurin, the funding was denied by a committee invoking that a "community media should address itself to the majority of the population."

Vol. 5 No 23
November 15, 1979

- In number 23's issue, dated November 15, the "Quebec - New deal begins today" article mentions that the "white paper is tabled" regarding the independence project, "thus marking the beginning of the end of the great uncertainty and impatience over the sovereignty question."
- "Gaspésians remember" covers Remembrance Day. Another article covers the Gaspé arrival of a refugee family from Laos.
- Normand Desjardins holds a vernissage at New Carlisle High School, where he teaches arts. Ken Annett runs a Gaspé of Yesterday article entitled Colonel Francis LeMaistre,

Volume 5, Number 1 excerpt

One of the first service stations on the coast to make the conversion was Garage Delbert Fitzpatrick, which went metric in the spring of 1978, and is selling gas at 23.5 cents a litre. By comparison, many of their competitors are selling gas at \$1.10 a gallon. Which is the better buy? According to the Metric Commission, gas sold at 23.5 cents a litre is a 3 cent saving over gas sold at \$1.10 per gallon.

No more shocks for your shocks



Caplan residents breathe a sigh of relief as construction draws to an end on their section of Route 132 this week. Those forced to travel through Caplan on a regular basis also had their fair share of bumps and grinds since the construction began this spring. It's rumoured that New Carlisle will be next to face a similar predicament.

Vol. 5, No. 22

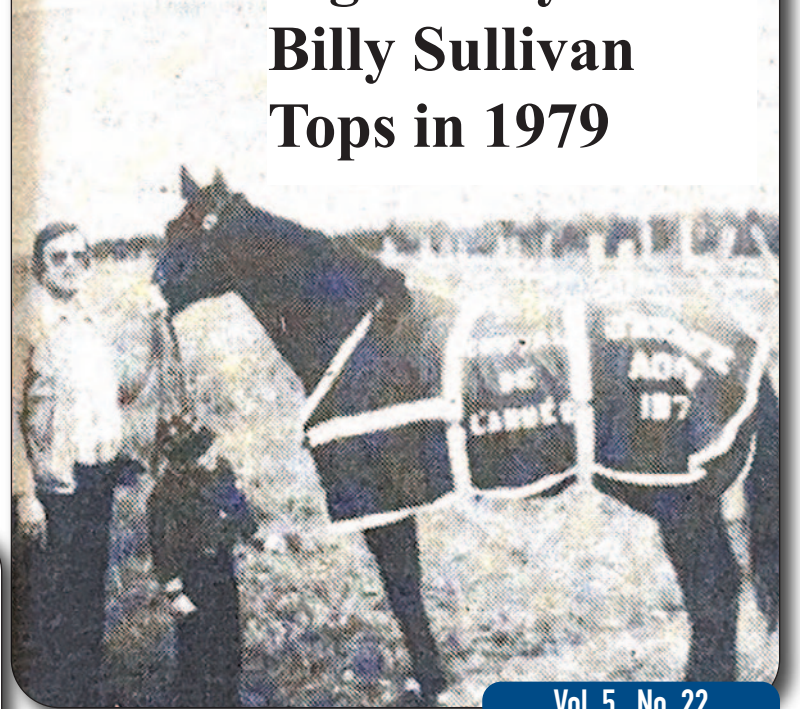
Many topics link 1979 to 2025

• Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE – The number of issues that connect 1979 and 2025 is stunning. On the negative side, it is sad to see that Gaspésians still have to fight in order to get fair transportation services from VIA Rail, despite the fact that such a public corporation should work with the population, not against it. It is also worrying to witness the decline of salmon, a cause of concern in 1979 for Jean-Paul Dubé, and still a cause of concern in 2025, given the downward trend in salmon stocks across our rivers.

On a more positive note, the cruise ship sector is doing far better in 2025 than it was 46 years ago, when it was part of a trial-and-error process. The region had to start somewhere. Another progress made regionally and nationally over the years is the reduction in the number of deadly road accidents, drownings and fire fatalities. While even one death is too many, public safety has improved significantly since 1979 thanks to education, regulation, and better infrastructure.

Big Beauty and Billy Sullivan Tops in 1979



Vol. 5, No. 22

1979

Lynden Bechervaise, Co-Chairman

Gary Briand, Secretary

Betty Brown Flowers, Treasurer

J. A 'Bud' Campbell, Grand Cascapedia

Don Miller, Belle-Anse

Peggy Patterson, Murdochville

Albert Fequet, Lower North Shore

B. Jones, Lower North Shore

Raymond Astles, New Richmond

Printed by Miramichi Web

Bonaventure artist Rachel Thibault is preparing an exhibition for 2026 at Matapedia station

GILLES GAGNÉ

MATAPEDIA – Bonaventure-based artist Rachel Thibault recently spent two weeks in residence in Matapedia to prepare for an exhibition that will reflect, in part, on her childhood memories as the daughter of a station agent. The exhibition will take place at the Matapedia station, where her father worked for 18 years.

The Matapedia station has been an art exhibition station since September 24, 2021. Rachel Thibault explains that beyond the fact the building was her childhood home, two other reasons inspired her to submit an art project there.

“This project came from two events. Magazine Gaspésie, the historical publication, launched a call for articles (in 2021) about Gaspé Peninsula train stations. I felt involved as a result of that invite and I wrote an article. It was published. Secondly, we lived on the other side of the tracks and the calling of the station where my father worked has changed to include that of an art centre,” she explained.

“My father was originally from Kedgwick, New Brunswick. He worked there as a station agent, then moved

to Clova (Mauricie) and Dupuy (Abitibi) before choosing Matapedia. My mother was from Saint-Siméon and he was also coming closer to Kedgwick for the end of his career. He worked here between 1959 and 1977. I arrived here when I was five years-old,” points out Rachel Thibault.

The importance of her childhood

She will take into account childhood perceptions during the preparation of her exhibition.

“It is a kind of tribute. I imagine being a child. I want to make people see the exhibition through the eyes of children. My dad was a worker, a husband, a father and a telegraphist. He was quite involved in the community. I also want to pay a tribute to the Matapedia station, which was an active yard when I was a child. In fact, I realize that it remains an active shunting yard,” says Ms. Thibault.

While the exact date of her June 2026 vernissage is still to be determined, some elements have already been planned.

“I have planned that reading period of literary texts, including Kasàlà, a literature genre originating from Africa

which consists of homage poems. They are recited in front of people. There will be a text about my childhood,” she points out.

Kasàlà is a form of panegyric poetry of African origin, characterized by its celebratory character and its oral dimension. It is an art of praising, honouring, and expressing gratitude, whether for a person, an event, or even life in general. Kasàlà is a living practice that evolves, integrating writing and adapting to different contexts.

In Matapedia, the station agent’s house was not located in the station itself, but just on the north side of the track, near where the New Carlisle to Matapedia line, the Cascapedia subdivision, was about to reach the Canadian National mainline between Campbellton and Mont-Joli.

“It was adjacent to the station. Our playground was close to the house, just on the other side of the track. I was playing with my sister. My father never told us to pay attention to trains and the risk tied to it,” she remembers.

She has already talked to Matapedia residents in order to revisit some common memories tied to the station and the trains that passed there 50 or



Rachel Thibault spent two weeks in June at the Matapedia train station to find inspiration for a 2026 exhibition that will be launched at the beginning of the summer.

Photo: G. Gagné

65 years ago.

Coming back to the preparation period of her vernissage and the concept linked to it, she wants people to play the role of “human trains, imaginary trains bound for Gaspé, Halifax, Montreal,” she mentions.

As a Bonaventure resident, she follows the ongoing saga to return the train east of New Richmond. She deplors the slowness of the railway refurbishment.

“Simply working on the concept of my exhibition is a political statement,” she concludes.

Since September 24, 2021,

professional artists and students from various cities have used the station as a place to be inspired.

As of now, people can see Jocelyne Allouche's film HOB0, her latest creation, inspired by stowaways who traveled from city to city on freight trains in search of seasonal work. It is featured in the former freight shed part of the station until the end of the summer.

The Matapedia Station, now an Artistic and Community Pole, is negotiating with VIA Rail to acquire the building, which would continue to serve as a passenger train stop.

Cascapedia River Museum opens temporary exhibit

JULIE SCHLIE

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES - On June 18, the Cascapedia River Museum presented the opening of its first temporary exhibit of the season, titled A Cartographic Journey.

This exhibit showcases reproductions from Library and Archives Canada, along with several original maps from the museum’s collection.

The progression of map-making can be seen through the sketches of the Gaspé Peninsula, from hand-drawn maps created by explorers in the early 1700s, to scientific cartography in the 19th century, and finally to aerial photography, which began in the 1920s.

The exhibit also features a copy of the geological map made by William Logan during his 1883 trek along the

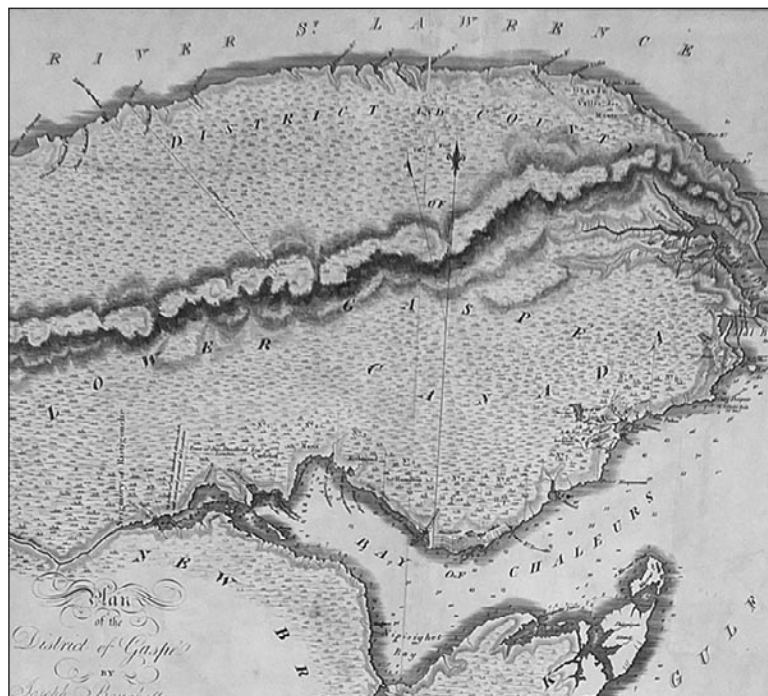


Photo: Julie Schlie

One of the maps displayed at the museum.

Grand Cascapedia River.

Local maps on display include depth soundings in the estuary of the Grand Cascape-

dia River and its tributaries, as well as the land division maps.

The exhibit continues until July 22.

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4:00-7:00 PM
NEW CARLISLE TOWN HALL

THIS MONTH'S ACTIVITY: THE BEAUTIFUL COUNTRYSIDE OF SPAIN WITH KIM HARRISON & DYLAN BUDD

*Space is limited. Please RSVP by Monday July 21st, 2025 to Madelyn Hayes at 418-752-5583.

Funded in part by the Government of Canada's New Horizons for Seniors Program

Canada

Canada Day Celebrations in New Carlisle

SHANNON DAY

NEW CARLISLE - This past weekend, the town of New Carlisle came alive with community spirit as CASA partnered with the Municipality of New Carlisle to organize a vibrant Canada Day weekend in honour of CASA's 50th anniversary.

The milestone was not only a chance to reflect on five decades of work, but also an opportunity to engage with the community. With the collaboration of the municipality, the weekend offered a range of activities for residents and visitors alike.

Beginning on Thursday, June 26, through Tuesday, July 1, New Carlisle hosted a wide variety of events. There was everything from a classic car show from the East Coast Car Club, games, volleyball, a weekend-long women's softball tournament, and live music every evening. Local bands performed nightly, drawing crowds to dance and enjoy the festive atmosphere.

On July 1, the celebration continued with a Canada Day parade and family-friendly activities throughout the day. Children and adults took part in events such as the Teddy Bear Picnic, washer games, nail-driving competitions, line dancing with Rino, and more.

The day ended with a fireworks show that lit up the sky.

Organizer Kathy Gallon and Cindy Carney of the July 1 Committee noted that many people contributed to making the celebration a success, including those who participated in the parade with their decorated floats.

CBC Quebec was also present, collecting stories throughout the weekend. Coverage can be heard on CBC Listen.

The Canada Day weekend marked a memorable chapter in CASA's 50-year history, highlighting the organization's ongoing connection to the community and its dedication to celebrating that bond.



The Family Ties float is always a popular part of the parade.



The Shigawake Agricultural fair won second place for their float.



Canada Day was kicked off with the welcoming and flag raising ceremony.

Photos: S.D Captures



The outdoor games were a big hit at this year's celebrations.



Residents of the CHSLD in New Carlisle had the opportunity to watch this year's parade, accompanied by volunteers and staff.



Canada Day in Barachois

HOLLY SMITH

BARACHOIS: - Barachois celebrated Canada Day with a lively parade, hot dogs, a BBQ, cotton candy, music, face painting, and a bouncy castle. The day included family fun at the Rec Centre and a performance by Alex Bailey before closing festivities.



Community members gather under and around tents, enjoying food, music, and good company during the Canada Day celebrations in Barachois.

Photos: Jennifer Chicoine



Kassie-Rose (7) proudly shows off her colourful face paint during the Canada Day celebrations in Barachois.



Canada Day in Cascapedia-St-Jules

ELAINE SEXTON

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES - The Royal Canadian Legion Branch 172 hosted a parade, a flag-raising ceremony and a delicious lunch to celebrate Canada Day.

Following the events, a game of baseball poche took place. Pictured are the legion members and Mayor Ashley Milligan at the raising of the flag, during which the national anthem was sung.

Legion President Joanne Barter and Mayor Ms. Milligan welcomed attendees and thanked everyone for participating.

The event was made possible by the efforts of the Legion members, volunteers, and parade participants.



Legion members joined Mayor Ashley Milligan for the flag-raising ceremony.

Photos: Elaine Sexton



A delicious lunch with Canada Day-themed desserts was served at the Legion to participants.



The Royal Canadian Legion hosted a parade in celebration of Canada Day.



SPORTS SECTION - SOFTBALL

Let's play ball

HOLLY SMITH

NEW CARLISLE - From June 26 to 29, New Carlisle was the place to be for women's softball. Twelve teams came from across the Gaspé Peninsula to take part in the third annual four-day tournament. Over 140 players joined the event, bringing energy and excitement to the ballfield.

Teams travelled from places such as Matane, Saint-Thérèse and Gaspé to compete. There were games every day, with teams giving it their all. The tournament was full of action, fast plays, strong hits, and exciting moments. Fans watched from the sidelines, cheering as their teams tried to move forward in the standings.

After many close games, The Royals came out on top and won the tournament. The Ladies in Red finished in second place after a strong performance all weekend. Both teams played very well and gave fans a final game to remember.

This tournament has grown quickly. Shannon Marsh, one of the organizers, explained that the first tournament had just eight teams, then ten the next year, and now twelve. "We're just getting started," she said. "The growth of women's softball on the coast has been nothing short of inspiring."

The softball field in New Carlisle has also changed a lot over the years. Marsh said it started out as "barely more than a patch of grass," but thanks to support from the town, it now has lights, bleachers, a family park, a canteen, and even a beautiful ocean view. She said it has become "the heart of our summer."

The idea for the tournament came from years of travelling to play softball in other towns. The local women's league now includes six teams, with three based in New Carlisle. One of those teams includes younger players who are learning the game from older players.

Shannon Marsh also spoke about the sportsmanship shown throughout the weekend. "Players lent each other equipment, teams cheered each other on, and the sense of sisterhood ran deep," she said. "It felt more like a festival than just a sporting event."

There was also live music during the weekend. On Friday, June 27, the Homegrown Country Band performed, and on Saturday night, June 28, the Antics Roadshow had the crowd dancing and singing along.

The tournament was supported by sponsors CASA, LFG New Richmond, and Maltais Performance Paspébiac, along with many volunteers and fans. Another tournament will take place in late August and will include special teams like local firefighters, police officers, nurses, and more.

As Ms. Marsh shared, "To every young girl or woman thinking about trying softball—do it. There's a place for you here."



The Royals were this year's tournament champions.



The Ladies in Red were this year's runners-up.

Photos: A.H. Photography (Allyson Hocquard)



Sisters Madison and Arianna Flowers proudly pose with the championship trophy after winning the women's softball tournament in New Carlisle.



A batter gets ready to swing under the lights during the women's softball tournament at the New Carlisle Green.



Horses, Speed, and Skill: A Thrilling day of Gymkhana and Extreme Cowboy Event

EMILY HOCQUARD

SHIGAWAKE - The fairgrounds in Shigawake were full of action on Saturday, June 28, as the Extreme Cowboy competition and Gymkhana took place. Riders and spectators came from across the region to enjoy a day focused on horse riding, speed, and skill.

The day began with the Extreme Cowboy competition, an exciting event where horse and rider go through an obstacle course. Riders were judged and timed as they opened and closed gates, crossed bridges, and jumped over obstacles. This event is designed to show real-life situations that could happen on a trail. Riders of all ages and levels joined the fun. The youngest participant was Quinn Condo, who is only four years old.

In the afternoon, Gymkhana games were held. These are timed events that test how fast and well a rider can control their horse. Events like barrel racing and pole bending were crowd favourites. Families cheered from the stands, and volunteers helped the event run smoothly. Many riders reached personal bests, and everyone showed great teamwork with their horses.

For many attendees, Saturday's event was more than just a competition—it was a celebration of the horse community's spirit and dedication. Whether it was young beginners getting their first taste of the sport or seasoned riders showcasing finely tuned skills, the Gymkhana and Extreme Cowboy Challenge left everyone inspired and excited for the next time!

The organizing committee consisting of "White Face Ranch" and the "Cavaliers de la 7e et compagnie" was pleased with the turnout and hopes the event will grow in the future. This day was sponsored by The Shigawake Fair and Music Festival, HG Division, White Face Ranch and Francis Aubut Larocque.



Melina Dolbec-Trudel competing in barrel racing, a fan favourite Gymkhana event.



Francis Aubut Larocque is not only part of the committee who organized and hosted this eventful day, but also a director for the "The Bonaventure Agricultural Society, Division A" (Shigawake Agricultural Fair and Music Festival) and a proud competitor in the Gymkhana!



At only 4 years old, Quinn Condo was the youngest contender in the Extreme Cowboy competition.



The organizing committee from left to right: Laurie Aubut Larocque, Francis Aubut Larocque, Léa Maltais, Céline Blais, Monique Gagnon, Mario Maldemay and Patricia Sénécal.

Photos: Shana Poirier

Announcements



Obituaries



ALMOND: Carol Jean Sweetman
1944 - 2025

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Carol Jean Almond of Ste. Anne des Plaines, Quebec, in her 82 year. Carol passed away peacefully at the Soins Palliatifs, Blainville, Quebec on June 19, 2025, with adoring husband Peter by her side.

Her final days were spent in the comforting presence of family and friends whose lives she had touched. Special thanks to niece Carolyn Price and nephew Christopher Almond for providing gentle care and companionship throughout her short illness and to longtime friend Louise Dufour who was a steadfast support to the family.

Carol was predeceased by her parents Helen Pearl Sweetman and Edwin Arthur Sweetman and sisters Joyce (Norman), Lois (Howard) and by her brothers Lennox (Vina) and Keith (Blandine) and brothers-in-law Lorne and George, and sister-in-law Elaine Almond (Roy).

Carol is survived by Peter, who will deeply miss the love of his life after 56 years, 8 months, and 7 days of mutual devotion. She is also survived by her siblings Irene, Shirley, Walter (Myrna), and Winston (Graciette) who will remember their sister for her kind and gentle soul. Her memory will also be cherished by her cousins, especially by Margaret Ann (Sweetman) Mauger who shared a relationship with Carol that was as close as twins. She was a treasured aunt to many nieces and nephews who will miss her ready giggle and sense of fun. Her goddaughter Tricia deeply values their lifelong connection. Her many friends are grateful for Carol's enduring loyalty and kindness.

Carol worked tirelessly on behalf of the unhoused in Montreal. Along with Peter and a dedicated group of friends, she created the organization Community Outreach. She was honoured for these efforts with the Lieutenant Governor of Quebec's Seniors Medal (silver). For many winters, she and Peter could be found sharing warm food and kind words on the city's streets.

Carol also served on the board of the United Church Women's Association for Ste. Therese.

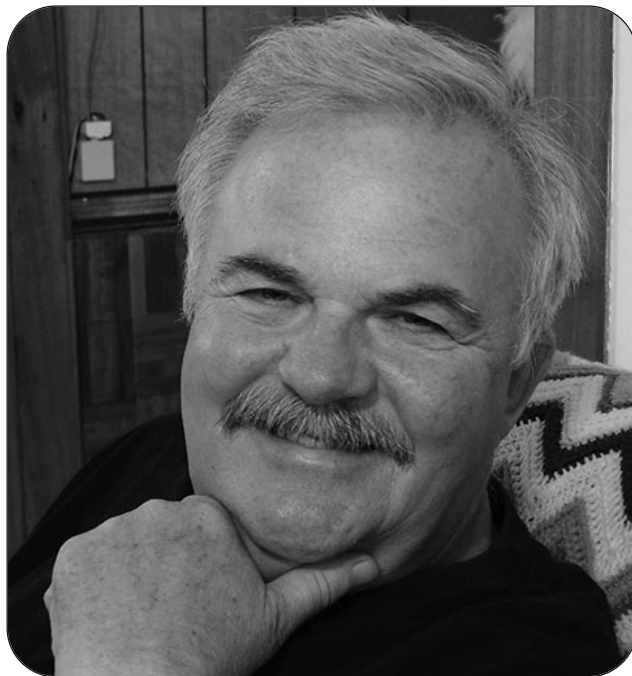
Carol enjoyed knitting and camping. She and Peter spent many happy summers at Fish Creek and Rollins Pond, NY, in their earlier years. After Peter's retirement, they returned each year to Carol's happiest place on earth — her childhood home in Port Daniel where she loved spending time with brother Winston and friends sharing a cup of King Cole tea. While there, she used her cooking and baking skills to plan celebrations that brought people together and fostered fellowship.

The family wishes to thank the dedicated staff of

Soins Palliatifs in Blainville who ensured Carol's comfort with excellent care in a warm, home-like setting.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation in Carol's memory to an organization supporting the unhoused, to Saint Jerome Hospital, AMI-Quebec, or a Palliative Care Facility of your choice.

A celebration of Carol's life will be held in August. A graveside service will also be held at a later date in her beloved Port Daniel.



PALMER: Brent

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of our brother Brent Palmer November 18, 2024.

There will be a graveside burial August 7, 2025, at St Andrew's Anglican Church in York Centre 11 a.m., followed by a celebration of life at the York River Community Hall.

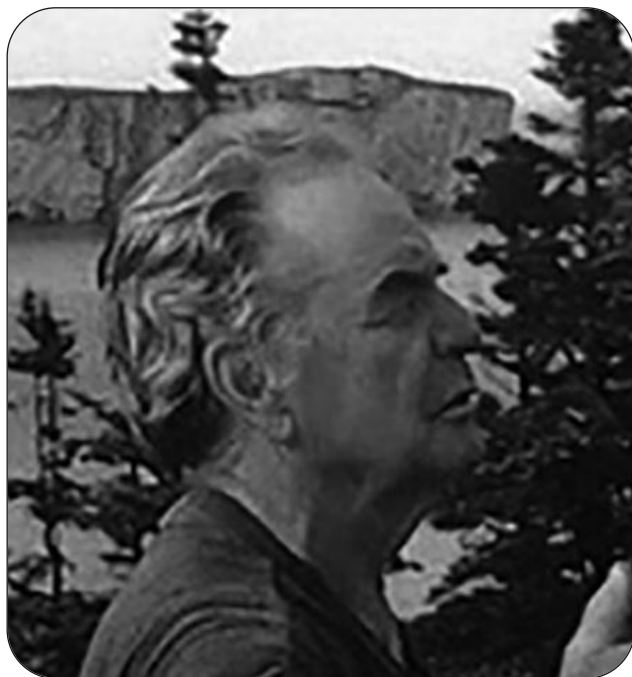
Brent is survived by his wife Ree; his son Troy (Connie); stepdaughter Jen (Ian); sister Dinah (Richard); brother Scott (Susie); sister Lana (late Tony) also many nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by his father Weston Palmer and mother Sybil Scott Palmer.

Brent's decades of service to food banking and his legacy in shaping BC's food banking network cannot be overstated. After joining the Mustard Seed Food Banks in Victoria in June 1984, Brent co-founded Food Banks BC, serving on both the FBBC and Food Banks Canada boards of directors.



Funeral Announcement



CHICOYNE: Stanford

In loving memory of Stanford M. Chicoyne, who passed suddenly on December 13, 2024.

Family and close friends are invited to a memorial service Saturday, July 26, at 2 p.m. at St. Paul's Angli-

can Church, 833 rte 132, beside the Chicoyne family home in Barachois, Quebec. Following the service and urn burial, please join us at Mountain View Golden Age Hall, 857 Rte 132, Barachois.



TAPP: James Lorenzo

The family and friends of James Lorenzo Tapp invite you to join us as we say goodbye to Lonzo.

Lonzo passed away November 2, 2024. Services will be at St Peter's Church in Barachois on Saturday August 2; visitation from 10 a.m. to 12:50 p.m., a mass of Christian burial at 1 p.m. and interment of ashes. A reception at the Barachois Recreation Centre will follow. Your presence and shared memories are welcome.



In Memory



ARSENAULT: Mary LeGresley

*Until we meet again,
We think about you always.
We talk about you still,
You have never been forgotten,
And you never will.
We hold you close within our hearts,
And there you will remain.
To walk and guide us,
Through our lives.*

Until we meet again. Your loving family xoxo

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



FOURNIER: Flora Mullin

In memory of our wife, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother who passed away, July 5, 2017.

*How much we miss you can never be told,
We shared our troubles to help us along.*

If we follow in your footsteps,

We will never go wrong.

We miss you in your rocking chair,

Your loving smile and gentle air.

Your vacant place no one can fill,

We miss you Mum and always will.

She was a mother so very rare,

And content to have us always there.

We do not need a special day,

To bring you to our minds.

The days we don't think of you,

Are very hard to find.

Each morning when we wake,

We know that you are gone.

And no one knows the heartache,

As we try to carry on.

Our hearts still ache with sadness,

And the secret tears still flow.

What it meant to lose you,

No one will ever know.

Each day recalls the memories,

of you gone to rest.

And those who think of you,

Today are those who loved you best.

The flowers we lay upon your grave,

May wither and decay.

But our love for you will never fade away,

You left us with beautiful memories.

Your love is still our guide,

And though we cannot see you,

You are always by our side.

Missed and remembered by her husband of 59 years Sonney and her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.



LEGRESLEY: Bill

2008

MCCREA: Patricia

2018

In heaven's embrace,

Your now entwined.

Your love a story,

forever enshrined.

A love eternal, through joy and strife.

As husband and wife,

You shared a life.

Now reunited in heavens sweet kiss,

In tender silence, your love we miss.

Your loving family xoxo

Thank you



On behalf of the Board of Directors at the Richmond Manor, a huge "Thank You" to those who gave so generously, and those who donated items to our annual Manor Yard Sale.

To our volunteers, Lynne, Natalie, Georges and Joanne, along with some of our board members, we so appreciated your help. To Nancy for the muffins and Nör for the coffee, we extend our gratitude.

There are also individual, and groups that come, including musicians, to entertain and give so much of their time at any time during the year. We would not be able to give so much without our faithful volunteers.

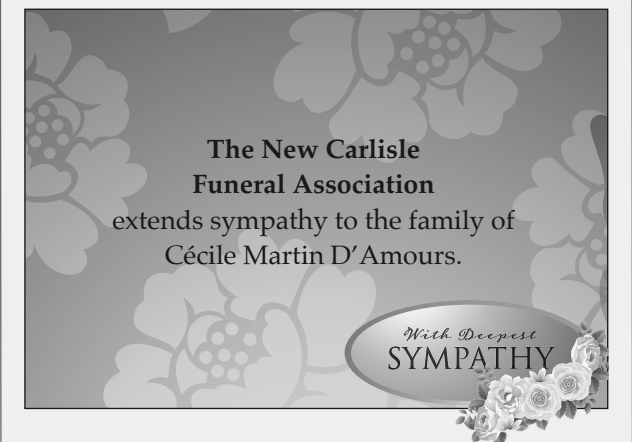
Your donations, \$1315.00, will enable us to continue to give to the Senior activities throughout the year.

Some of the Board Members: Nör Imad, Peter White, Elaine Sexton, Bruce Willett and Sheila Campbell.

Happy 65th Anniversary



Congratulations to Albert and Jean McWhirter on celebrating their 65th wedding anniversary.



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418-752-5400

Announcement Deadlines:

July 17 for the July 23 issue

July 30 for the August 6 issue

August 13 for the August 20 issue

Delivery Methods:

Email: specs@globetrotter.net or holly.smith@globetrotter.net

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Classifieds

FOR SALE: 67 acre Woodlot for sale in New Richmond area for \$74,900. All inquiries can be directed to Kevin at 905-410-2717.

Coast Round-up

SHIGAWAKE:

Shigawake Music Festival and Agricultural Fair

July 10: Thirsty Thursday with Mountain Whisper from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

July 12: Celebrate Shigawake's 100th anniversary with a brunch starting at 9 a.m. cost: \$10 for adults and \$8 for children followed by a four-wheeler rally starting at 11 a.m. cost: 10\$. Traditional games for kids from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and a Barn dance with the homegrown country band beginning at 8:30 p.m. cost: \$10.

July 17: Thirsty Thursday with Tammy Adams from 7

p.m. to 11 p.m.

July 24: Thirsty Thursday with Mlou and Caro from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

July 31: Thirsty Thursday with Aaron Check from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

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:

Kempffer House

The tea room is back beginning **July 2**. Open every Wednesday with sittings at

1 p.m. and 3:15 p.m. Cash only, children \$8, adults \$12, and \$15 for the alcove. Reservations required. For more information, call 418-752-1334 or email heritagenc@globetrotter.net.

NEW CARLISLE:

St. Andrew's Anglican Church

St. Andrews church Spring potluck supper has been postponed until July 19.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: Book Room

Please be advised that the book room is closed for the summer. Anyone who needs assistance can contact Kathleen at 418-392-4896.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: 50+ Club

July: No meeting.
September 20: A Harvest Bingo will begin at 1 p.m. until finished, doors open at 12 p.m.

September 15: Meeting

beginning at 6:30 p.m.

October 20: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

November 17: Meeting

UNITED CHURCH

HOPE TOWN

Sunday, July 13

No Service

Sunday, July 20

2 p.m. Service

UNITED CHURCH

NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, July 13

10 a.m. Service

Sunday, July 20

10 a.m. Service

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, July 13

St. James - Wakeham

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, July 20

St. Philip - St. John

Sandy Beach

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, July 27

10:30 a.m. Outdoor Holy

Eucharist at Fort

Haldimand

7 p.m. Evening Prayer at

St. Matthew's

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, July 13

New Carlisle

10 a.m. Morning Prayer

Port Daniel

10 a.m. Morning Prayer

Sunday, July 20

New Carlisle

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Hope Town

3 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Shigawake

11 a.m. Holy Eucharist



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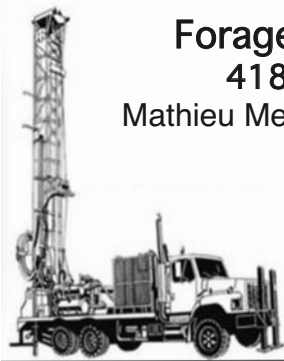
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SCAN ME

Shigawake turns 100

HOLLY SMITH

SHIGAWAKE - The town of Shigawake is getting ready to celebrate a big birthday. This year, the small Gaspé Coast community is turning 100 years old, and everyone is invited to join the fun.

To mark this special milestone, a weekend full of events will take place from Friday, July 11 to Sunday, July 13. The celebration will include food, games, music, and stories about the town's history. It's a chance for people of all ages to come together and celebrate what makes Shigawake such a great place to live.

Friday, July 11 Free BBQ and Games

The weekend begins on Friday at 5 p.m. with a free BBQ at the log cabin. Everyone is welcome to come enjoy a meal with family, friends, and neighbours. If the weather is nice, there will also be outdoor games and activities. It's a perfect way to start the weekend and bring the com-

munity together.

Saturday, July 12 Events at the Fairgrounds

Saturday is filled with exciting events at the Shigawake Fairgrounds.

The day begins at 9 a.m. with a delicious brunch. The cost is \$12 for adults and \$8 for kids under 12.

At 11 a.m., people can join the 4-wheeler rally. It costs \$10 to register. Riders will get the chance to explore the area in a fun and adventurous way. For more information, people can call Bobby at 418-752-4514 or Rodney at 418-391-7480.

Later in the afternoon, at 2 p.m., there will be traditional games for kids. These fun activities will bring back memories of old-fashioned fairground games and will give kids a chance to laugh and play together.

At 8 p.m., everyone is invited to the barn dance, featuring music from the Homegrown Country Band and special guests. It costs \$10 to attend. There will also be a

canteen and bar service available. It's a great way to dance the night away and enjoy local talent.

Sunday, July 13 History and Music

On Sunday, the town will celebrate its history and wrap up the weekend.

At 1 p.m., there will be guest speakers at St. Paul's Church, sharing stories and memories about Shigawake over the years.

At 2 p.m., the Homegrown Trad Band will perform a free concert at the church. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy the music.

Finally, at 4:30 p.m., there will be a reception at the Community Centre, with wine, cheese, and hors d'oeuvres. This closing event will be a time to talk about Shigawake's past, share stories, and say goodbye to a wonderful weekend.

This centennial is a time for people to come together and celebrate all that Shigawake has been, and all it will be in the future.

This poem was originally published in Volume 5, Number 2 of The Gaspé Spec. It is taken from the book Poems on Gaspé and Other Verses by Leslie Ramier.

SHIGAWAKE

*A little village by the Bay,
Where every home has an open door
And welcome all who come their way,
Unmindful whether rich or poor.*

*You will rarely find it on any map,
Of wealth or fame it can little boast,
Yet in this place named Shigawake
Are the ones I love the most.*

*By fertile fields the neighbours live,
Where streams and trees bespeak of rest,
And many would their riches give
To so be blessed.*

*A little village by the Bay,
With wayside church and sloping hill,
And loved ones long since passed away
Are memories that we treasure still,
In Shigawake.*

Leslie Ramier

Friday, July 11th

5PM - Opening ceremony BBQ at the log cabin. Free to everyone.

Outdoor games and activities, weather permitting.



SHIGAWAKE
100 ans
years



CATHERINE BLOUIN
DÉPUTÉE DE BONAVENTURE



Saturday, July 12

Shigawake Fairgrounds

9AM - Brunch. \$12 adult, \$8 kids under 12.

11AM - 4-wheeler rally registration at fairgrounds. \$10 registration. For more information contact Bobby 418-752-4514 or Rodney 418-391-7480

2PM - Kids traditional games at the fairgrounds

8PM - Barn dance featuring the Homegrown Country Band and guests. Entry \$10. Cantine open and bar service available.

Sunday, July 13th

1PM - Opening remarks from guest speakers at St. Paul's Church.

2PM - Music with the Homegrown Trad Band at St Paul's Church. Free entry.

4:30PM - Reception at Community Centre, with wine, cheese and hors d'oeuvres. Sharing Shigawake's history. Closing ceremonies.



Jean Coutu

MRC de BONAVENTURE

