

Shigawake Celebrates 100 Years

HOLLY SMITH

SHIGAWAKE: The municipality of Shigawake proudly marked its 100th anniversary from July 11 to 13 with a weekend full of celebration, remembrance, and heartfelt community spirit. The centennial brought together residents, visitors, and families across generations to honour the rich history and enduring identity of this small but proud Gaspesian town.

With a weekend packed with events, from ATV rides and traditional games to historical displays, community meals, and heartfelt tributes, the celebration captured everything that makes Shigawake a true gem of the region.



Photo: Emily Hocquard

Smiles all around! Young participants proudly show off their winning envelopes after a fun-filled afternoon of traditional games on Saturday.

Weekend Highlights: Food, fun, and local pride

Festivities kicked off on Friday afternoon with a BBQ at the Log Cabin, where locals and visitors gathered to enjoy grilled favourites and reconnect under the summer sun.

The event was family-friendly and full of laughter, a perfect start to a memorable weekend. Local Member of Parliament Alexis Deschênes was also present to speak with residents and take part in the celebrations.

On Saturday, July 12, over 140 people attended the

brunch at the Fair Grounds. Tables were full of food and conversation as old friends and new neighbours came together to mark the milestone.

At 11 a.m., engines revved as more than 70 participants took part in the ATV rally, exploring scenic trails and countryside. Riders of all ages

joined in the fun, adding adventure and energy to the day.

Later that afternoon, at 2 p.m., traditional children's games brought classic fun to the Fair Grounds, where you could hear echos of children laughing and playing, and parents cheering from the sidelines.

At 8 p.m. a lively barn dance featuring the Home-grown Country Band drew a crowd of enthusiastic residents, adding music and fun to the centennial celebrations.

Honouring the community: Youngest and oldest awards

As part of the centennial, the town honoured several individuals who represent both the newest generation and the most seasoned residents of Shigawake: Youngest female: Ellie Hottot; youngest male: Sawyer Almond; Second-oldest citizen: Joyce MacKenzie and oldest citizen: Sarah MacKenzie. (honoured posthumously)

The award for oldest citizen was accepted by Judy McCune the daughter of Sarah MacKenzie, who sadly passed away in early July. The moment was a moving tribute to Sarah's legacy, and the applause was filled with both warmth and respect.

Cont'd on page 2

Family Ties visits Ferme Bourdages

Holly Smith

NEW CARLISLE - Family Ties is making the most of the summer season by organizing fun and engaging outings for families, including a special trip to Ferme Bourdages in Saint-Siméon. Several groups of parents and children took part in this popular annual activity, heading out to the fields to pick fresh, juicy strawberries under the warm July sun.

This popular activity, looked forward to by many each year, offered a perfect combination of outdoor fun, healthy living, and hands-on learning. With the sun shining and the fields bursting with ripe, red berries, families wandered the rows, filling their baskets, and sometimes their mouths, with the sweet taste of summer.

Parents enjoyed a relaxing day out, connecting with one another and watching their children delight in the simple joy of harvesting their own fruit. For the kids, it was a chance to run, explore, and learn where their food comes from in a way that was both educational and delicious.

The outing was just one of many ways Family Ties helps foster strong family bonds and promote community connection throughout the year, offering experiences that are enriching, memorable, and rooted in the local landscape of the region.



Malaya Lee, daughter of Jorja Gallan and Russell Lee, enjoys a sweet summer moment picking strawberries in the field.

Photo: Jorja Gallan

**A walk through
time with SPEC**

Adding a historical touch to the weekend, The Gaspé Spec presented a slideshow of newspaper clippings spanning the past 50 years of life in Shigawake. Residents and municipal staff were delighted to see photos, headlines, and moments from the past, from community events and elections to fairs and festivals, all chronicled through decades of local coverage.

The display brought back memories and gave many a new appreciation for the town's history and the role the community paper has played in preserving it.

**Words from former
mayor Garry Hayes**

Former mayor Garry Hayes addressed attendees with a message focused on the strength and importance of Shigawake's independence. He emphasized that remaining a separate municipality helps protect local services and avoid

rising taxes that could come with amalgamation.

He also praised the town's strong anglophone population and the welcoming, close-knit nature of its people, values that have helped sustain Shigawake for a century.

**Looking ahead
with pride**

The Mayor of Shigawake, Rolande Beebe, told SPEC that the Centennial event was a great success and praised the citizens for their participation and everyone who contributed to making the event memorable. Reflecting on the weekend's significance, she added, "It was a special time to share great memories. May we continue to be united and welcoming everyone in this beautiful town."

Shigawake's 100th anniversary was more than a celebration of years gone by, it was a reminder of what makes the town thrive: connection, tradition, and community pride. As residents looked back with gratitude, they also looked forward with optimism, knowing that the same spirit that built Shigawake will carry it into the next century.



Declan Blackley from St. Catharines, Ontario, watches and dances with joy as his great-uncle Dave Felker entertains the crowd.

Photo: Dave Felker



Mayor Rolande Beebe presented the Oldest Citizen Award to Judy McCune, daughter of Sarah Mackenzie. Mrs. Mackenzie, the recipient, sadly passed away at the beginning of July.

Photo: Pascal Caron



Local Member of Parliament Alexis Deschênes was also present to speak with residents and municipal representatives. Pictured from left to right are: Mayor of Shigawake Rolande Beebe, Member of Parliament Alexis Deschênes, Councillor Michael Hayes, Councillor Georgetowne Chapados, Administrative Assistant Pascal Caron, Councillor Nancy Skene and Councillor Marcel Gagnon.

Photo: Alexis Deschênes Facebook



Citizens past and present gathered at St. Paul's Church to enjoy a lively musical performance by the Homegrown Trad Band.

Photo: Pascal Caron



Over 70 participants hit the trails during the rally, bringing excitement and community spirit to the centennial weekend.

Photo: Dave Felker



A special cake was prepared by Pamela Huntington to mark Shigawake's 100th anniversary, with attendees gathering to sing "Happy Birthday" in celebration of the town's centennial milestone.

Photo: Pascal Caron

Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie acquies 256 wood chip cars from CN

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW RICHMOND – The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie (SCFG) has just acquired a fleet of 256 woodchip cars from Canadian National (CN) for the transportation of wood chips. These cars join a fleet of 32 cars of the same type already owned by the SCFG.

The amount of this acquisition has not been disclosed by either party, but Luc Lévesque, director general of the SCFG, indicates that it is a transaction worth several million dollars. This transfer of ownership was signed in mid-June and, according to Mr. Lévesque, is beneficial to both companies.

"We have a fleet of cars acquired a few years ago, and it is aging. Our number of cars wasn't large enough to make modifications and extend their useful life economically. In speaking with CN, we realized that they had the same problem, but if CN decided to transfer the fleet to us, we would have reached a turning point to resolve our equipment problem, given the traffic we have," explains Luc Lévesque.

"It's a business opportunity for the railway company. It will generate millions of dollars in revenue per year. It represents half the revenue from our best years, and it diversifies our operations," he explains.

These "best years" occurred between late 2016 to May

2022, when SCFG transported 118 trains of wind turbine blades to the southern United States, in partnership with CN. This was oversized transport and very advantageous financially.

SCFG owned 32 woodchip cars before the transaction, compared to 288 now. CN's woodchip cars are also of a certain age, 50 years for the oldest, but it's fairly simple, if it hasn't already been done, to extend their lifespan by 10 to 15 years.

"We had a fleet of 32 cars, and now we have a fleet of nearly 300 cars. This gives us access to parts in greater quantities. With 288 cars, you become a major customer for suppliers, with the savings that generates," emphasizes Mr. Lévesque.

Diversifying revenue sources

The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, a municipally controlled entity, has retained customers who used CN's woodchip cars. These sawmills and panel production plants are located in several regions of three provinces.

"There are obviously some of our cars in the Gaspé Peninsula, but we also have them in Ontario, Mauricie, New Brunswick, Abitibi, and Bas-Saint-Laurent. CN and other railway companies haul them. We are paid for their rental. It's

been our life's work, seizing business opportunities," explains Luc Lévesque.

For the past decade, the SCFG's operations have been limited to one-third of a network owned by the Quebec Ministry of Transport. This 325-kilometre network runs from Matapédia to Gaspé, but only the 115-kilometre Matapédia-New Richmond section is passable. The reopening of the Caplan-Port Daniel route, where Saint Mary's Cement is located, has been delayed half a dozen times since 2020, due to multiple factors.

The cement plant is expected to be accessible before the end of 2025. In the meantime, trucks are being loaded at Port Daniel, and some of these stop in New Richmond for cement transshipment into rail cars. This transshipment rate will increase in mid-July due to the reopening of a rail unloading line in Moncton, a major market for Saint Mary's Cement.

Since the stop of windmill blade hauling, cement traffic has been SCFG's primary source of revenue in the region, and the addition of 54 miles, or 90 kilometres, to the rail car route will boost this revenue. Not to mention that serving the cement plant directly will increase the competitiveness of rail, which is currently hampered in that regard by the truck-railway disruption in New Richmond.



Photo: G. Gagné

Woodchip cars still bearing the CN logo have reappeared in the Gaspé Peninsula in recent weeks, as seen here in Matapédia. They now belong to the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie.

Better competitiveness through loading at Port Daniel should generate increased traffic.

The transportation of wind turbine blades was also impacted by the use of trucks between the LM Wind Power blade plant and the transshipment site in New Richmond due to the condition of the railway east of New Richmond and the delays in railway repairs between 2015 and now. The SCFG would have benefited from much larger revenues had windmill blades been loaded in Gaspé before being exported to Texas and the surrounding states.

The ingenuity of the SCFG team was recognized in May by Canadian National, which designated it North America's

outstanding short line railway over the past year.

CN collaborates with approximately 100 regional railways across North America. The award presented to the SCFG recognizes past and present partnerships in the transportation of blades, cement, wood chips, lumber, steel and other more occasional commodities.

"The railway sector already employs people in the region and will be a major source of employment, even more so in a few years. One day, the fleet of wood chip cars will have to be replaced. It would be beneficial to do this here. There are already companies that could do it," concludes Luc Lévesque.

Local aggregate traffic to relieve pressure on highway

GILLES GAGNÉ

MARIA - The SCFG is partnering with a contractor, Construction Béluga, to transport aggregates for beach replenishment in Maria. This transport began on July 10 with two test runs.

The volume is extremely important, at a range of 500,000 to 550,000 tons, and the distance covered by the trains will be very short by usual railway standards, between 15 and 16 miles, from Nouvelle to Maria's Hirondelles street, where the cars are unloaded.

Luc Lévesque, director general of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, specifies that although this traffic makes total sense, he didn't have to go far to land



Photo: G. Gagné

The first air dump car has just emptied its load, the first of about 7,000 for the coming months in Maria.

the contract. It came from the contractor.

"On Thursday, June 19, I received a call from Béluga.

We started looking into it seriously the following Monday morning. The quarry is in Nouvelle. The route is 15

miles (25 kilometers). I managed to find some cars. It will generate 7,000 cars of traffic for us, and everyone will benefit from it. That's what a regional railway is supposed to be for. Not many people could have managed to do that. We did it without cutting prices, at a decent rate, and with a profit," explains Luc Lévesque.

In 2021, the SCFG had its best year in its 18-year history, transporting 4,636 railcars outside the region. In 2024, this traffic was reduced to 2,066 railcars. The loss of the windmill blade trains in 2022 largely explains the decline.

Maria Mayor Jean-Claude Landry says that beach replenishment would have resulted in "40 trucks per hour from 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m.,

maybe 7 p.m. That's practically 12 hours, between 400 and 500 trucks per day, during the peak tourist season, between Nouvelle and Maria. Rail is really the preferred option. One railcar can carry 100 tons of material. That's 8 to 10 trucks with 10 wheels. The total tonnage of beach replenishment will be between 500,000 and 550,000 tons," he explains.

"There will be noise and dust for people living on Rue des Hirondelles, where the trains will be unloaded. I met with them. They certainly see the inconveniences. If there is damage, the street will be resurfaced. There will be alternative routes for people living north of Rue des

Cont'd on page 5



Gilles Gagné

Commentary

Fast-track push will rightfully face hurdles

On July 16-17, Canada’s prime minister Mark Carney invited the country’s Indigenous leaders in Gatineau to hear what they had to say about his government’s recent decisions, most notably, the major infrastructure and industrial projects that the federal government hopes to launch during its current term.

Not surprisingly, the chiefs had plenty to say. Right from the onset of the morning meeting, the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations issued a written statement that was released around lunch time.

The Indigenous groups from that province first illustrated the context that prompted Mark Carney to listen. Canada's government approach to resource and infrastructure development consists of a fast-tracked rush, motivated by American president Donald Trump’s trade war.

The British Columbia First Nations stated that "the Government of Canada has been put on notice. With or without you, First Nations will continue to exercise, assert, and implement our rights within our territories. We will exhaust every avenue necessary to ensure the federal government fully respects its own laws and upholds our legal orders."

They added that "we call on your government to stand in unity with First Nations across Canada and firmly commit to fully upholding First Nations’ free, prior and informed consent within the One Canadian Economy Act."

Submitted to the House of Commons by the Liberal Party, that One Canadian Economy Act, also referred to as Law C-5, received the approval of the Conservative Party. The act could bulldoze away some procedural steps common to previous major projects, notably environmental assessment, which could be shortened and limited to one jurisdiction, either federal or provincial.

Other First Nations expressed mixed reviews. A Cree First Nation in Alberta, based in Mikisew, later stated, "this meeting is not consultation. There is a long road ahead for any meaningful consultation."

Another First Nation invited Mr. Carney to Fort Chipewyan, a zone also known as the Treaty 8 territory, "near where you (the prime minister) were born in Fort Smith."

The program of the visit would be simple: "We can share with you how we have been severely impacted by the cumulative effects of virtually unmitigated development in our territory."

Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty, who was previously Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Cree, told CBC that First Nations buy-in is a must for major projects in the national interest. However, she also pointed out that the chance of a project going ahead without Indigenous consent was "very low" and "almost nonexistent."

To put it plainly, there is still a lack of clarity regarding Minister Gull-Masty’s position. A "must" for approval doesn’t square well with a "very low" risk of seeing a venture going ahead without Indigenous consent.

She at least recognized the frustration among some chiefs. "It was clear that there were varying degrees of trust in the room," the minister told CBC.

Minister Gull-Masty also stated that some communities supported the One Canadian Economy Act and that their position would be made public in the coming days.

It has occurred over the last few years that some First Nations communities located in Western Canada have approved oil and gas pipelines in exchange for royalties and jobs.

However, it would be surprising to witness a high number of such approvals over the next few months, considering that the ventures targeted by the Carney government often cover a vast territory. Such as the pipelines and, in some cases, wind-farms.

Truth be told, the larger the territory, the harder it is to achieve consensus.

Fast-track times two

The July 16-17 meetings in Gatineau marked the first-time government officials briefed First Nations leaders and rights holders on the new law. In all fairness, it should have happened before the June 26 approval in the House of Commons. Bloc Québécois and New Democratic Party Members of Parliament were already complaining about the lack of discussion regarding what was then still Bill C-5. The number of disgruntled stakeholders has since grown.

The Assembly of First Nations began the Gatineau gathering by first attending information

sessions on a legal review of the new act, prepared by Indigenous law experts.

As a result, the chiefs came prepared with thorough questions emphasizing three major concerns: the bill’s potential to exacerbate environmental harm, the lack of free, prior and informed consent and the absence of revenue-sharing mechanisms that would ensure Indigenous nations benefit fairly from development on their lands.

The federal election was held on April 28. Bill C-5 was adopted on June 26, close to two months later. We all agree on the fact that the Mark Carney government needed a few days to appoint a cabinet and get organized, but holding the Gatineau event after the adoption of the bill was awkward, to say the least. How can First Nations leaders feel that they were consulted on such an important topic, one that, once again, involves unceded territories?

Can the One Canadian Economy Act be fixed?



For many First Nations leaders, Gatineau was their first opportunity to express serious concerns about the new legislation. It is hard to understand why such an occasion was only provided once again, after the law was already passed at the House of Commons.

It largely explains why some reactions came under the form of “thank you for hosting this session, this subjugation session –not a consultation session,” as well as “what you see here, all the people that are gathered here, came a long way to share that what Canada’s doing is not correct.”

Most First Nations leaders feel excluded from the federal government’s plans. They believe they were left out of the process entirely, and that the July 16-17 gathering was essentially an event to save face. They rightfully expressed cold comments about the exercise, a form of protest, not a show of cooperation.

The meeting’s conclusion is probably darker than what Prime Minister Carney had expected.

Rather than being centred around policy debate, the gathering now symbolizes, like many previous federal-Indigenous meetings, a strained relationship, marked by expanding legal resistance and a two-fold question now posed both by Indigenous chiefs and Members of Parliament from the Liberal and Conservative parties alike: Can the One Canadian Economy Act be fixed? and Can First Nations trust that government actions will improve over the short term?



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Police Report

Human bones found in Cascapedia-St. Jules

The Sûreté du Québec confirmed on July 17 that a human skull was found on the evening of July 14 in Cascapedia-St. Jules, and indicated that additional bones and various items were also discovered during the search. The skull was located a few dozen metres from Route 299, near what looks like a gravel pit. A small cliff stands near the site where the skull was found.

“This is what we believed, however, you will understand that this was not the expertise of the police officers, but that of our colleagues [...] a pathologist and forensic anthropologist”, explains sergeant Audrey-Anne Bilodeau, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec (SQ).

Investigators and forensic experts visited the scene of the discovery on Tuesday, July 15, and again the following day. “Their searches were conducted using several means, drones and the canine squad among others. They revealed various items and other bones, all of which will be sent for analysis, to help, firstly, identify the person, but also to determine the causes and circumstances of death,” added Sergeant Bilodeau.

She stresses that the death was not recent. “However, it is not possible to determine a period for now. Nor is possible for now to say if it is the body of a man or a woman. It is far too early to confirm the identity of a potential victim. Experts are analyzing the remains to try to obtain a possible identification, but it is meticulous work that takes time. That work will be carried out by the experts of the Montreal Forensic Science and Legal Medicine Laboratory,” specifies Audrey-Anne Bilodeau.

The passerby who discovered the skull was walking between kilometres 10 and 11 along Route 299 in Cascapédia-Saint-Jules. The discovery occurred shortly before 7 p.m., according to Sergeant Bilodeau.

Police officers were alerted immediately and set up a security perimeter. The field search is now complete, but the investigation is ongoing.

Furthermore, the Municipality of Cascapédia-Saint-Jules posted a message on its Facebook page, stating that it is collaborating with the authorities. The Municipality also reminds its residents that the authorities are taking all necessary measures to ensure their safety.

The SQ is not speculating on the possible identity of the deceased. “Such a discovery increases the hopes of families who have been looking for the body of their next of kin. I see all the comments on Facebook but it is way too early to make guesses”, she assures.

The name of Nadia Lantin was quickly mentioned on social media. The 51-year-old woman from Chandler was last seen on Wednesday, September 22, 2021, around 5 p.m., leaving work on René-Lévesque Boulevard West in Chandler. Her vehicle was located on September 23, on a trail in the ZEC des Anses. She was believed to be traveling on foot. She was last seen wearing her IGA uniform. The place where her vehicle was found and the Cascapedia-St. Jules location where the body was found are about 140 kilometres apart.

Another Gaspesian has been missing for several years. Maxime Dugas-Lepage was murdered on January 20, 2020, in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts. Steve Lévesque, another man from Sainte-Anne-des-Monts was convicted of second-degree murder in that affair because a witness testified having seen the slaying. However, the victim’s body was never found. Steve Lévesque will be eligible for parole after serving 16 years in prison. Kilometre 11 on Route 299 is also about 140 kilometres from Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

A man from Port Daniel, Will Langlois, has not been seen since February 5, 1998. He was a witness to the 1996 murder of Daniel Langlois, on Christmas Eve. Will Langlois disappeared while the accused murderer, Rodrigue Boudreau, was

awaiting trial. Mr. Langlois’ testimony at the preliminary hearing was admitted into evidence at the trial in the fall of 1998, which proceeded in his absence. Rodrigue Boudreau entered a plea of guilty on a reduced charge that same day.

SQ operations leads to five arrests

Between June 30 and July 5, 2025, SQ officers from the Rocher-Percé MRC made five arrests related to impaired driving due to alcohol, drugs, or a combination of both.

On June 30, 2025, at approximately 8:45 p.m., police officers stopped a vehicle in the area of highway 132 in Chandler. The driver, a 27-year-old man from Victoriaville, showed obvious signs of drug-impaired driving. He was arrested and taken to hospital for a blood sample. The results are currently pending.

On July 1, 2025, at approximately 2:30 a.m., another incident occurred at the intersection of highway 132 and Chemin Leblanc, also in Chandler. A 17-year-old female driver from Grande-Rivière was also arrested for drug-impaired driving. A blood test was performed, and the results are pending.

On July 2, 2025, at approximately 1:30 a.m., a 26-year-old man from Percé was stopped by police on Bougainville Road. He was arrested for alcohol-impaired driving. He failed the breathalyzer test. His driver's license was immediately suspended for 90 days in accordance with the Highway Safety Code.

On July 3, 2025, at approximately 1 a.m., a 50-year-old woman from Percé was arrested for alcohol, drug, or a combination of both after being stopped near highway 132 in Percé. As in the previous cases, a blood test was performed and the results are pending.

Finally, on July 5, 2025, at approximately 1:30 a.m., a 23-year-old driver from Sainte-Thérèse was arrested in the Grande-Allée Est area of Grande-Rivière. The police had reasonable grounds to believe he was driving while impaired by drugs. However, he refused to provide a blood sample as required by law. He may face charges for refusing to provide a blood sample. His driver's license was immediately suspended for 90 days in accordance with the Highway Safety Code.

Sûreté du Québec to be present on roads during construction break

During the construction holiday, the Sûreté du Québec reminds road and recreational tourism network users that it will be stepping up its operations to encourage caution, both on the road network and on bodies of water and trails until August 3.

The construction break is a time of year when the number of fatal and injured collisions is particularly high. In 2024, during this same period, 14 people lost their lives in 13 fatal collisions on the road network across the entire territory served by the Sûreté du Québec. Four deaths also occurred in four fatal collisions involving off-road vehicles.

Approximately one-third of Quebecers take time off during this period, which significantly increases road travel, as well as the number of people participating in water activities and trails.

The Sûreté du Québec therefore encourages vacationers to travel safely and to practice their favourite recreational and tourism activities in compliance with current regulations. It's important to remember that helmets are mandatory for all-terrain vehicle users, and it's strongly recommended to wear a personal flotation device at all times during water activities.

To stay informed about police operations during the construction holiday, the public is encouraged to follow the Sûreté du Québec on social media and through traditional news outlets.

SCFG:

Cont'd from page 3

Chardonnerets. This work is urgent. We are on the verge of losing our supermarket due to erosion, and the hospital will eventually be threatened. The railcar solution is a good use of the railway. For transporting heavy equipment, the railway is the way of the future,” assures Mr. Landry.

The SCFG acted quickly to find and adapt cars

The first test run was conducted with six “air dump” cars full of aggregates, with about 160,000 pounds, or 80 tons, per car. The air dump system makes one side of the car falling over. At the same time, the floor of the car lists to favour the emptying operation. Air is pumped into cylinders to facilitate the operation. The air comes from



Photo: G. Gagné

The SCFG crew reached the unloading spot in Maria at the end of the July 10 morning.

the locomotive or locomotives.

The SCFG rented five air dump cars from Chemin de fer de Charlevoix (CFC) over the previous days in order to

add them to its two similar cars. Four CFC cars were used for the first test train, and the two SCFG cars.

“We had a little problem with the hoses of the

Charlevoix cars during the first test run but we found a way around the problem. It took a while (about 45-50 minutes) to empty the first train but on the second test run, the six cars were emptied fast, like 1-2-3-4-5-6. Altogether, with the switch of locomotives from the rear engine becoming the front one for the return trip, and a few operational manoeuvres, we stayed only 20 minutes in Maria,” says Luc Lévesque.

The SCFG had bought 23 covered cement hoppers in 2024, cars that function according to gravity. There were put to good use during the third week of July. By July 15-16, the tops of those cars had been removed to facilitate their loading.

“With the seven air dump cars, the 23 hoppers and five ballast cars, we are able to make four loaded trains per day. I am not excluding six

daily trains. They will meet in Carleton, the only siding track left between Nouvelle and Maria. I thought at one point of rebuilding a siding in Maria but I decided not too. Our plan is feasible as it stands,” concludes Mr. Lévesque.

A storage space was laid out on the east side of Hironnelles street for the loading of trucks from the piles created for railcars’ unloading.

The financial terms of the agreement between Béluga Construction and the SCFG are not revealed for now.

The agreement is deplored by independent truckers of the area but the tourism industry leaders, who feared the consequences of traffic jams between Nouvelle and Maria, are discretely expressing relief, as 40 loaded trucks per hour translate into 80, because they must come back to the quarry.

Revival of Gaspé Mines in Murdochville: *Osisko seeks a solution to dewater pit*

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

MURDOCHVILLE - Some 70 people listened to a presentation by Osisko Metals on July 8, which focused on the environmental aspects of the possible revival of Gaspé Mines in Murdochville. These public presentations have become a tradition to provide updates on the company's various progress.

For example, since the start of the 2025 drilling season last winter, no fewer than 43 wells have been drilled over a total distance of 31,509 metres, out of a planned total of 120 wells over 110,000 metres, primarily on Copper Mountain.

One of the main issues mentioned to attentive citizens during the approximately 40-minute presentation was the excessively high copper concentration in the pit's artificial lake.

The company must find a way to reduce the copper concentration for salmon before dewatering the pit and releasing the water into the York River.

"When we dewater the pit, we want to make sure there's no copper. We're going to protect the salmon and we're going to proceed slowly so that the river can receive this water," explained Alexandria Marcotte, vice-president of operations at Osisko Metals. About a hundred tests have been conducted so far to find the ideal recipe.

Tests could be conducted in the river in September with the goal of launching the dewatering process in the summer of 2026. The process could take between two and four years.

Everything will depend primarily on the weather and the amount of precipitation that falls on Murdochville during this period. The mining company promised during the evening that it would return to the public before launching the dewatering operation.

An experimental fishery will also be conducted to characterize the condition of the salmon in the river so that their health can be monitored during the operation and their habitat preserved.

"Osisko Metals wants to conduct research at the same time as the work is underway," she said.

The wildlife inventory noted the presence of the Bicknell Thrush, a bird with special status. Protective measures will have to be considered. The flora's characterization is also underway.

Resource estimate by early February

Meanwhile, the drilling will allow the company to submit a resource estimate by February 2026.

"We really want to define the resource because it will be important before conducting the economic study," continues Ms. Marcotte.

The economic study will then begin, albeit slightly behind the initial schedule.

It is expected to be completed by the end of 2026, with environmental studies beginning around 2028.

If all goes well, the mine could be operational by the turn of 2030.

Osisko presented new drilling results in June that showed an average copper grade ranging from 0.25% to 1.92%, the latter value occurring over a short 30-metre segment south of Copper Mountain. This data will be included in a new resource estimate.

According to the company, the inferred mineral resource is 670 million tonnes at an average grade of 0.38%. The future looks interesting and profitable.

"We think so. We'll keep drilling, and as long as we're here, the answer is yes." That's what Osisko Metals believes," says Ms. Marcotte.

The mayor remains optimistic

Also in attendance, Murdochville mayor Délicia Ritchie Roussy made no secret of her optimism about the revival of the mine that has marked her town's history.

"It's progressing very well. We're really well informed from them. They're not hiding anything. We have all the necessary information. I feel very good about that," she says. According to her, residents are generally in agreement with the revival project.

"For their children and grandchildren. There are grandparents whose grandchildren have gone out to work. If they can work here... because they'll hire a lot of

people," believes the mayor.

Ritchie Roussy admitted she never imagined the copper mine could return to Murdochville.

"When it closed, we never thought to ask Noranda if there was any copper left. We thought there were none left at all," she says.

The mayor plans to seek one final term in the upcoming November election to help shape the project's future.

"Above all, negotiate the post-mining period. When they open, we'll already negotiate the closure with well-established clauses with the mine," she promises to avoid a repeat of history.

On August 25, 2002, citizens voted in a referendum to close the town after the mine closed in October 1999, and the smelter closed in April 2002.




Photo: N. Sergerie

Some 70 people attended this other information evening on the Gaspé Mines revival project at the Murdochville community centre.

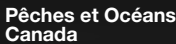
Some 600 people lost their jobs during these two closures. However, Quebec rejected the referendum result and kept the town open.

To aid recovery, a call cen-

tre was launched in 2003, creating about 55 jobs. During the mine's boom years from 1974 to 1982, Gaspé Mines employed around 2,000 people.



Fisheries and Oceans
Canada



Pêches et Océans
Canada

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) would like to remind the public of the importance of checking open areas before proceeding with shellfish harvesting


Several tools are available to help you check before you harvest:

- Use the interactive SHELLI application, available at www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/CheckBeforeYouHarvest, or use the QR code below with your mobile device. You can even receive notices of area openings and closures directly to your inbox. Go to our SHELLI map and click on "I want to" to sign up!
- Call **1-800-463-4204** and a recorded message will inform you which areas are closed or open to shellfish harvesting in the Gaspé peninsula.
- Pay attention to signs posted where shellfish harvest is prohibited.

Remember that eating contaminated shellfish from prohibited areas is dangerous and can lead to paralysis or even death.

Visit the DFO Quebec Region website for the regulations on shellfish harvesting.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is closely monitoring shellfish harvesting and closed areas and asks the general public to report any poaching activity to 1-800-463-9057 or online on our website.



Canada

Electoral map: process is still being challenged

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - A coalition of elected officials from the Laurentians, Centre-du-Québec, and Estrie regions is seeking permission to appeal to the Court of Appeal the trial Superior Court’s decision that rejected the motion to challenge the adoption of Bill 59, the legislation that ended the electoral map revision process.

This May 29 ruling allowed the two ridings of Bonaventure and Gaspé to be retained for the October 2026 election.

At that time, Judge Alexander Pless rejected the request by elected officials from the Laurentides, Centre-du-Québec, the Brome-Missisquoi MRC, and the City of Sherbrooke against the Chief Electoral Officer of Quebec and the Attorney General of Quebec to revoke the Act to interrupt the electoral district delimitation process, which was adopted by the National Assembly of Quebec in a unanimous vote on May 2, 2024.

The commission responsible for redrawing the electoral map for the 2026 and 2030 elections had proposed removing one riding in Gaspésie to create Gaspé-Bonaventure and eliminating another on the island of Montreal to establish new ridings in the Laurentians and Centre-du-Québec.

During hearings held from May 8 to 14, the Gaspésie MRCs argued that the proposed electoral map would seriously undermine the principle of effective representation and significantly harm the region’s voice in Quebec’s democratic institutions.

In the notice of appeal filed on June 27, the appellant argued that the Superior Court recognized that Bill 59 infringed on the right to vote, as protected by section 3 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, but ruled that this infringement was justified under section 1 of the Charter.

In his decision, the judge noted that “in principle, everyone’s vote must carry equal weight. However, section 3 of the Charter guarantees the right to effective representation. This requires taking into account other factors that conflict with the strict arithmetic equivalence of votes.”

However, he also concluded that the Attorney General of Quebec had successfully demonstrated that the Act was justified under section 1 of the Charter.

The appellants also note that the trial judge dismissed the option of adding ridings on the grounds that it did not have strong majority support in the National Assembly and intend to demonstrate that the judge ignored the possibility of adding four ridings without imposing on the Electoral Representation Commission where to add them, an option that was nevertheless raised by two opposition parties and for which the Attorney General of Quebec never explained why it was rejected.

The group of elected officials also explains that the trial court failed to analyze the fact that, in order to protect a single riding in Gaspésie, the legislature significantly infringed on the right to effective representation of half a million voters in constituencies in a positive exception situation and committed a mixed error of law and fact in concluding that the measure is proportional despite the detrimental effects, which it describes as significant.

The mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, who is a party to the litigation, said he had received the proceedings and that his lawyers are currently reviewing the case.

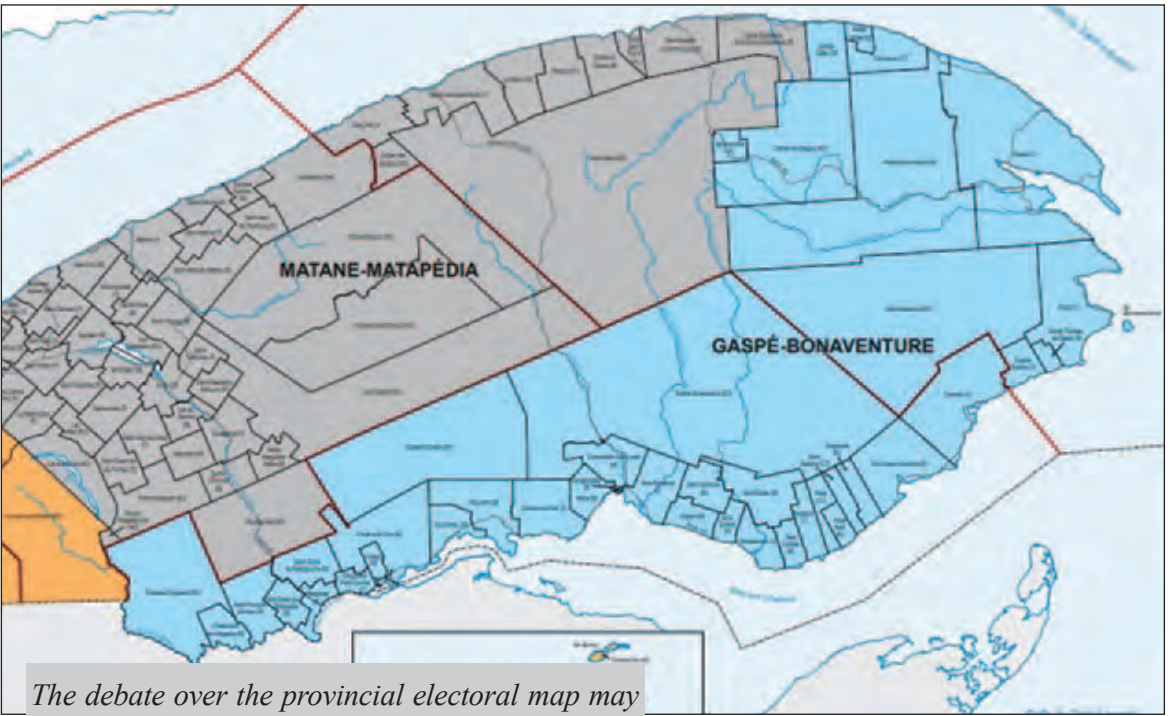
“We may contest the appeal. Our lawyers are looking into the merits of the case to help us decide how to proceed. I still believe that the trial court’s decision was very well-founded and essentially echoed the Supreme Court’s Carter decision,” said Mr. Côté.

The decision upheld Bonaventure and Gaspé for the 2026 election, but the judge warned that for the subsequent election, the National Assembly would have to review the electoral law to protect what little democratic weight remains in the regions.

“I continue to believe in the principle of effective representation, which goes far beyond the number of voters in a given territory,” the mayor continued. If the Court of Appeal hears the case, it could go all the way to the Supreme Court, but Daniel Côté does not believe that the country’s highest court will revisit the case.

“It’s possible, but the Supreme Court has already ruled on similar appeals. Unless the basis of the Carter Decision [of 1991] is called into question, that society is so different today that the Supreme Court would revisit it. But we’re not there yet,” he says.

“But the ruling is solid and was not written on the back of a



The debate over the provincial electoral map may continue before the Court of Appeal.

Photo: Archives

napkin. It is a ruling that reflects the essence of the Supreme Court and other case law. The ruling goes into great depth. Any ruling can be challenged before the Court of Appeals, but I find the trial court’s ruling to be solid,” said the mayor of Gaspé, who is waiting for the prosecutors to take a position before going any further.

It should be noted that the commission suggested merging the ridings of Gaspé and Bonaventure, bringing together the MRCs of Côte-de-Gaspé,

Rocher-Percé, Bonaventure, and Avignon to create Gaspé-Bonaventure, while Haute-Gaspésie would be transferred to the riding of Matane-Matapédia, a riding in the Lower St. Lawrence region.

As of April 30, 2023, Bonaventure had 35,898 voters and Gaspé had 30,131, far below the minimum threshold. The gap was -29.2% and -40.6%, respectively.

Gaspé ranked third among the least populous ridings, behind the Îles-de-la-Madeleine, which has exceptional status,

and Ungava.

According to vote projections based on data from the Institut de la statistique du Québec, the gap between Gaspé and the average is expected to soon exceed that of Ungava.

In 2017, the commission maintained Gaspé’s negative exception status and granted the same status to Bonaventure.

However, as the representation disparities have increased, the commission declined to renew this status.

Chandler wants to continue its development

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER - The Town of Chandler wants to continue its economic development by analyzing the possibility of building businesses on Commercial Street, on land occupied by the former Gaspésia paper mill.

The municipality has commissioned an environmental study to determine whether structures can be built along this stretch, with the goal of establishing local businesses between the town hall parking lot and the golf course.

“We would have the possibility of having buildable land. We are having it checked to see if the contamination is significant enough to prevent that,” notes the Mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche.

According to the mayor, there is interest from entrepreneurs who would like to set up shop there. If the study is conclusive, construction could begin in 2026 or 2027.

“That was the parking lot at that level. We believe the pollution is a little lower. That’s why we’re having it checked. If there is potential, we will try to make the most of it,” explains the elected official, thinking in particular of the additional revenue in the form of municipal taxes.

A permit for Han Logement

Han Logement has applied for a building permit for its project to build 32 affordable apartments for people with disabilities in Chandler.

The \$10 million project will see four complexes of eight units each constructed on Micmacs Street. “This is a crucial step. They have applied for their permits. We can assume that everything is going well. Construction should begin in late summer or early fall. There has been a slight delay. There was an easement issue with Hydro-Québec. We’ve sorted that out,” said the mayor.

According to the mayor, the organization’s crowdfunding campaign—aiming to raise \$400,000—is progressing well. A second phase could add another 24 units to the project.

A three-dimensional dock

Chandler will soon present a three-dimensional model of its proposed redevelopment of the former commercial dock into a recreational and tourism facility.

The mayor hopes this visual tool will serve as a final pitch to convince Ottawa to invest in the project. “It’s a beautiful project, and making it visual shows what the final product will look like. These people came to the wharf and saw the potential. Having this tool can only help us in carrying out the project,” said Mr. Daraïche.

The mayor hopes to present the project to Transport Canada this fall.

Ottawa has expressed interest in transferring ownership of the infrastructure, which has been closed since 2016 due to its poor condition. A figure of \$60 million has been mentioned to refurbish the facility before transferring it to the town.

Niagara has imposed a tourist tax since 2019 to fund its infrastructure

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

NIAGARA FALLS, Ont. – A five-day stay for a family in Niagara Falls could cost around \$200 in various tourist fees, which help fund the infrastructure and activities of Canada's tourism capital.

Every year, approximately 14 million tourists visit the famous falls, but the Niagara Falls Tourism Office refuses to disclose its operating budget, instead referring inquiries to the City.

The Municipal Accommodations Tax (MAT) is a mandatory tax imposed by the city council on the purchase of short-term accommodations for a continuous period of 28 days or less in hotels, motels, inns, bed and breakfasts, and vacation rentals in the city of Niagara Falls. It has been in effect since 2019.

The purpose of the MAT is to support and develop the tourism industry in Niagara Falls and improve the quality of life for city residents.

The objectives of the tax include, but are not limited to, increasing tourist visitation; increasing total tourist spending; increasing the development of tourism assets and tax assessment; and undertaking environmental sustainability initiatives to support the



Photo: N. Sergerie

Niagara Falls attracts some 14 million visitors annually, according to the Niagara Falls Tourism Office.

tourism industry and the broader community.

In 2017, Ontario passed a law allowing municipalities to impose a hotel tax.

Since June 1, the rate has been set at \$4 per night for a two-star establishment and to \$7 per night for a five-star establishment. Unrated properties are required to charge \$5 per night. Initially, the tax was set at \$2, regardless of category. Beginning in April 2026, the MAT will be converted to 4% of the accommodation bill.

The MAT must be clearly listed on the guest's receipt or invoice.

In addition, the tourism office adds that, as in other

tourist cities around the world, some hotels may charge additional hotel or resort fees to cover ancillary services. Some businesses may also charge additional service fees. Businesses are allowed to set their own prices and add discretionary service fees. The amount charged must be communicated to the potential customer in advance and not presented as a "tax."

As prices and service charges are determined individually by each business, these charges may vary. Ontario businesses are required to comply with the Ontario Consumer Protection Act, which covers these requirements.

Niagara Falls Tourism specifies that it is not responsible for setting prices, processing, or collecting service charges.

In addition, parking is subject to a fee: the cheapest lots start at \$10 and are located some distance from the main tourist attractions. The closer you get to the attractions, the higher the rate, up to \$35 per day for covered parking.

In addition, there is an efficient public transportation system that allows visitors to visit all the sites between the large parking lot west of the city and Niagara-on-the-Lake, a historic resort area. Along the way, there are many vineyards and fruit growers, including Ontario peaches.

One thing is noticeable when tourists visit Niagara Falls. The restrooms are very clean and odor-free. No trash cans overflow at any time of day, despite a constant influx of tourists. The tourist infrastructure is in excellent condition, clean, and the staff—even the students—are courteous and smiling.

Several new activities are offered to tourists who visit the tourist destination fairly regularly.

The Niagara Falls Finance Department reports that it has collected \$4,017,272.04 with the measure for the 2024 fis-

cal year. It is again specified that the money is used to promote tourist activities.

A contrast with Percé

However, the principle of the tourist tax sparked considerable debate in Percé.

It was introduced on May 1, 2022, but the court ruled it illegal in June 2023 on the grounds that 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 appoint a third party as tax collector, but that this role could not be imposed, which exceeded the powers granted.

Percé had initiated proceedings in the Court of Appeal, but the council withdrew in June 2024.

Following the July 1 council meeting, Mayor Daniel Leboeuf stated that he had not received any feedback from groups of merchants, hoteliers, or restaurateurs who wanted to propose alternatives to the tax as it was proposed.

He pointed out that Percé devotes a significant portion of its budget to hospitality and infrastructure, asserting that the industry must do its part.

Gaspé wants to position itself as a leader in responsible tourism

JEAN-PHILIPPE THIBAUT
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Town of Gaspé is launching its first-ever Four-season sustainable destination strategy. The roadmap is described as ambitious and aims to guide the territory's tourism development "in a harmonious, environmentally friendly manner that benefits the entire community."

Mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté notes that Gaspé is one of the first towns in Quebec to adopt such a plan. "For our destination, we expect to become a Quebec leader in sustainable tourism, authentic tourism, and four-season tourism. We anticipate an improvement in the quality of life for residents."

For the mayor, sustainable development is no longer an option. "It must practically be



Photo: J-P Thibault

Gaspé mayor Daniel Côté at a press conference at town hall.

an obligation. It's a condition for success. We can no longer conduct development the way we did 100 years ago."

The strategy unveiled on June 25 is structured around four priority areas of intervention: sustainable mobility and

connectivity, four-season tourism, environmental preservation and responsible management, as well as collaborative governance and sustainable strategy.

"This strategy is an element that will guide our actions in sustainable tourism for years to come [...] It gives us the tools to develop a thriving tourism economy that respects our exceptional environment and contributes directly to the quality of life of our citizens," adds Daniel Côté.

Four Seasons

Earlier this year, Gaspé hosted winter cruises for the first time, welcoming Le Commandant Charcot. The town administration sees this as just the beginning of its four-season tourism develop-

ment.

"We've put ourselves on the map with this, but it's a bit of a pretext to promote genuine winter tourism development," notes Daniel Côté. We've been talking about it for years, but we've taken the bull by the horns and it's a development area we're going to focus on. We're still in a summer tourism paradigm. The results are starting to show, but we're still very tied to summer."

To support fall tourism, a \$50,000 grant was provided earlier to the Berceau du Canada team to enable operations during peak international cruise season. The town's proposed new arena project is also back in the spotlight. The mayor believes such infrastructure would help support both sports and event tourism.

Other potential growth areas include backcountry skiing and snowmobiling—"when it snows," Côté notes. Daniel Côté is also open to artificial snowmaking at Mont Bechervaise, which is owned by the Town.

"Studies are underway and we are contributing to them, but there are a million technical issues [...] There are different options on the table, and I think it will become a priority," he explains.

The next steps of the Four-Season sustainable destination strategy will include the establishment of a monitoring committee to oversee the implementation of the action plan and the search for funding to carry out priority projects. The full report on the process is available for consultation on the Town of Gaspé's website.

Gasoline still at premium prices in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Gaspé and Sainte-Anne-des-Monts regions continue to rank among the areas with the highest gasoline prices in Quebec.

On July 16, regular gas was selling for \$1.574 per litre at retailers in both locations.

The disparity is increasingly difficult to understand. Just 100 kilometres away in Chandler, the price dropped by 8 cents on July 15, landing at \$1.494 per litre.

Elsewhere in the Baie-des-Chaleurs region, prices ranged from \$1.49 to \$1.52 depending on the municipality. However, the Petro-Canada station in Paspébiac attempted to raise its price to \$1.574 in the middle of the afternoon on July 16.

According to data from the Régie de l'énergie, a litre priced at \$1.49 aligns with the average annual profit margin of 11 cents per litre in the Rocher-Percé MRC. In Chandler, the board sets the cost price for retailers at \$1.36.

In Gaspé, based on the same data, the profit margin



Gasoline sold for \$1.574 on July 16 in Gaspé, among the highest prices in Quebec.

Photo: N. Sergerie

stood at 18.4 cents, significantly above last year's average of 12.8 cents.

Taking this into account, the price of gasoline in Gaspé should be closer to \$1.52, as it is elsewhere in the region.

A report published by the board in February 2024 noted that, in 2023, the majority of independent retailers in Gaspé applied higher retail margins than those in any other region of Quebec. Two years later, it appears the situation remains unchanged.

If fair pricing were applied, the price per litre in Gaspé would be comparable to the \$1.51 set several weeks ago in

the Matane and Rimouski regions.

As of July 16, the board listed the wholesale purchase price at \$1.356 in Gaspé and \$1.341 in Baie-des-Chaleurs. At \$1.574, Gaspé trails only Nord-du-Québec and Îles-de-la-Madeleine, two regions with unique pricing structures due to their remote locations.

By comparison, gasoline was also selling for \$1.57 per litre in Montreal on July 16. However, prices in the greater Montreal area are affected by higher taxes from the Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMT), which funds public transit.

Discretionary budget: Gaspé adjusts its approach

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Town of Gaspé has revised the process surrounding elected officials' discretionary budgets, following a decision by the Quebec Municipal Commission concerning the City of Gatineau.

The commission had reviewed how Gatineau handled its discretionary funds after receiving a complaint and, in June, concluded that the Gatineau municipality had exceeded the roles and responsibilities defined by the provincial legislature for council members. It also found that the accumulation of funds for discretionary use did not comply with the legal framework.

Gaspé maintains that its own practices are in line with regulations.

"We believe so. Our legal opinions point in that direction. We don't operate in the same way as Gatineau. In the end, the result may be similar," said Mayor Daniel Côté.

In Gaspé, the procedures are clearly defined. The council authorizes discretionary funds through a borrowing bylaw,

which can ultimately lead to a referendum. This is formalized at the January council meeting following the presentation of the December budget.

"All of this is planned and made public in budget reserves, in accordance with the regulations. It's not the same as in Gatineau, where it was directly included in the city's operating budget," he continues.

Going forward, the town of Gaspé will adopt specific resolutions identifying how and where discretionary funds are allocated.

"We are proceeding in the most transparent manner possible. We are adding safeguards by passing resolutions. We are convinced that we were legal before, but we will be even more so once the decision is adopted by the councilors," said the mayor.

The added step could delay funding for local organizations, but it's seen as a move toward greater fairness.

"All financial assistance procedures will be reanalyzed, possibly with the new council after the election. All grants may be debatable. What we want is maximum fairness for

all organizations," said the man who will be running for mayor next November.

Each year, Gaspé provides approximately \$2 million in financial support to community organizations.

"The entire council seems comfortable with the way things are done," concludes the mayor, emphasizing that fairness is a core value.

Right of first refusal

Gaspé is granting itself a right of first refusal. The town of Gaspé will have priority to purchase private land that may be put up for sale for certain uses, a power granted by Quebec in June 2022.

"It must be for public use: housing, children's areas, even areas sensitive to biodiversity," Mr. Côté gives as an example.

The town will determine the targeted land over the coming months.

"The urban planning team will identify the land on which we will register our right of first refusal. The owners will be informed," he says.

The value of the land is not expected to change, according

A RéGÎM shuttle on the Forillon Peninsula this summer

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - A new shuttle bus operated by the Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (RéGÎM) has been running on the Forillon Peninsula in Gaspé since July 7.

The free service makes three departures a day, morning, at noon, and at the end of the day, from the Gaspé Intermodal Station, Monday through Saturday.

This free service is offered thanks to a partnership between the Town of Gaspé, the MRC de La Côte-de-Gaspé, the SADC de Gaspé, the Micmac Nation of Gespeg, Forillon Park, Tourisme Gaspésie, and Desjardins.

"This is a first attempt this summer. We'll see how it goes and hope to be able to continue the shuttle next summer and improve it," says Forillon sector councilor Charlie-Maude Bossé-Giroux, who initiated the project and convinced the partners to get on board.

"The goal is really to reduce car use. In the summer, with visitors to the national park, there are a lot of cars on the peninsula," she adds.

A ridership rate of 30 to 40% will be considered a success. The pilot project, which costs \$100,000, is self-financed with the help of partner contributions. However, a few funding details remain to be finalized.

RéGÎM is acting solely as a technical partner in the project.

"If the last few funders don't come through, the committee will have to decide whether to run two round trips a day for part of the season or end a little earlier due to a lack of funds," explains RéGÎM president and Gaspé mayor Daniel Côté.

Lily-Charlotte Spain, a student at C.-E. Pouliot High School and a resident of La Pointe, believes this project is important.

"The fewer cars on the road, the more we'll feel like we're taking action on climate change. That's important. Also, our parents often work and don't always have time to drive us to see our friends. The shuttle will make it easier for local residents to get around," she said, invited to speak by the district councilor. The pilot project will run until September 14.

to the elected official. If there is a transaction, the Town will be able to match the offer, if it deems it appropriate.

Detailed information will be available soon on the Town's website.

Cheaper asphalt

Surprisingly, the only bid submitted by Eurovia to pave the streets of Gaspé this year is slightly lower than the town's estimates. The mayor says this is good news.

A total of \$1.1 million has been allocated to pave several street sections deemed the highest priority.

"We are doing several hundred metres where it is most urgent. I would like to point out that an objective analysis was carried out using specific criteria. There is no political arbitration involved," said Mr. Côté.

In 2022, the Town of Gaspé adopted a \$3.4 million borrowing bylaw, in addition to sums from various funds for a total of \$4 million over four years.

In the first year, the cost skyrocketed, with Eurovia's bid requesting \$1 million higher than that town's \$600,000 estimate. In 2023, however, the cost dropped to \$676,000.

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VIA meets with stakeholders in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Although absolute discretion had been requested, VIA Rail's Director of Government and Indigenous Relations, Denis Boucher, visited the Gaspé Peninsula during the week of July 7 to discuss the possible resumption of service in the Gaspé Peninsula with various stakeholders.

According to what we have learned, Mr. Boucher is also visiting sites to assess their condition in preparation for a return of service, which VIA confirmed on July 11. (See other article)

All of the stakeholders with whom SPEC spoke remain cautious in their comments so as not to reveal too much about the substance of their discussions with Mr. Boucher.

"Mr. Boucher asked to meet with me, and it was the first meeting where we each presented our views," explains Alexis Deschênes, Member of Parliament (MP) for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine.

The two-hour meeting was described as frank and direct. "As for the specific content of the discussions, Mr. Boucher asked that it remain confidential," adds the MP.

"My position remains unchanged. What I want is for



Photo: N. Sergerie

"No tracks, no train," says Daniel Côté.

VIA Rail to return to the Gaspé Peninsula as soon as possible, and I want to help make that happen as quickly as possible," continues the elected official.

VIA Rail had intended to resume service to the Gaspé Peninsula, including Gaspé, in 2027. However, the Quebec government's decision in March to revisit the work to be done on section three (Port Daniel-Gaspé) changed the situation.

"We wanted to use this visit by a VIA Rail representative to ensure that we have good channels of communica-

tion. It allowed me to reiterate our goal as a railway company to continue working to convince the Quebec government to provide the necessary funds for the rehabilitation of the track to Gaspé," says Éric Dubé, president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie.

VIA's issues were discussed during the exchange. "We reiterated that if VIA Rail needed us to restore passenger service, we would be there," continued Mr. Dubé, who pointed out that the company's objective is not to make a profit, but to provide service.

However, no commitment was made.

"We understand that Mr. Boucher was not there to confirm or deny anything. That is VIA Rail's private domain. It was really to discuss objectives and understand the real issues. But for us, the goal is to bring passenger service back to Gaspé as quickly as possible," Mr. Dubé reiterated.

The Coalition for the Return of VIA Rail Passenger Service to the Gaspé Peninsula is satisfied with the meeting, which helped rebuild bridges after a year of silence.

"The goal was to inform each other about our respective activities on the train issue and establish a channel of communication. For a year,

we hadn't really received any feedback on our letters," explains coalition spokesperson Micheline Saint-Onge.

VIA mentioned that it had been working with the Quebec government on bringing back the train for two years.

"But last March's decision to return to the analysis phase delayed the completion of the work to Gaspé. They were working on the return with the Ministry of Transportation, but the decision took them by surprise, forcing them to review the planning for the return to the Gaspé Peninsula," says Ms. Saint-Onge.

"We reiterated the needs of the Gaspé population, but this train is also for all of Quebec and Canada. We reaffirmed that we would continue our efforts and ask VIA and Quebec City for the gradual return of the train as soon as the tracks are ready to Port-Daniel-Gascons," adds the coalition spokesperson.

"We continue to tell the MTQ (Ministry of Transport of Quebec) and VIA to keep in mind that we are asking for a return to Gaspé as soon as possible," concludes Ms. Saint-Onge, who points out that the coalition still needs the support of the population to pursue its demands.

The VIA representative ended his tour by meeting with Daniel Côté the mayor of

Gaspé on July 10. He is equally discreet about the discussions he had with Mr. Boucher, as the meeting was held behind closed doors.

"What we can say is that VIA Rail still intends to serve the Gaspé Peninsula all the way to Gaspé. That's clear to them. It's what I've been saying for some time: no tracks, no trains," said the mayor.

The push to restore rail service to Gaspé is back in the Quebec government's hands.

"I understand that not everyone is on the same page as me, and there are attempts to divide Bay of Chaleur from the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula, but the goal remains to repair the rail line to Gaspé. If VIA Rail decides to serve part of the Gaspé Peninsula, they will be able to do so. Currently, that is not their main focus," argues Mr. Côté.

"We have no foreseeable horizon from Quebec (the government). VIA Rail is putting itself on hold and continues to hope to have a track to run their train, just as we hope they will come back," says the mayor.

"It's a false debate to argue about VIA Rail when we're losing focus on the essential issue, which is getting the track back. VIA Rail pretty much agrees with our position on this. No track, no train," concludes Mr. Côté.

VIA rail will not partially return to the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Despite growing anticipation from the Coalition for the Return of VIA Rail Passenger Service to the Gaspé Peninsula, VIA Rail has confirmed that a partial return is not in the cards.

In an email confirming the visit of Denis Boucher, Director of Government and Indigenous Relations, to the region, VIA Rail reiterated its long-standing position.

"In keeping with our original commitment, a partial return of the route is not possible for logistical reasons, and our position has not changed."

In this email, VIA Rail reiterates its repeatedly stated position, namely "its commitment to resume service in the Gaspé Peninsula when the tracks are safe and allow for competitive travel times to Gaspé, and that remains our intention."

The company confirms the



Photo: N. Sergerie

Éric Dubé, President of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie.

statements made by Éric Dubé, president of the Société de chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, that it was preparing to resume service in 2027, once the rail line to Gaspé had been repaired.

"However, when the provincial budget was tabled on March 25, 2025, VIA Rail learned, along with the people of Gaspé, that the rehabilita-

tion work on the section between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé had been returned to the planning phase, with no new timeline," VIA notes.

VIA Rail explained that it had already set up an internal committee to coordinate all operational aspects of the return, including the availability of rolling stock and staffing, and the modernization of regional stations. A joint governance structure with Quebec's Ministry of Transport and Sustainable Mobility was also in place to ensure close coordination.

"Faced with this major change, and still firmly committed to restoring full service for the people of the Gaspé Peninsula, VIA Rail must now go back to the drawing board to assess the next steps," the email continued.

In his discussions with stakeholders in the region, Mr. Boucher asked them to keep his visit confidential.

Finally, the company con-

firmed that during the week of July 7, he met with the Table des MRC de la Gaspésie, represented by the president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, Éric Dubé, the Coalition pour le retour des services du train passager de VIA Rail en Gaspésie (SCFG) Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament Alexis Deschênes, and Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté.

"This visit reflects VIA Rail's desire to maintain open communication with representatives of the region," the email from VIA states.

**Éric Dubé
not surprised**

The president of the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie, Éric Dubé, says he is not surprised by VIA Rail's decision to maintain its stance and wait until work on the rail line to Gaspé is complete.

"I'm not really surprised. They've been playing this card for a long time. From the be-

ginning, they've always said it was Gaspé or nothing," said Éric Dubé.

He explained that the expected timeline had originally aimed for a return by 2026 or 2027, but now that's uncertain.

"What changed all that was that we were supposed to be in Gaspé by 2026 or 2027. Will the deadline be pushed back? We understand that the pressure is on the Quebec government because they are the ones who put the rehabilitation to Gaspé on hold. Did VIA use this as an excuse? They are the ones who can answer that," commented the president.

The SCFG will continue to pressure Quebec City to restore the rail line to Gaspé, given that Osisko will need the train for the eventual relaunch of Murdochville's Gaspé Mines around 2030.

"There are other projects. We are in discussions with other companies. This is a major issue for the region," adds Mr. Dubé.

Maria Hospital: another delay for preliminary studies

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

MARIA - The preliminary studies on the mechanical infrastructure of the Maria hospital centre, an essential first step towards building a new emergency room and intensive care unit, have been delayed again. The report, originally expected by the end of June, is now projected for September.

According to the CISSS de la Gaspésie, additional surveys and drilling are required before the study can be submitted. The delay follows budgetary concerns that had already caused the contract to be suspended last fall, although it was eventually relaunched during the winter.

The authorized studies are technical in nature, focusing on the facility's electro-mechanical, structural, and civil components. Among other things, the study, conducted by the firm CIMA+, aims to determine whether the electrical system is powerful enough to accommodate the expansion, and whether the water and sewer systems need to be adjusted to accommodate the expansion.

In September 2023, the



Photo: N. Sergerie

Maria Hospital.

CISSS board of directors increased pressure on the Quebec government to include the project in the 2024 Quebec Infrastructure Plan (PQI).

The resolution adopted by the board of directors and its chair to take steps to ensure that the Maria emergency project was included in the PQI and to take steps to obtain strategic support for the project to be recognized as a regional priority.

The absence of the project from the PQI when the 2024 budget was tabled in March prompted strong reactions

from regional elected officials and the nurses' union.

However, in the March 2025 budget, one line mentioned the Maria hospital in the PQI.

The document stated that "the Ministry of Health and Social Services will submit requests for approval by the government over the next year for new major projects, namely the Drummondville and Maria hospitals and phase 3 of the program to add places in MDAAAs (seniors' homes and alternatives)."

The project, which had

been on the table since 2018, was granted "clinical relevance" status in the fall of 2022, meaning that the Ministry of Health recognized the need.

The Clinical and Real Estate Master Plan already showed in the spring of 2022 that the hospital, built in 1952, was no longer suited to modern practices, especially the emergency room, where the last renovations date back to 1972.

In June 2018, the CISSS de la Gaspésie adopted a resolution to move forward with a new construction to replace the current facility, a scenario that dates back even before the creation of the CISSS.

In the meantime, the modernization of the emergency room was prioritized.

For comparison, the new emergency room and intensive care unit at Gaspé Hospital—opened in 2021 in a newly

connected building, cost \$31.7 million.

No financial results before September

The CISSS de la Gaspésie's financial results for the last fiscal year, which ended March 31, will not be available before September.

The network has submitted its final financial data to Santé Québec and is still awaiting official confirmation. The documents must first be tabled in the National Assembly, which resumes on September 16.

In an email, the CISSS stated that efforts are underway to meet the \$30 million savings target for the 2025–2026 fiscal year, based on a total operating budget of \$560 million.

However, CEO Martin Pelletier recently acknowledged that independent labour alone accounts for \$20 million of the projected \$30 million deficit.

Agreement reached for financing of Demeure Toi in Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The president of the Demeure Toi organization in Gaspé is satisfied with the agreement reached with the CISSS de la Gaspésie.

On July 15, the organization announced that, following two weeks of discussions with the regional health authority, it had secured \$275,000 per year in funding for the next three years.

"We discussed each other's understanding and perception of the client profile. We realized that we had a common understanding of the needs of this clientele," says president Claudine Dupuis.

The agreement will be re-evaluated in three years.

"We have no guarantees, but I remain very confident that with the collaboration we have with the CISSS, everything will go smoothly," Ms Dupuis adds.



The Demeure Toi building will be delivered to the organization at the end of July.

Photo: N. Sergerie

The \$8.9 million building is scheduled to be delivered at the end of July, with interior work to follow in preparation for welcoming the first tenants, people living with autism, by mid-September. Of the 11 spots available, a few remain open.

Hiring of staff will begin shortly, although the organization has not yet finalized its operating budget. Calculations are still underway.

An open house is planned, possibly in August, to allow the public to visit the facility.

Earlier this year, a dispute over funding had led Demeure Toi to consider delaying the opening of the building. At the time, the organization cited a promised \$318,000 in funding from the Quebec government, while the CISSS was offering only \$50,000.

More people working in June

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - A rise in the number of people resuming their job search in June in Gaspésie—Îles-de-la-Madeleine led to a year-over-year increase in the unemployment rate, according to Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey.

Compared to last year, the labour force—that is, those employed and those looking for work—increased from 42,000 to 44,100, a gain of 2,100.

Employment followed a similar trend, rising from 38,700 to 40,300, an increase of 1,600.

The region also recorded more unemployed people, with the number increasing from 3,300 in June 2024 to 3,800 last month. As a result, the unemployment rate rose year-over-year from 7.9% to 8.6%.

Nevertheless, the figures remain encouraging, as they indicate renewed optimism among job seekers.

From May to June, 2,100 jobs were created in the region, according to the federal agency. Of these, 33,600 were full-time and 6,700 part-time.

Month-over-month, the number of unemployed dropped by 900 to 3,800.

The unemployment rate declined from 11.0% in May to 8.6% in June.

Record high overnight temperature in Gaspé

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - A new record for the highest overnight temperature was set in Gaspé on July 15.

The thermometer reached 17.6°C (63.6 Fahrenheit) at Michel-Pouliot Airport, surpassing the previous record high of 16 degrees°C, which was set in 1982, according to Environment Canada.

The previous nights were also unusually warm, with another record nearly broken on the night of July 14 to 15, when the temperature dipped to just 20.2°C. The record for that date was set in 1930, at 21.1°C.

Despite the hot, humid weather and smoke drifting in from wildfires in Western Canada, no daytime heat records were broken on July 16. In Gaspé, the temperature reached 31.3°C, while the record to beat was 34.5°C, set in 2013.

Across the Gaspé Peninsula, temperatures remained within three to five degrees of historical highs.

Dubé health care reform not acceptable to nurses

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

SAINT-SIMÉON - The Dubé health care reform is simply not acceptable to the nursing staff at the CISSS de la Gaspésie.

This is the finding of a survey conducted by Léger on behalf of the Fédération de la santé du Québec de la Centrale des syndicats du Québec (CSQ), to which the Syndicat des infirmières, infirmières auxiliaires et inhalothérapeutes de l'Est du Québec (SIIEQ) is affiliated.

According to the union, 55% of SIIEQ members hold a negative opinion of the reform, while only 15% view it positively. An additional 30% either had no opinion or declined to answer.

"The first effects of this reform, given that Santé Québec came into effect on December 1, 2024, have been budget restrictions, staff cuts, and staff not being replaced. This has a direct impact on the workload," says SIIEQ president Pier-Luc Bujold.

He adds that the administrative burden has also increased significantly.



Photo: N. Sergerie

SIIEQ President Pier-Luc Bujold.

"It's like building a ship in the middle of a storm. There are many inconsistencies and a lack of information. People are running around much more to get answers to their questions. Workers do not have much confidence in this reform," adds Mr. Bujold.

"What we're hearing on the ground is not cheerful or desirable. Greater centralization means that decisions are more disconnected from the reality on the ground. It achieves the government's objectives, but does it serve Quebecers?" asks the president.

He also points to promises made by the CAQ government when it was elected in 2018, including a family doctor for every Quebecer and reduced emergency room wait times.

"We are waiting for the positive effects, but they are not materializing on the ground," he notes.

When asked to rate the CAQ government's management of health care since 2018, the president is clear.

"It's difficult to give a rating. There are many inconsistencies. It would not pass," the president assesses.

Newport wharf: Phase 2 is almost complete

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER - Phase 2 of the Newport wharf renovation in Chandler is almost complete.

Launched last fall, only the water and electricity remain to be finalized before boats can begin using the completely reconfigured wharf.

"The contractors have almost finished the structure itself. Everything is done. Only a few details remain," notes Luc Legresley, president of the Newport Harbour Authority.

"In phase 1, instead of having a beach that was not used due to contamination, we ended up with a large parking lot with a wharf structure that allows us to moor four large boats—crab boats—and then there was phase 2, which was what we called the lobster boats' wharves. We have a new wharf and what was finished has been replaced. It was overdue. The work done by Fisheries and Oceans is excellent," he adds.

Of the 15 lobster boats based in Newport, 14 can now

dock at the new facility. A dedicated landing area has also been built.

"It was there before, but it wasn't very practical, and when phase 3 is completed, there will be less jostling inside the dock," says the president.

This phase 3, scheduled for 2026, will be important as it will bring significant improvements.

"Currently, what we have is an angled dock, and the new one will be straight, with a wing at the entrance to prevent a lot of boat movement or waves in the dock. There will be various studies, and phase 3 is scheduled for 2026," continues Mr. Legresley. According to him, Fisheries and Oceans is investing the necessary funds to avoid having to correct future problems.

"The port authority and Fisheries and Oceans are working very well together to find permanent solutions to avoid having to come back and incur such high costs," says the manager.

Phase 4, which is less ur-

gent, consists mainly of upgrading the newer wharf on the west side of the harbour.

"The wharves are in good condition. They are sheet piling and cement structures. They are still in pretty good shape. They won't be demolished, but there will be some work done to reinforce what is currently there," says Mr. Legresley.

According to him, everything should be completed by 2028 at the latest. "We will have adequate facilities where Fisheries and Oceans should not have to come back to resume work. That's what's interesting," said Mr. Legresley.

While estimates vary, the overall cost of the multi-phase project could approach \$20 million. "I wouldn't dare put a figure on the costs because the cost increases are appalling. Just for us, we're going to have an administrative office. What we thought would cost \$100,000 is now closer to \$180,000," notes the president. The costs of materials and labour make it difficult to estimate the overall costs.



Photo: N. Sergerie

A similar vessel will be delivered to the Coast Guard in the fall and will be based in Rivière-au-Renard.

A few temporary layoffs at Forillon Shipyard

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Less than ten employees have voluntarily chosen to take longer vacations at the Forillon Shipyard in Gaspé due to circumstances beyond their control, according to company management.

Rumours were circulating in the community that there would be several job losses over a longer period of time at the shipyard located near Sandy Beach wharf.

The shipyard is currently in a transition period. The Canadian Coast Guard's 10-boat search and rescue contract is nearing completion, with the Baie-de-Gaspé scheduled for delivery in October to the port of Rivière-au-Renard. At the same time, construction is set to begin on the first hybrid diesel-electric semi-offshore fisheries research vessel for the Coast Guard—a \$55.5 million contract awarded in fall 2023.

Combined, these two contracts represent \$157 million in orders, securing the shipyard's place among the major players in small- and medium-sized vessel construction.



Without giving an official interview, President and chief executive officer Jean-David Samuel explains that the engineering component of the semi-offshore contract took longer than expected, which disrupted the construction schedule.

Faced with this situation, the shipyard suggested that employees take extended vacations this summer using employment insurance. Less than ten of the facility's hundred or so workers accepted the proposal, which is not a layoff, insists Mr. Samuel.

Other employees remain on site, performing alternate tasks while awaiting the delivery of steel, expected in August, which will kick off assembly of the new vessel.

Looking ahead, the shipyard anticipates needing about 15 additional workers this fall, driven by this major contract and a growing order book. Several bids for new shipbuilding projects have already been submitted.


Meanwhile, the Bouchard Shipyard, acquired by Forillon last September, is operating at full capacity in Rivière-au-Renard.



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1980, another step higher, with 29 issues

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – The sixth year of SPEC's history was another period of change. The newspaper adopted a weekly mode of publication at the end of October. For the Gaspé Peninsula anglophone community, the first half of the year was also marked by the referendum on Quebec sovereignty, a period of worry.

**Vol. 6 No 1
January 10, 1980**

- In the volume 6, number 1 issue, dated January 10, 1980, the main front page titles are "Landmark demolished" and "CHNC lock-out". The landmark is the old bridge that used to link the two shores of downtown Gaspé. It was built around 1940 by 300 local men under the supervision of Dominion Bridge's experts. The workers were paid 25 cents an hour back then. Robert Alexander reports that after a crane toppled one of the spans, which fell into the York river, "the tearing metal screamed in protest. No doubt it was my imagination but I felt it was shouting a protest at the undignified way we were repaying it for many years of faithful service."
- The lock-out at CHNC followed six months of unsuccessful negotiations and was called on December 17, reports Irene Dallain.
- The referendum on Quebec's sovereignty, spearheaded by the Parti Québécois, is starting to heat up, as the Liberal Party leader Claude Ryan published a pamphlet entitled "A house of cards." In his editorial, Terry Stanley commits to covering the upcoming federal election and the referendum in a balanced way. Several letters are published weekly on that topic.

**Vol 6. No 2
January 24, 1980**

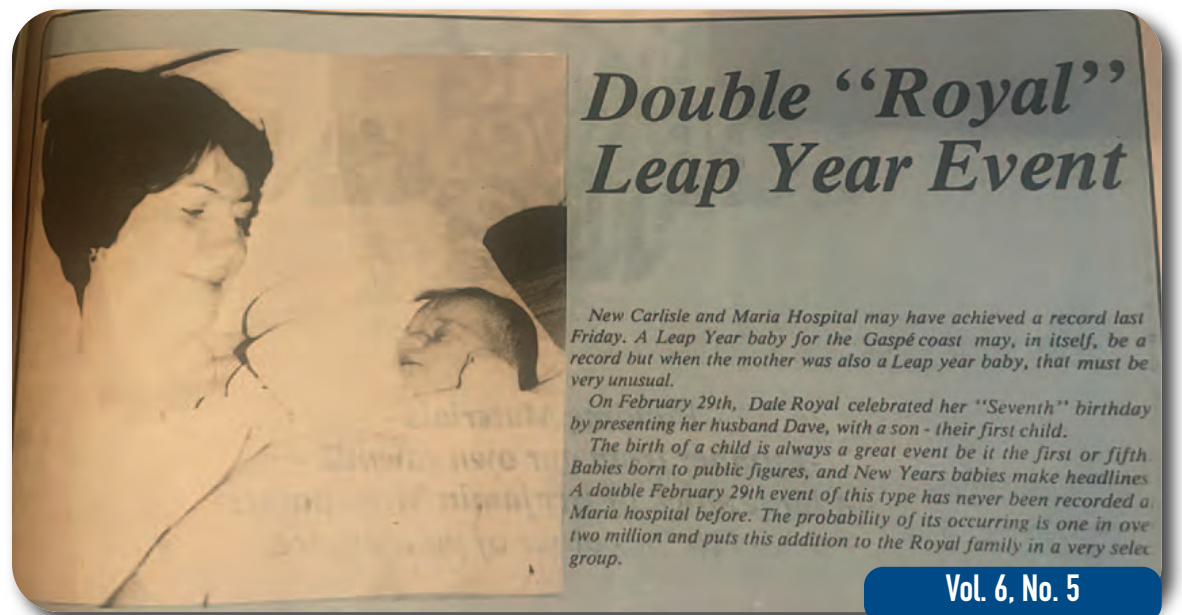
- In the Volume 6, number 2 issue of the SPEC, dated January 24, the cover presents a "Polar Bear Sighting in Port Daniel. Richard Cragg, the brother of Alice Hayes, took a

plunge in the Bay of Chaleur, on January 1.

- A resident of Fleurant's point, Willam Henry Court, was to celebrate his 100th birthday on February 3. Some family members wrote an article about him. He notably writes poetry.

**Vol. 6 No 3
February 7, 1980**

- The issue 3 of SPEC, released on February 7, reports on the CHNC lock-out on the cover, as 80 CSN union members joined the radio station employees to demonstrate. "Banners, songs and the burning of a scab in effigy highlighted the protest," mentions the caption.
- Also on the cover, a last-minute announcement of the Quebec government, from minister of State for Cultural Development, Camille Laurin's office, is mentioned. SPEC will get a \$15,000 grant. Responding to comments that the grant is referendum propaganda, SPEC's management members "think of it as recognition by the P.Q. government that the Anglophone community is alive and well and an integral part of Quebec."
- Inside, a report covers the call to the port of Gaspé of a Norwegian ship loaded with lumber. The ship started listing due to high waves that moved lumber bundles and stopped before crossing the Atlantic ocean in order to fix the problem.
- Big ads, many comments and articles pertain to the upcoming February 18 federal election, including the visit of Prime Minister Joe Clark.
- Ken Annett writes a long article about the "Res-



tigouche" area, in which he covers the 1760 battle.

**Vol 6. No 4
February 21, 1980**

- The February 21 issue of the SPEC, number 4, leaves all the front page to the results of the February 18 federal election, won in Bonaventure-Magdalen Islands by incumbent Rémi Bujold with an unofficial victory margin of 14,000 ballots, and Alexandre Cyr in Gaspé, who tallied 8,202 more votes than his closest opponent. Canada wide, Pierre Elliot Trudeau comes back with a majority.
- The SPEC runs the results polling station by polling station for both ridings.
- The police report mentions that a Californian, Mark Jeffrey Sterk, was fined \$2,000 at the Percé courthouse for obstructing the seal hunt.
- The minimum wage will increase from \$3.47 to \$3.65 on April 1, announces the PQ government.

**Vol 6. No 5
March 6, 1980**

- In SPEC's number 5 issue,

released on March 6, the front page covers two subjects, including that of the Double "Royal" Leap Year Event, pertaining to a mother, New Carlisle Dale Royal, born on February 29, 28 years before, who gave birth to a baby, also born on February 29 at the Maria hospital. The other topic, entitled "United for Gaspé", reports on the nomination of Gaspé riding Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Michel Lemoignan as leader of the Union Nationale party, since its previous leader, Rodrigue Biron, wanted the party to vote "yes" to Quebec's sovereignty, a move that was not approved by the other four party MNAs.

- Transportation issues are always close to SPEC coverage. In a commentary, Robert Alexander criticizes the safety measures in place at the Gaspé airport, while Jim Routh, president of the Gaspesia Teachers Association, writes a letter to CN-VIA's director of sales, denouncing the poor reliability of the Gaspé-Montreal equipment and staff's lousy attitude towards the riders. Mr. Routh assures that his recent train trip was his last. That

poor service, he opines, is aimed at discouraging Gaspesians from taking it.

**Vol 6. No 6
March 20, 1980**

- The SPEC number 6 issue features a montage of winter pictures on the cover, dated March 20. The title is "Clancy lowered the boom."
- Inside, New Richmond's Cynthia Dow and Ivan Robertson are taking orders for a book about the history of the Cascapedia Bay, from Caplan to Maria. Normand Desjardins runs an article about a show presented at Bonaventure Polyvalent by Franco-Ontarian singer Robert Paquette. Another article mentions the possibility of a teachers' strike.
- James Routh's letter to VIA Rail triggered an answer from the vice-president of "VIA Quebec", J.L. Moisan, who apologizes and requests "a full and complete investigation into the conditions and the apparent lack of control over certain situations on the Gaspé line."
- Doris Ascah MaDougall and David J. McDougall publish two articles about "The Sandy Beach Light," which notably highlights the role of the main families, including Ascah, that were keepers there, and an article about New Richmond's Stanley House.



Vol. 6, No. 2

Next page

1980, another step higher, with 29 issues

Vol 6. No 7

April 3, 1980

- The number 7 issue of the year, dated April 3, presents a big headline on the cover, “Report finds anglo population slipping - in need of leadership.” The demographic decline of the region’s Anglo-phones is not as bad as in the other Quebec regions though. Between 1971 and 1976, the EMT population, for English mother tongue, fell by 7.4% in the Gaspé, compared to Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, where it fell by 32%, or Quebec City, where it dropped by 17.4%.
- The future referendum question is presented on page 3, where readers also learn that New Richmond mill, owned by Consolidated-Bathurst, declares a profit of \$9.1 million for 1979, notably attributable to producing 38 more tons daily than the 600 requested by the firm.
- The McDougalls run a follow up about the Sandy Beach Light and will do a part 3 in the ensuing paper.

Vol 6. No 8

April 17, 1980

- In the number 8 issue, dated April 17, readers learn that Gaspé singer “Leo Lapierre (was) a hit with Toronto school children,” while the “No campaign (is) launched,” regarding the upcoming referendum. “Watson Briand 60 times a winner” (his exact name is Briard) and “Committee to investigate transportation on the coast” are the other headlines.
- Inside, a title, “Moratorium imposed on groundfish licences,” accompanies an article quoting Fisheries and

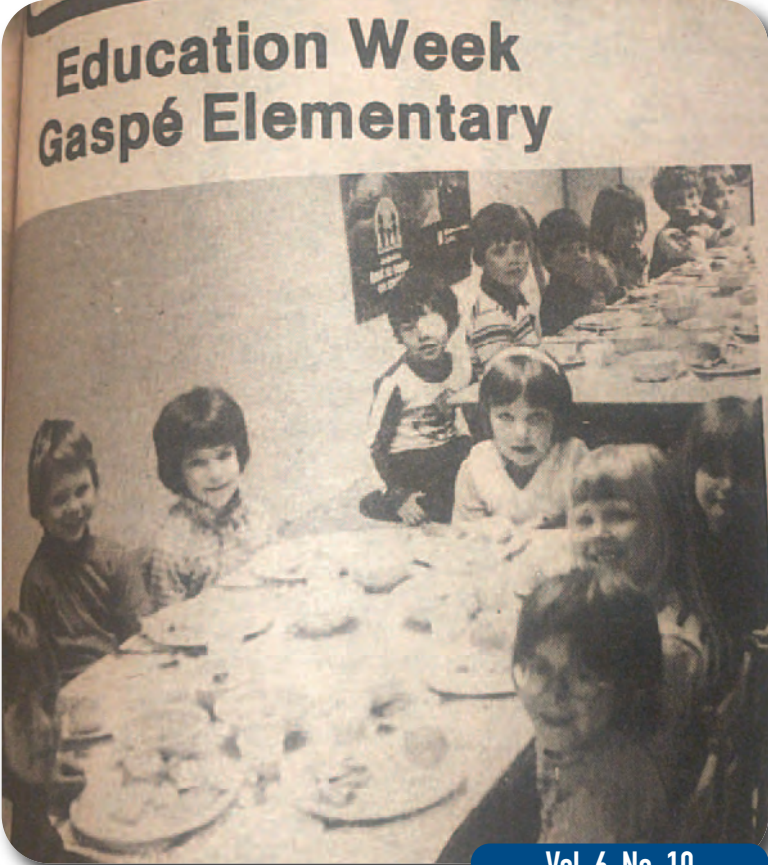
Oceans Canada minister Roméo Leblanc: “The existing groundfish resource simply cannot sustain additional effort in most areas.” Between 1977 and 1979, that government granted 60% more licences to Nova Scotia longliners alone.

- The transportation committee mentioned on the front page will be formed by regional stakeholders and the vice-president of VIA Rail-Quebec, J. Léo Moisan. A report about service improvements is expected for the fall.

Vol 6. No 9

May 1, 1980

- In the number 9 issue of SPEC, dated May 1, the front page promotes “International Regatta-Gaspé,” a boat race scheduled for June 21-22. An “Economic summit in Bonaventure” was held on April 25, and the newspaper runs the list of recommendations and resolutions. The third headline deals with doctors Jean-Paul Audet, a pro Yes to Quebec’s sovereignty, and Alban Gagnon, a federalist rooting to the No side, holding a debate on the upcoming referendum. Jordan Brown’s report on the debate is well-balanced.
- Inside, readers learn in two articles that a downtown Gaspé fire claimed five lives, those of Mrs. Girard Shaw and her four children. The town was also hit by torrential rain at the end of April, 200 millimetres in less than 24 hours, which caused damage, including erosion to the Sunny Bank road.
- Joan B. Dow proposes with CASA a “Gaspé’s Who’s Who,” and asks SPEC’s readers to contribute through sug-



gesting names with a description.

Vol 6. No 10

May 15, 1980

- The number 10 issue of SPEC, released on May 15, features a front page report by Cynthia Dow on the “Yvettes” brunch in Bonaventure. The Yvettes movement was founded following comments made by Parti Québécois minister Lise Payette to the effect that some federalist women were submitted to their husbands, like Yvette Ryan, the wife of Claude Ryan, the leader of the No to sovereignty side. Also on the front page, Robert Alexander writes a follow up on the April flood, precisely about the Sunny Bank hatchery, where no stock was lost despite other damage. In the editorial, a common write-up by Jordan Brown and Bradley Dow, they express, five years to the day after the foundation of SPEC, what

they would like to see for its future, full-time reporters in Chandler and the Magdalen Islands, as well as making it a weekly.

Vol 6. No 11

May 29, 1980

- In number 11 issue of SPEC, dated May 29, the referendum results, a No to Quebec’s sovereignty, is covered on the front page. “Ryan wins round 1” also provides details about regional results, as in the Gaspé riding, the No side gathered 59.1% of support, compared to 59.5% Quebec-wide, while in Bonaventure, the No was favoured by 66.8% of voters.
- Also on the cover, readers learn that the “Discoverer of Mines Gaspé celebrates 100th birthday. Alfred Miller was born on May 17, 1880.
- Lynden Bechervaise resigns from Seacoast Publications’ presidency, and is thanked for his contribution

by Gary Briand in the opinion page.

Vol 6. No 12

June 12, 1980

- The volume 6, number 12 issue of SPEC, dated June 12, presents one article on the cover, Gaspesian boat builder Louis Rehel’s latest creation and working methods. It continues inside.
- The front page also reminds readers of the upcoming Gaspé International Regatta. “St-Pierre diversifies,” about a small business in New Richmond, and “Murdochville sea cadets inspected” are also mentioned.
- Robert Alexander reports on the loading of 150 tons of salted cod on a Portuguese ship, the Santa Joana, at the Gaspé port.

Vol. 6 No 13

June 26, 1980

- In issue number 13, dated June 26, Patrick Dallain reports in “Bridge blocked” the June 22-23-24 demonstration of then-called Restigouche’s 200 citizens in support of chief, Tony Dedam, unhappy about the constant patrol and search of their vehicles by provincial and federal fishing officials concerning what is called then “illegal” salmon.
- The two other front page titles are “There is a cavern in town”, in reference to the Saint-Elzéar cavern, where a museum is now open, and “Mine rescue teams in competition,” about a rescue simulation in Murdochville.



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From Page 14

More of 1980...

Vol. 6 No 14
July 10, 1980

- The number 14 issue of SPEC, dated July 10, features a long article written by Patrick Dallain, who spent some time at Moses, or Moïse, colony in Saint-Jogues' Mont de l'Éternel.

Vol 6. No 15
July 24, 1980

- In issue number 15, dated July 24, SPEC's reporter David Alexander writes about the heavy rain of July 7, which caused the three rivers of Gaspé, York, Saint John and Dartmouth, to reach what was called unprecedented levels. The damage was worse along the Dartmouth river.

- Also on the front page, Jordan Brown and Steven Budd report on the New Richmond Industrial, Commercial and Agricultural Exposition.

- A Matapedia student, Cara Irvine, has been writing articles covering the Escuminac to Matapedia area. In this paper, she writes about the rich history of Cold Spring Camp and about a Pennsylvania Girl Scouts visiting the coast. Sharon McRae writes about a strike affecting the mills of Abitibi-Price, including Chandler's Gaspesia.

- Patrick Dallain runs an article about a July 4 court decision that forces New Brunswick International Paper to pay fines totalling \$29,000 for polluting the Nouvelle river in 1975, five years earlier, through using bulldozers to "correct" the river bed during log drives.

- The SPEC runs the summary of a report stating that "Canada's "Indians" (the quotation marks are from the paper's editor) have experienced steadily improving conditions over the past 20 years, but a report prepared by the federal government shows many of them face grave problems."

Vol 6. No 16
August 7, 1980

- The number 16 issue of

SPEC, dated August 7, shows Trina Hayes' article and a big front-page picture of a swimmer who just finished the 14-mile race between Grande-Anse and Paspébiac. The picture probably shows Argentinian Claudio Pitt, the winner, who covered the distance in 8 hours, 6 minutes and 53 seconds, which is 23 minutes in front of Egyptian Magdy Mandour.

- "Chandler strike over," about the end of the Gaspesia mill strike is also mentioned on page 1, as is "Gaspé fish plant to open maybe?" and "Medicine man Noel Knockwood at Maria's 4th annual Pow Wow."

- The fish plant article referred to the possibility of building a processing facility at Brillant Cove.

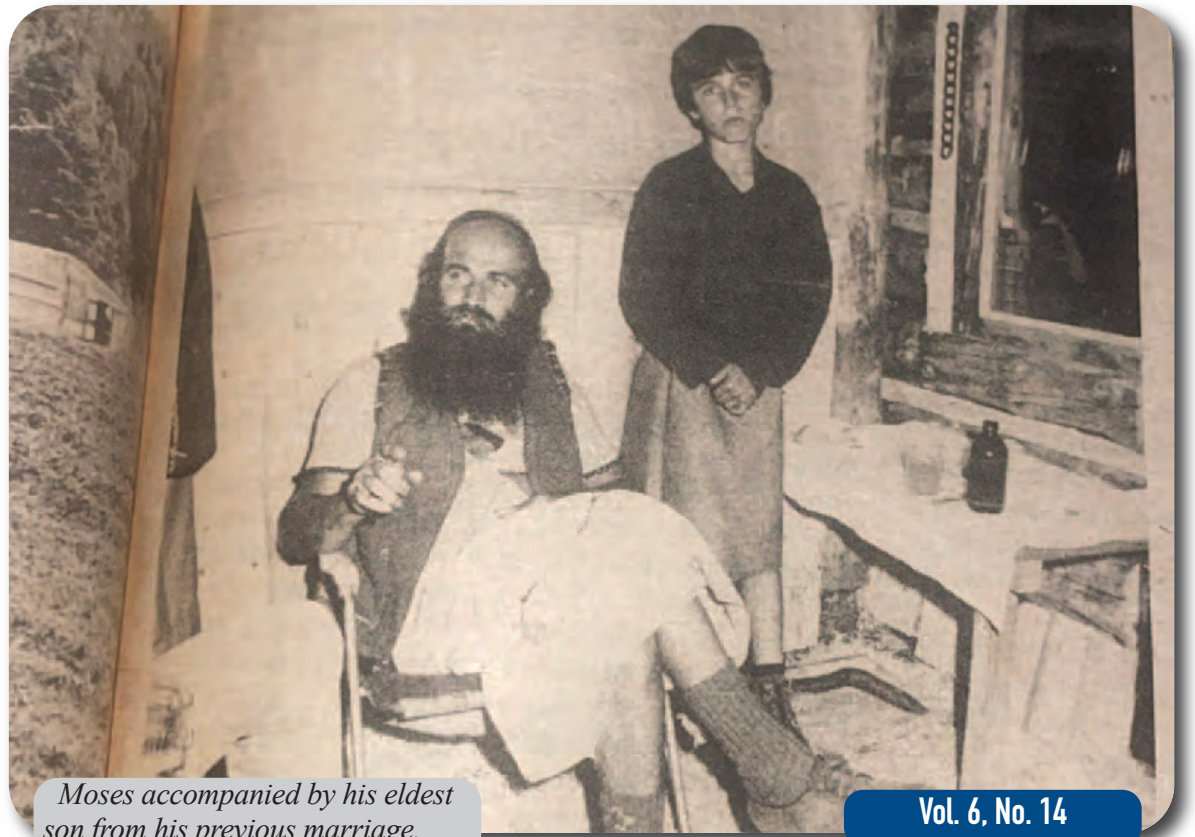
Vol. 6 No 17
August 21, 1980

- Dated August 21, the number 17 issue of 1980's SPEC features five titles on the front page and two articles, namely the "Grand Opening Carrefour Gaspé," the new shopping centre, and "Poor quality of ATV signal leads Gaspé South to restore CBC North." The latter subject pertains to the Gaspé South Telecasting Syndicate's attempts to improve the quality of the signal for the Gaspé and Percé viewers and ideally get two English channels. The situation is complicated by the Canadian Radio-Television Commission's rules.

- "Local vets to attend reunion," about an upcoming Hong Kong war veterans, "Two more French Language TV stations" and "Students face change." The latter topic deals with the Escuminac English students having finished grade 8 who will enrol at Campbellton's Junior High School while grade 9 students from Matapedia will attend Sugarloaf High School.

Vol 6. No 18
September 4, 1980

- The number 18 issue of SPEC, dated September 4, presents "Gaspé mayor resigns - Robert Pidgeon leaves public life" and "Fallen comrades not



Moses accompanied by his eldest son from his previous marriage.

Vol. 6, No. 14

forgotten" on the cover. Jordan Brown reports on the latter subject, which follows a New Richmond reunion that gathered Hong Kong vets from as far as Vancouver. As for Robert Pidgeon, a lawyer then, he quits because of the work load, thinking that it takes a full-time mayor in Gaspé, because of disagreement with the provincial government over the Fiscal reform bill, and disregard for the urbanist and zoning plan by some members of the town's administration.

Vol 6. No 19
September 18, 1980

- The number 19 issue of SPEC in 1980, dated September 18, runs a short story about the water shortage in New Carlisle, which convinces a citizen, Pierre-Paul Durand to launch a small-claim lawsuit against the Town. The decision is not rendered. In Gaspé, "Bossé resigns" explains the resignation of town councillor Yvette Bossé, who is interested in the mayoral position. Two candidates, Lewis Sinnett, the former chief of police, and Debbie Bouley, who has a strong background in politics, will run for the vacant seat.

- Inside, an article present the results of a successful Terry Fox, Marathon of Hope Campaign, as two organizations raised more than \$6,700 in New Carlisle and New Rich-

mond.

Vol 6. No 20
October 2, 1980

- In its number 20 issue, dated October 2, the SPEC reports on the annual Gaspé County Fair. The title, "Sun and fun shine on county fair," says it all about the very warm weather that prevailed during the end of September event.

- Other titles are "Laurin set to present Plan d'action," expected to deal with Quebec minorities, "Over 2,500 attend New Richmond Fair," and "Chandler girl wins national poem contest." The girl is 11-

year Elizabeth Hunt and she attends St. Patrick Elementary School.

Vol 6. No 21
October 16, 1980

- The number 21 issue of the SPEC, dated October 16, features "Rural Schools Educational Conference," "Future of the Atlantic salmon," Matapedia Valley dispute" and "English population slow to take advantage" on the cover. The

Page 16

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educational conference gathered 200 Gaspesian administrators and teachers in Murdochville in order to improve the quality of education. The salmon topic pertains to an Atlantic Salmon Board consultation about the specie's future. The Matapedia mill dispute refers to a controversy pitting Matane and the Valley to locate a paper mill. The English population "slowness" deals with the low number of Anglophones applying for home improvement grants.

Vol 6. No 22 October 30, 1980

- The cover of SPEC's number 22 issue dated October 20, 1980, shows the headline "VIA sleepers not in favour with public?". Jordan Brown presents the opposite view points of J. Léo Moisan, VIA Rail's director for Quebec, and Philip Doddridge, director general of the Regional School Board of Gaspesia. While Mr. Moisan argues that sleepers were simply not in favour with the public, which prompted the transporter to use automotive cars. That decision forced Gaspé travellers to transfer to the Halifax-Montreal train once in Matapedia, Mr. Doddridge replied that VIA Rail's service is deplorable, notably with regards to train transfer for Gaspesians. He adds that "the frustration of being unable to obtain sleeping car accommodations from points on the coast in recent years has driven people to seek alternative methods to travel, or to make reservations out of Campbellton, New Brunswick, thus demonstrating statistically that the need for such accommodations on the coast is minimal."
- Another title mentions that "SPEC is now a weekly," while readers also learn that "Communications Québec (is settling) in Gaspé" and that "Sharon Briard (is) our photo contest winner." Lewis Fitzpatrick won the Gaspé mayoral race.

Vol 6. No 23 November 4, 1980

- The 23rd issue of SPEC in



Shown in Photo (left to right) Ray Smith, Hartley Dort, Raynald Babin, Arnold Levesque (Winner), Pat St-Onge and Raynald Arseneault.

Vol. 6. No. 19

1980, dated November 4, features two big titles on the cover, a reminder that the newspaper is weekly, and "Drugs, an issue" at Bonaventure Polyvalent. At a "parent-teacher night," principal Wade Gifford stated that "80% of secondary V students attending BPS use, or have experimented, with drugs." The article covers many angles.

Vol 6. No 24 November 11, 1980

- In issue 24 of SPEC, released on November 11, covers Remembrance Day on the front page. An article explains the pros and cons of the Port Daniel East and West possible merger. The sharing of the Port Daniel West deficit is discussed with vigour.
- Other front-page titles are "Mines Gaspé locates possible major deposit," "QPF officer wins appeal" and "Lemoignan assesses federal budget." The copper deposit is an underground one and would be practical to mine from the existing ore reserve already exploited.
- On the historical side, Ken Annett reports on the opening of Kempt road between Grand Metis to Broadlands, which took place between 1830 and 1833.

Vol. 6 No 25 November 18, 1980

- In issue 25 of SPEC, dated November 18, Cynthia Dow runs an article about "Pollution

charges still pending" regarding New Richmond's Consolidated Bathurst mill, where in April 1979, an employee was suspended without pay for having refused to dump 80 tons of waste in the Little Cascapedia river.

- The other main titles are: "Combine police force strikes at Ash Inn," "Vandalism on the rise in Gaspé" and "Up to \$10,000 available to inventors."

Vol 6. No 26 November 26, 1980

- Issue 26 dated November 26 of SPEC features a photo going with "50 charged in poaching network," about a poaching bust carried out in Montmagny. People living between Saint-Omer and Montréal were arrested.
- The front page also contains "CN Express to streamline operations," a move to cut services in its parcel delivery

branch, "Two hits and runs in Gaspé" and "Bonaventure County Liberals raise over \$29,000."

Vol 6. No 27 December 3, 1980

- The number 27 issue of the newspaper, dated December 3, reports on a study carried out by VIA Rail over the summer and showing that "Gaspesians want security, punctuality, comfort, prompt boarding service and inexpensive rates". The study was conducted by 82 students who interviewed 35,000 people! Jordan Brown comments on the study in his editorial.
- Also on the front page, readers see that the Regional School Board of Gaspesia has just submitted recommendations to the Jean Commission, a group examining adult education problems. The first recommendation suggests a reduction in group sizes, which

would open the door to English training.

- The article "Poaching case being reviewed" covers game wardens suspected of illegal hunting.

Vol. 6 No 28 December 10, 1980

- Released on December 10, the number 28 of SPEC features "Deadline approaches" as the main headline, pertaining to the Quebec language law and the obligation to comply with the new regulation about the use of French.
- As a follow up, "3 game wardens implicated in the poaching case on Saint John's" (river) are suspended with pay. "Agricultural Society (Div. B) holds annual meeting" and "New doctors for CLSC Chaleurs" are the other front-page headlines.
- A former Gaspesian from the Barachois area, Ulric Girard, writes a long story about his "uncle Jerome," who died in 1947.

Vol 6. No 29 December 17, 1980

- The final issue of the year, number 29, dated December 17, includes a Seasons Greetings special, through running a poem on the cover. Like it is often the case, this edition is mostly filled with community news, Christmas messages and politicians' priorities for the coming year. "What better place than the Gaspé," by Jordan Brown, and "Give peace a chance," by Cynthia Dow, fill the opinion page. This festive issue runs 60 pages!

Links between 1980 and 2025

Gilles Gagné

NEW CARLISLE – It is easy to find links between then and now. Two elements from 1980 stand out when compared with the context of 2025.

First, the moratorium imposed on groundfish licence issuance 45 years ago likely came too late, as it was followed in 1993-1994 by two fishing moratoriums that remain in effect to this day. Resource management was more political than based on biological data in 1980, a second federal election year in a row.

Second, although the economic situation of Natives appeared to be improving in 1980, a federal government report at the time also pointed out that "many of them face grave problems." While there has been progress since then, how can the federal government justify the fact that, in 2025, 56 years after humans first walked on the moon, hundreds of Indigenous communities in Canada still lack access to clean drinking water, a basic human need?

CASA celebrates 50 years

GILLES GAGNÉ

PASPEBIAC – In the part one (July 9 issue) of SPEC’s report on the Committee of Anglophone Social Action’s (CASA) 50 anniversary, the newspaper presented highlights from CASA’s annual general meeting, as well as some reactions of the participants to the June 29 events, which included both the AGM and a gala.

Here, the SPEC presents figures from CASA’s annual report and additional images from the June 29 celebration.

As reported by executive director Allen Richards, many programs experienced strong attendance or significant growth in 2024-2025. Among them, here are some noticeable statistics:

Employability: Regional individual employment services and support: 420 people received employment search assistance. Community empowerment literacy initiative: 112 people received individual appointments.

Youth wellness through nature program: Outdoor adventure program: 66 students participated.

Health and well-being: Patient navigator: 123 interventions were made. Community liaison: Family support program: 194 appointments, reaching 96 patients. Networking and outreach: 420 community members were reached and 98 committees, meetings and events were attended. International Women’s Day: 200 women participated. Youth mental health: 98 youths were reached.

Arts, culture and heritage: Homegrown (a platform for creative expression): 34 musicians, 5 comedians, 125

people attended, and 9,700 online views were recorded. Community in harmony (access to music instruments and workshops): 212 people participated in activities, including 68 music workshops. Youth showcase: 2,300 online views. Traditional shows: 5,500 online views. The Gaspesian Way Christmas Shows: 30 local musicians participated, generating 24,400 views and 2,635 comments. Studio and recording: 16 music recordings, including 8 songs for CASA’s 50th. Art workshops: 3 sessions for 22 participants. Support to community organizations: 16 workshops attended by 158 people.

Support to seniors: Wellness centres: 200 sessions in 10 different locations, 180 regular participants and 1,833 telephone support calls. Seniors outreach workers: 2,897 people reached, and 81 individuals received personalized support with health, social or well-being-related needs.

Digital communications: 240% increase in new followers, 192% boost in content interactions and 488,000 video views.

Bonfire media: 9,453 page views and 727 active users.

Bright beginnings - early childhood: 664 participants reached and 90 educational kits were distributed

Additional numbers about these programs can be consulted in the annual report, available on CASA’s website.

It’s also worth noting that a video chronicling CASA’s early days and its development over the years is available on the site. Interviews feature Bernard “Bernie” Saint-Laurent, Don Miller, Gary Briand, and Lynden Bechervaise.



Two of CASA’s founding members, Lynden Bechervaise and Don Miller, holding gifts, attended the 50th anniversary gala. They were thanked by Office Manager Ashley Renouf, Seniors’ Wellness Agent Dawn Assels, and Executive Director Allen Richards.



CASA’s first three executive directors, Joan Carr, Kim Harrison and Cathy Brown, as well as former board member Ken Ward, were honoured for their contributions to the organization. They were presented with gifts by current staff: Executive Director Allen Richards, Communications Coordinator Shannon Day, Community Liaison Shannon Marsh, Seniors’ Program and Activity Coordinator Kathy Gallon, and Seniors’ Wellness Agent Dawn Assels.



CASA staff acknowledged the contributions of long-time board members. From left to right, holding gifts, are Tony Conoley, Stella Kennedy, Douglas Hunt, and Dave Douenard—all current board members. They received thanks from Executive Director Allen Richards, Programs Manager Fay Gallon, Patient Navigator James Robson, Seniors’ Program and Activity Coordinator Kathy Gallon, Administrative Assistant Meaghan Hottot, and Youth Mental Health Coordinator Carissa Dempsey.



Between the end of CASA’s annual general meeting and the start of the gala on June 29, Executive Director Allen Richards made a humorous appearance on stage dressed as a janitor who had “been around for 50 years.” He then described the tenures of each executive director since 1975, including Joan Carr (his mother), Kim Harrison, Cathy Brown, and himself. His remarks drew plenty of laughter from the crowd gathered at the Paspebiac Cultural Centre.

Photos: Gilles Gagné



The Gaspé SPEC was founded by CASA in 1975, both organizations came into being around the same time that spring. Members of the newspaper’s staff attended the AGM and gala, including Office Manager Holly Smith, Office Assistant Jillian O’Connell, Sales Manager Emily Hocquard, and Board President Elaine Sexton. They enjoyed catching up with Rebecca MacDonald, Digital Coordinator and Safety Officer at the Gaspé Literacy Council.

New framework for the Rural Areas Fund penalizes Gaspésie

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CARLETON-SUR-MER - The terms and conditions of the Rural Areas Fund are now known, and the Table des préfets de la Gaspésie deplores the fact that the rules have been changed, which will ultimately harm the region's development.

The most significant irritant is the limitation of resources dedicated to MRC staff who supported the community in developing projects. Previously, up to 20% of the budget could be used to pay salaries. The percentage is now limited to 5%.

"What this means is that we can no longer pay a large portion of our employees with these budgets. We will have to turn to municipalities for contributions," said Mathieu Lapointe, president of the Table of préfets.



Photo: N. Sergerie

Mathieu Lapointe, President of the Gaspésie Prefects' Table.

Another major change involves the funding disbursement schedule.

"The disbursement is now a three-year agreement. Initially, we will receive 30% of the amount and 70% at the end of

the three years. The MRCs will have to advance the amounts through lines of credit or credit facilities. It will be the same for the projects we support. We will have to ask organizations to financially support the MRC's contribution for the duration of the project," explains Mr. Lapointe.

The impact will be significant, particularly for community organizations.

"We can provide up to \$150,000 to support a project. If we tell the organization that we will give them \$150,000 but that they will receive 30% of the funds upon signing and 70% when the project is completed, we are putting significant pressure on these organizations, which may not have the financial cushion to absorb these amounts. This will lead to several issues," says the president.

The operation of organiza-

tions can no longer be supported through the Rural Areas Fund.

"This also limits our interventions in the community and weakens organizations," continues Mr. Lapointe, who notes that the amounts have already been agreed upon, with each MRC receiving approximately \$1 million per year.

Organizations that may no longer be eligible for support include Stratégie Vivre en Gaspésie, Place aux jeunes, and local chambers of commerce.

"With the new terms and conditions, based on the information we have, we will no longer be able to support them," said Mr. Lapointe, who is also the prefect of the Avignon MRC.

He questioned the Quebec government's decision to restrict the fund's use, which had previously been praised for its agility and flexibility.

Mr. Lapointe believes that the Gaspésie is paying for other regions that have not managed their budgets well.

"That's what we understand from these decisions, that there may have been abuse in certain regions. That is not the case for us. What we are saying to the ministry is that if regions or MRCs have not complied with the old criteria, enforce them and don't crack down on those who did follow the rules," says Mr. Lapointe, who remains hopeful that he can convince the Quebec government to change things.

The first signs of this change were received last December for this fund, which is the MRCs' main development tool.

At the time, Mr. Lapointe even discussed the issue with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, demanding that the fund remain unchanged.

Formal board of directors for Centre artistique de Cap-aux-Os

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Centre artistique de Cap-aux-Os now has a formal board of directors since June 17, which will enable the project to convert the village church into a creative venue to be finalized.

Six people have been appointed to the board, with a seventh member to be named soon.

"We were a provisional committee since 2021, when we created it to have a registered committee to solicit bids, sign contracts with funders. We were a committee of what I called founding members registered as a non-profit organization. As soon as we had confirmation from all the funders, we called a special meeting to elect the directors," says president Daniel Bernier.

The project involves transforming the village's former church into a modern, dynamic and inclusive arts centre.

The Centre artistique will be a creative hub dedicated to artists, and will become Gaspé's first Maison de la culture.

This emblematic site, once the heart of the community, will regain its role as a gathering place thanks to a complete renovation that respects its heritage while embracing innova-



The interior of the church will be converted next winter if all goes well.

Photo: N. Sergerie

tion.

Planned renovations include replacement of doors and windows, improved insulation, re-designed interior cladding and new staircases.

At the same time, special attention will be paid to universal accessibility: adapted toilets, a barrier-free entrance and modernized exterior staircases will be integrated to ensure that this space is truly open to all.

The installation of an artesian well, a septic tank and the replacement of oil heating with a more ecological option also mark the project's commitment to sustainability and environmental standards.

A crowdfunding campaign has been launched to encourage community participation, with a target of \$30,000.

"Right now, it's difficult. We're still optimistic. We're going to appeal to the public

because right now, we're only 11% of the way to our goal. We've got a long way to go, but we're confident," says Mr. Bernier.

The total project was estimated in 2022 at \$4.1 million. "Exterior work is starting and we're in the plans and specifications process to receive them with estimates for the construction vacations or right after. This would allow us to go to tender around the end of August for interior work during the fall, winter and early spring," says Mr. Bernier.

If all goes according to plan, the facility is expected to open in May 2026.

Funding includes \$1.6 million from the federal government, \$2 million from the provincial government, \$155,000 from the Town of Gaspé and \$50,000 from the MRC de la Côte-de-Gaspé.

Six caribou births in captivity

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - There is encouraging news for the recovery of caribou in Gaspésie. Six calves were born in enclosures this spring, with eight females having been pregnant. However, one female and two calves did not survive the births.

These deaths occurred despite the presence of on-site rangers, who observe the caribou daily, as well as the availability of a ministry team and veterinarians on call seven days a week to intervene if necessary.

It is noted that the risk of perinatal mortality among calves and females persists. This phenomenon is common in the wild and can also occur in captivity, despite the careful care provided to the animals.

This was revealed by the Department of Environment, Climate Change, Wildlife, and Parks in a press release on July 10 announcing these results.

The Gaspé herd produced the highest number of calves, with half of the 12 calves born this spring. In comparison, only one calf was born in Val-d'Or and five in Charlevoix.

With these new births, the captive caribou population in Gaspésie now stands at 24: nine adult females, three adult males, six juveniles, and six calves.

In addition, 11 caribou remain free in the mountains of Parc de la Gaspésie, according to a count conducted last fall. This means that the total caribou population has increased from 30 last fall to 35 this spring, based on data compiled by the ministry.

The department does not plan to release the captive caribou into the wild in the short term. The composition of the group in the enclosure makes it possible to consider population growth through reproduction.

The ministry adds that the duration of this management measure will be evaluated through a multi-criteria analysis, taking into account various factors such as survival rates, physical condition, sex ratio, reproductive success and the implementation of other complementary management measures, including predator control and habitat restoration.

Based on these various parameters, sporadic releases of individuals are being considered, as a proportion of the population remains in their natural environment.

However, the number and timing of releases have not yet been determined, and there is currently no plan to keep the entire Gaspé Peninsula caribou population in captivity.

11 major infrastructure projects in Gaspésie

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - Eleven construction sites are currently active in the Gaspé region as part of the Quebec Infrastructure Strategy.

This information comes from a new interactive map put online by Quebec City on June 19. However, some of the map's elements are questionable.

For example, the map shows that section 2 of the rail line between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons is in service, even though over the third week of June, the Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie indicated that a bridge in Caplan had not yet been completed.

Rehabilitation of this section has now cost \$299.7 million.

Section 3, on the other hand, is in the planning stage, with the budget to be announced once the project is formally approved.

Other transportation projects include the \$27.3 million Petit Pabos river bridge in Chandler and the planned re-



Photo: N. Sergerie

Fisheries Minister André Lamontagne, Grande-Rivière Mayor Gino Cyr, Merinov Director David Courtemanche and Gaspé MNA Stéphane Sainte-Croix at the official groundbreaking ceremony in June 2023 to launch construction of the Carrefour de l'innovation des pêches de Grande-Rivière.

furbishment of the Matapédia bridge.

In terms of public buildings, the Maison des aînés in Chandler (\$75.6 million), the Carrefour de l'innovation des pêches in Grande-Rivière (\$31.2 million) and the English elementary-secondary school in New Carlisle (\$30.3 million) are on the agenda.

Finally, there are two social and collective housing projects in the planning phase: the 84-apartment Havre district in Gaspé and the 36-apartment Villa Mgr Bourdages in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

Notably absent from the interactive map is the emergency and intensive care renovations project at the Maria hospital.

Salmon fishing: Up to \$1.3 million for Gesgapegiag

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GASPÉ - The Micmac Nation of Gesgapegiag could receive up to \$1.3 million under an agreement reached with the Quebec government allowing a partial resumption of net salmon fishing in June.

According to a decree published in the Official Gazette on July 2, the amount will be paid during the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

This sum stems from the agreement reached on October 22, 2024, which was automatically renewed for one year on April 1, 2025, according to the decree.

The announcement was made in a press release on June 10. In that press release, Quebec indicated at the time that the agreement allowed certain salmon fishing activities to resume on the Cas-

capedia River, in accordance with the terms of the community fishing license.

Species conservation was at the heart of the discussions, as indicated by Minister Ian Lafrenière, responsible for Relations with First Nations, during a May visit to the Gaspé Peninsula.

Net fishing is a traditional cultural practice for the Mi'gmaq. In addition to species conservation, ensuring the transmission of knowledge to younger generations was also a key concern.

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

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

In June 2024, at least one net was spotted on the Grand Cascapedia River. The two parties had been in dispute

since the end of a 16-year agreement on March 31, 2024, under which no nets were used to catch salmon.

At the time, the Quebec government informed Gesgapegiag that it would no longer enter into individual compensation agreements, proposing instead to pay sums to create jobs and protect and conserve salmon. That proposal was rejected by the community.

In the absence of an agreement, there were no longer any restrictions on net fishing, according to the memo sent to Gesgapegiag Nation members.

However, in the days that followed, a new agreement was reached. The Quebec government agreed to pay compensation in exchange for refraining from net fishing, and the nets were subsequently removed.

Workforce: the main challenge in the coming years in Avignon and Bonaventure

Nelson Sergerie

CARLETON-SUR-MER - Labour remains the main challenge in the MRCs of Avignon and Bonaventure, following the release of their respective economic potential studies conducted by Aviseco Conseil.

The two MRCs joined forces with the common aim of identifying assets, gaps and challenges in order to better guide socio-economic development over the coming years.

In addition to the workforce concerns, housing emerged as a key issue.

"But it's really the new workforce. For every two people leaving for retirement, only one is ready to take the job. It's a real challenge. We have to work to attract new workers," says MRC d'Avignon prefect Mathieu Lapointe.

"We have a lot of business owners looking for buyers, and not many people are coming forward. We'll be working to support entrepreneurs in this process," he adds.

The challenge for the buyers will be to find capital, and the owners must make their business financially attractive.

A study also highlights the need to develop a value chain for secondary and tertiary processing.

"For example, forestry is very strong. We have work done in the forest. We have sawmills. Could we go a step further and do some processing instead of just producing boards? To be able to come up with a finished product, that's something to look at to create synergy in this sector," says the prefect.

Once the full picture is understood, the next step will be to develop an action plan to address the identified issues and implement potential solutions.

"We'll also be looking at how to align our financial programs and ensure that the projects we support are in line with what the report tells us, so that we can be consistent in our approach," notes Mr. Lapointe.

Strategic planning underway for Pointe-à-la-Croix

Nelson Sergerie

POINTE-À-LA-CROIX - Pointe-à-la-Croix is launching a strategic planning process in preparation for the World Acadian Congress in 2029 and the municipality's 175th anniversary in 2030.

"We already have a general strategic plan at the municipality, but the new one will be strictly for the organization of the CMA and the 175th to prepare for it," says the Mayor of Pointe-à-la-Croix Pascal Bujold. CMA means Congrès mondial acadien.

The planning process will take place over the following weeks and is expected to be ready by early 2026.

"It's really about putting a timeline on everything that needs to be done: improving and beautifying the municipality. It's general, but that's the objective," continues the mayor.

Cellular network upgrade

Consultations are also underway for the installation of a cell tower to improve signal quality in the area.

A 76-metre tower will be erected on municipally-owned land at Belvedere Mountain.

"It's a big tower, but it will help the network in the Pointe-à-la-Croix area. It's a problem, but it looks like it's getting worse," notes the mayor.

Since the installation of a 5G tower on the New Brunswick side nearly three years ago, citizens have been complaining about difficulties using their mobile devices.

"We've seen the plans and this will solve the problem and help the people of Petite Rivière-du-Loup and the Alverne sector," says Mr. Bujold.

If all goes according to plan, the tower will be operational in 2026.

THEGASPESPEC.COM

Mawiomi Treatment Centre holds third wellness, culture and family gathering

GILLES GAGNÉ

GESGAPEGIAG – The staff of the Mawiomi Treatment Centre hosted its third wellness, culture and family summer gathering on July 10 at the entrance of the organization’s facility. More than 100 people attended the event, which featured a barbecue, live music, poetry, a healing song and a recognition ceremony for the employees who have completed their first year of work.

The Mawiomi Treatment Centre has a capacity of seven beds. It is a residential centre, meaning that those receiving treatment stay overnight. It notably offers a seven-week structured treatment program for chemical dependencies and has incorporated the "Harm reduction model" of treatment with an emphasis on Mi'gmaq culture, values and traditions.

Executive director Melissa Bryan points out that the “Mawiomi BBQ” is important to foster links between the staff and the community.

“It goes very well. It has progressed since we first held that community event. Some people were afraid to come, because of the stigma linked to substance abuse. People didn’t want to be associated with the centre. However, the barbecue is organized for the community, so that people can meet the staff and reduce prejudice. Everybody can experience a substance abuse problem at one point,” explains Ms. Bryan.

She was hired to work for Mawiomi Treatment Services Inc. six years ago and was appointed executive director in November 2022.

“After becoming executive director, I really wanted to create a link between the centre and the community. The first event was quiet. There was no music, no tents, just tables and chairs. We have gradually added elements. With the barbecue now, people who wouldn’t come at first now feel welcome. We want families to be aware of the substance addiction problem. It is the first step that must be recognized if we want to solve it,” adds Melissa Bryan.

The July 10 BBQ was punctuated by traditional healer Denise Larocque’s reading of a Kasàlà, a form of African poetry describing what Gesgapegiag, Mi'gmaq culture and healing are about. “We know that the opposite of addiction is connection,” she concluded, after underlining that “Mawiomi is a place of wisdom” in its definition.

Joshua Philbrick, who also works as a traditional healer for the treatment centre, sang a song “for the people who have lost a friend or a family member to addictions,” or simply for people who want to think about someone who has suffered from them.

John Gedeon Junior also contributed to the gathering’s animation through singing and providing some additional music.

The Mawiomi Treatment



Hannah Pointer, Jaime Arsenault, Joshua Philbrick, Shayne Foran on the front row, as well as Charlie Bernard, Mitchell Syvret Caplin and Peter Clement on the second row, received recognition for their first year as staff members of the treatment centre. The facility’s executive director Melissa Bryan was glad to join them for the photo (left on the second row).



The Mawiomi Treatment Centre staff was pleased to welcome the community on July 10 and build stronger links with Gesgapegiag’s citizens.


Photos: G. Gagné

Centre’s team notably provides individual counselling, group circles, videos, discussions and teachings. The approach of the treatment is based on ancestors’ holistic


(emotional, spiritual, physical, mental) manner designed to address the individuals’ needs.

Mawiomi supports Indigenous peoples in their individ-

ualized healing journey, embracing the seven sacred teachings that honours the human spirit, namely respect, wisdom, truth, courage, honesty, humility and love.





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Gladys McKay passes away at 106

GILLES GAGNÉ

CASCAPEDIA-ST. JULES – She was born 25 days after the First World War armistice, she kept accurate memories of the 1929 economic crash, and she was proud enough to visit the hairdresser the morning of her 106th birthday, as she had done for many birthdays before.

She was arguably the oldest citizen of the Gaspé Peninsula, but she was not immortal. Née Gladys Julia Maud McKay, she passed away peacefully at the age of 106 and six months, at Maria's St. Joseph's Residence, on June 23. Born in Cascapedia on December 6, 1918, her funeral was held on July 11 at New Richmond's United Church.

Her wake was held in the house where she lived for just over 20 years after returning to the Gaspé Peninsula at age 84. She lived there first with her sister until her sister's passing in 2005, then alone until she moved to St. Joseph's, a week before her 104th birthday in December



On December 6, 2023, friends Eileen Pidgeon, James Hardy, Tammy Burton, Shirley Campbell, Donna Coull, Kathleen Paquet, Reverend Pierre Momberg, France Bujold, Eileen St-Onge and Elsie Willett gathered around Gladys McKay for her 105 birthday. She had just received many gifts and a beautiful birthday cake.

Photo: G. Gagné

2022.

Kathleen Paquet, who lives close to the McKay home, was one of the most active volunteers supporting Gladys McKay over the last years of her life. A group of dedicated friends ensured the centenarian wouldn't eat alone and that she was fine between meals, either by visiting her or calling her. For several years, a rotation of friends also took turns staying overnight so she

wouldn't be alone.

Ms. Paquet greeted many people during the open-casket wake on July 10. "Ms. McKay liked the bling. She liked to party and she still had good memory. She could remember our birthdays," she explained to some of the visitors.

She also noted that Ms. McKay was not happy about her last hairdo. "She found that her hair was too short."

Professionally, Gladys

McKay first taught at the former Dimock Creek school. Then, she moved to Lake Louise, Alberta, where she worked for Canadian Pacific Hotels, "for the poorest wages I ever earned," she explained when she turned 105.

She then taught in Noranda, Abitibi, before moving to Montreal, where she worked for Alcan, now known as Rio Tinto-Alcan.

A few years before turning

100, she lost some of her vision and was only able to see light and some movements. This led her to stop watching TV. She nevertheless stayed sharp through receiving visitors on a daily basis and communicating with relatives in Alberta.

Her birthdays were always special events, whether celebrated at her house or, in the last three years, at St. Joseph's Residence.

At the end of 2022, after having been hospitalized for a month, it was determined she could no longer live alone. She moved to St. Joseph's Residence not by ambulance, none were available at the time, but by taxi.

"The driver couldn't believe how old she was. He gave us his business card in case we would need him in the future," Kathleen Paquet told the SPEC in December of 2023, a year after the cab ride.

At the time, the Gaspé Peninsula health authorities could not officially confirm that Gladys McKay was the region's oldest living resident, but no one at the organization had heard of anybody older.

June was hot and dry

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Dry and hot: that was the weather report for June at Michel-Pouliot Airport in Gaspé. Fortunately, no forest fires were reported anywhere in the Gaspé Peninsula during the month.

According to Environment Canada, only 36 millimetres of rain fell in Gaspé last month, just 46% of the normal 79 millimetres. This finding is based on the fact that precipitation was recorded on 14 of the 30 days in June.

Two days saw more rain, June 10 and 20, with 0.34 inches and 0.36 inches, respectively. The rest of the month, up to 0.12 inches of rain was measured at the airport.

Gaspé, Montreal, and the Far North experienced a significant rainfall deficit, according to the federal agency.

The warm weather in early June resulted in an average temperature of 15.1°C, which is 1.9 degree above the seasonal normal of 13.2°C. Temperatures exceeded 25°C on June 5 and 6, with a high of 29.8°C on June 4, due to a mass of warm air moving across the province.

No forest fires

Despite this dry and hot weather, the Société de protection des forêts contre le feu (SOPFEU) reported no fires in June.

Since the beginning of the season, 15 fires have been reported, affecting 68.3 hectares of forest.

The largest fire occurred on May 15 and may have been started by an arsonist.

It ravaged 50.3 hectares in Pointe-à-la-Croix, making it the largest fire recorded in the Gaspé Peninsula in over 20 years.

Several firefighters, assisted by a helicopter and two tanker planes, struggled to regain control as strong winds drove the blaze deeper into the forest.

The last time a fire of this magnitude occurred in the region was in 2004, when 59 hectares burned in the Rocher-Percé MRC.

The largest fire ever recorded in the Gaspé Peninsula occurred in 1995, when 23,105 hectares burned in the backcountry of Bonaventure, an area equivalent to half the island of Montreal. That fire began during a forestry operation.

Most of the other fires this season were started accidentally, while a few occurred during forestry operations.

GLC announces winners of writing challenge

HOLLY SMITH

GASPE - The Gaspé Literacy Council (GLC) recently announced the winners of its Pens, Paper, and Plants Writing Challenge, a celebration of creativity and storytelling open to writers across Eastern Quebec. The contest attracted entries in three categories: Poetry, Mini Stories, and Short Stories.

Here are the winners:

Poetry: First Place: Catherine Parcaud (Lower Saint Lawrence), Second Place: Constance Brochet (Baie des Chaleurs/Southern Gaspésie) and Third Place: Victoria Carrier (North Shore).

Mini Stories: First Place: Holly Smith (Baie des Chaleurs/Southern Gaspésie), Second Place: Cynthia Dow (Baie des Chaleurs/Southern Gaspésie) and Third Place: Madison Touzel (Gaspé-Percé).

Short Stories: First Place: Masson Girard (Gaspé-Percé).

The competition highlighted the GLC's ongoing commitment to literacy and creative expression in Eastern Quebec. Participants ranged in age and background, and entries reflected a wide range of themes inspired by nature, imagination, and community.


GLC staff were thrilled by the response and the quality of the submissions. "We love seeing the talent across the Gaspé, the Magdalen Islands, and the North Shore and we're thrilled to have had some budding writers participate with the more seasoned storytellers," said Angelina

Leggo, Executive Director of the GLC. "We're proud to be able to offer a platform that encourages people to write creatively," she continued.

The GLC hints that more contests may be coming in the near future. Interested writers and readers are encouraged to keep an eye on the Gaspé Literacy Council's Facebook page for announcements and upcoming opportunities.

For more information about the GLC and its programs, visit their Facebook page or reach out directly to get involved in their literacy initiatives.

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Swing, Spike, and Score!

Gesgapegiag team wins Volleyfest 2025

Holly Smith
From July 10 to 13, the girls' volleyball team from Gesgapegiag showcased their skill and determination at Volleyfest 2025, held at Laval University in Quebec City. Competing against top teams from across the province, they rose to the occasion and emerged as the 2025 Volleyfest champions. Their hard work, teamwork, and dedication brought pride to their community and earned them a well-deserved victory.

Maria softball tournament

Holly Smith
The Town of Maria was buzzing with energy from July 4 to 6 as it hosted its annual softball tournament, drawing over 90 players and hundreds of spectators for a weekend filled with fun, friendly rivalry, and community spirit.
This year's tournament featured two adult divisions, women's and mixed. Six women's teams and five mixed teams took part, with several athletes competing in both categories. Some players completed up to eight games over the three-day stretch, pushing through the summer heat with impressive determination.
In the women's final, the New Carlisle Royals defeated the Vintage Club from Saint Omer 9-5. The mixed final was a nail-biter, with Saint-O-Mix edging out The Villains from Gesgapegiag 7-6.
Teams played a series of pool or ranking games followed by quarterfinals, giving everyone a fair chance to advance. The weather stayed mostly clear, adding to the enjoyment of the weekend.
Organizer Lori Budd praised the Town of Maria and the volunteers for their continued support. "It's incredible how ball brings people together," she said. "The tournament is about more than just winning, it's about connection and fun."

Elliot Greene off to Canadian Championships

Charles Greene
Elliot Greene son of Ryan Greene and Genevieve Audet of New Richmond will be pitching for the U17 Quebec Provincial Team at the National Softball Competition. The event is scheduled from August 5 to August 10 in Napanee, Ontario.
Accompanied by his father the assistant coach, the two have travelled to Bellechasse twice a month this winter for team training. During the week the young athlete pursues specific training at a local gym
Elliot, 15, attends Carleton Polyvalent School.



Elliot Greene and his father the assistant coach will be travelling to Napanee, Ontario in August to attend the Canadian Championships.



The Gesgapegiag girls' volleyball team proudly holds their championship banner after winning Volleyfest 2025 at Laval University. Their hard work and determination led them to the top spot in this year's tournament.



A player slides in as the opponent moves in for the tag during a tense moment at the Maria softball tournament.



A determined infielder makes a full-out dive to stop the ball during a high-energy game at the Maria softball tournament.

Announcements



Obituaries



CRAIG: Janet Ann

It is with great sadness that the family of Janet “Ann” Craig announces her sudden passing at Maria Hospital on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at the age of 70.

Ann was predeceased by parents Leonard and Greta (Hall) Craig, sister Betty Craig, and brother-in-law Joseph Chapados and brother, Garry R. Craig.

She will be lovingly remembered and deeply missed by brother Eric (Brenda) Craig, of Bobcaygeon, Ontario; sister Donna (Alan) Kemp, of Ajax, Ontario; and aunt Bessy of New Carlisle. Ann also leaves behind nieces Cheryl (Albert) Craig, Cindy (Kevin) Killam, Janice-Ann (John) Boustead, Erika (Matt) MacEachern, Dawn (Steve) de Montfort, Erin, and Lauren Kemp. She is also survived by her great-nephew Michael Craig, as well as her many other great-nieces and great-nephews.

Born on December 27, 1954, Ann lived a life defined by simplicity, loyalty, and quiet strength. Experiencing the world through her own eyes, she moved through life with sincerity and honesty, often seeing and hearing what others missed. She had a gift for creating lasting bonds with those around her. She loved cats, romance movies, going to church, and her days at the Anchor (school). She particularly enjoyed her trips to Ontario to spend time with family.

Ann was the kind of person who left an imprint on everyone she met and had no problem telling you exactly what was on her mind. Her unfiltered honesty, perfectly timed one-liners, and surprising sense of humour made her unforgettable. She had a way of saying things no one else could, and her family will always treasure the countless laughs she gave them, often when they least expected it.

One of the most cherished constants in Ann’s life was her lifelong friendship with Sandra Flowers. The two were inseparable and fondly remembered walking around town in their younger days. To many in the community, they were a heartwarming sight, a quiet reminder of lasting friendship and the comfort of routine. In her final hours, spending time with Sandra brought joy to Ann’s heart.

Ann spent her last years in the devoted care of Pamela McGuire and her wonderful staff, who provided not only a safe and loving home but also a true sense of belonging. The family is deeply grateful for the kindness, respect, and compassion they showed Ann every day.

The family also extends sincere thanks to Dr. Basque, Dr. Carignan, and Dr. Bonneville for their

care over the years, and to the nurses and staff at Maria Hospital for their dedication and support.

In lieu of flowers, those wishing to express sympathy may consider a donation to: L.I.F.E. (Living Is For Everyone) Association: 131 Gérard D. Levesque, New Carlisle, Quebec G0C 1A0 or Crohn’s and Colitis Canada <https://crohnsandcolitis.ca>

Visitations will be held at the Henri Thibodeau Funeral Home, 197 Gérard D. Levesque, New Carlisle, on: Friday, August 1, 2025, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday, August 2, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. The funeral service will follow at Saint Andrew’s Anglican Church, New Carlisle, on Saturday, August 2, 2025, at 11 a.m., with burial to follow.

A luncheon will be held afterward at the Royal Canadian Legion, New Carlisle Branch, where friends and family are invited to gather, share memories, and celebrate Ann’s life together.



MACKENZIE: Sarah Lillian Watt

December 7, 1926 - July 4, 2025.

Sarah Mackenzie passed away peacefully at the CHSLD on Friday, July 4, 2025. With loved ones by her side, she was in her 99th year.

Predeceased by her parents Hugh and Dolly Watt, husband Herb MacKenzie, son Gary, siblings and their spouses Arnold (Jessie), Ida (Ted), Dorothy (Ray). She is survived by her children Donald (Diane), Judy (Derrick), Terry, and daughter-in-law Maureen. As well as many grandchildren, great-grandchildren, great-great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

She will forever be remembered as a hard working, loving, caring and warm hearted woman whose legacy lives on in the generations of family she helped shape. Widowed at the age of 52, she devoted her entire life to her four children, their families, her church St. Pauls Anglican in Shigawake and the Anglican Church Women (ACW). She considered it an honour to serve as the president of the ACW for 35 years. Her involvement with church events, harvest suppers and fundraising was a true testament of her commitment to her church and community.

She will be greatly missed by all who knew and loved her, but there is a comfort in knowing that she passed peacefully, with only a little twitch of her shoulder at the end, as her hand was taken by her loved ones waiting above her to join them. May she rest in eternal peace.

A celebration of her life will be held at St. Pauls Anglican Church, Shigawake. Visitation at 1 p.m. on Friday, September 19, 2025, service and interment at 2 p.m. followed by refreshments at the Cultural Centre.



Funeral Announcement



LEMAISTRE: Betty

The family of Betty Le Maistre wishes to invite her friends, neighbours, former students and all who knew her to attend her burial August 2, at 2 p.m. at the New Carlisle United Church Cemetery. There will be a short graveside service, followed by a reception at the New Carlisle Town Hall. We would be honoured if you joined us, and look forward to renewing old acquaintances.



In Memory

WYLIE: Viola

In loving memory of our wonderful mom.

*Of all the special gifts in life,
However great or small.
To have you as our mom,
Was the greatest gift of all.
May the winds of love blow softly,
And whisper in your ear.
We love and miss you Mom,
And wish that you were here.
Deep in our hearts,
Your life is kept.
To love and cherish, not forget.
No more tomorrows we can share,
But yesterdays are always there.
A silent thought, a secret tear,
Keeps your memory ever near,
In our hearts forever.*

Gone but not forgotten.

Thank you

Shigawake Community Centre members Sarah Duguay and Landis Assels would like to sincerely thank our summer friends Joan McRae, Elaine Huntington, Councillor Georgette Chapados and her friend Lisa Beaudin, as well as Margaret Ramier and Marcelle Sullivan, for their generous help in preparing lunch for Shigawake’s 100th anniversary celebration.

A special thank you goes to Pam Huntington for the beautiful cake that added a sweet touch to the festivities!

Announcement Deadlines:

July 31 for the **August 6** issue
August 13 for the **August 20** issue
August 27 for the **September 3** issue

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

Classifieds

LOOKING TO BUY: Antiques of all kinds: furniture, dishes, trinkets, toys, tools, items from the first and second world wars, cast iron items, hockey helmets from the 70's. For further information contact Francis at 418-368-9167.

Coast Round-up

GASPÉ:

Camp Fort Haldimand

July 23: Official opening and line dancing 7 p.m.

July 24: 5 p.m. cold plate supper, cost: \$17 and 7 p.m. gift bingo.

July 25: 7 p.m. amateur hour cost: \$5

July 26: 7 a.m. breakfast cost: \$15, 7:30 a.m. crafters market, 8 a.m. children's activities, 2 p.m. tuck tournament.

July 27: 10:30 a.m. Church service, 12 p.m. closing of silent auction,

light lunch, official closing. All Events held at Camp Fort Haldimand. Silent auction will be open during all events.

SHIGAWAKE:

Shigawake

Music Festival and Agricultural Fair

July 24: Thirsty Thursday with Aaron Check from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

July 31: Thirsty Thursday with Mlou and Caro from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

August 2: Metal Barn Dance starting at 9 p.m.

August 7: Thirsty Thursday in the barn with CHNC band from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m.

August 14-17: Fair and music festival - details to come.

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.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

The Cascapedia River Museum

July 25: The Cascapedia River Museum is pleased to

welcome

Claudine Boudreau, multidisciplinary artist from Maria, for her summer exhibition entitled "Unpredictable Journeys", which will be held from July 25 to September 12. Claudine presents us with drawings that merge watercolor techniques with unique explorations. The museum is located at 275 Route 299 Cascapedia St Jules. We warmly invite you to this opening on Friday, July 25 for a friendly get together from 5 to 7.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES: 50+ Club

September 20: A Harvest Bingo will begin at 1 p.m. until finished, doors open at 12 p.m.

September 15: Meeting

UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN

Sunday, July 27

10 a.m. Service

Sunday, August 3

2 p.m. Service

beginning at 6:30 p.m.

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

November 17: Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

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

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, July 27

10 a.m. Service

Sunday, August 3

10 a.m. Service

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, July 27

Camp Fort Haldimand

10:30 a.m. Outdoor Holy Eucharist

Sunday, August 3

St. Andrews - York

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist



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Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally, and backwards.

WORDS

BLONDIES

BROWNIES

CAKE

CANDY

CHEESECAKE

COOKIES

CREAM

CRÈME BRÛLÉE

CUPCAKES

CUSTARD

ÉCLAIR

FLAN

GELATIN

GELATO

ICE CREAM

MOUSSE

PIE

POPS

PUDDING

SORBET

SPUMONI

STRUDEL

TART

TIRAMISU

Barbecue Spare Ribs

Makes 6 servings

2 tablespoons paprika

1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

2 tablespoons garlic powder

1 tablespoon salt

1 teaspoon freshly ground black peppercorns

6 lbs. spare ribs, racks cleaned and trimmed

13 ounces barbecue sauce

1. Stir together the paprika, cayenne, garlic powder, salt, and pepper in a mixing bowl.

2. Thoroughly rub the mix into the rib racks. Place in a shallow dish, cover and chill for at least 8 hours.

3. After chilling, remove the ribs from the fridge. Preheat a gas or charcoal grill to about 300 F.

4. Cook the ribs on the grill, covered with a lid, until the meat is tender and pulls away from the bone, about 2 hours.

5. As the ribs cook, periodically brush them with some barbecue sauce, reserving any unused sauce.

6. When ready, remove the ribs from the grill and let them rest under aluminum foil for at least 10 minutes.

7. After resting, brush the ribs with any reserved barbecue sauce before cutting and service.

HOROSCOPES - July 23 to July 29

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

You're on fire this week, Aries. Ideas are sparking left and right. Don't forget to slow down before you burn out. You want to showcase energy without creating chaos.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

This week is ideal for treating yourself to something great, Taurus. Money and love are both flowing in a way that is to your liking. The universe delivers for you right now.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, your words have power this week, so use them wisely or go wild. It's a great time to network, flirt or finally send that romantic text you've been thinking about.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

It's not a bad thing to have so many emotions flowing right now, Cancer. This week is ideal for reconnecting with your intuition or redecorating your

space.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Get ready to shine again, Leo. You could be the center of attention and those around you love the show. You may also enjoy some career wins this week.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, you're crushing your to-do list this week while others seem to be snoozing. Midweek brings you a curveball, but you can handle it with signature grace and organization.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Your charm is turned up to 100 percent right now, Libra. A chance encounter could ignite something sweet this week. Weigh your options regarding which path to pursue.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, this week you're serving up mysterious mastermind energy. People want your attention, but you are playing it really cool. Money or career secrets may come to light.

HOROSCOPES - July 30 to August 5

ARIES – Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, if you long to take your romantic relationship to the next level, this might be the week to focus on your feelings. Your partner may be waiting for you to make a move.

TAURUS – Apr 21/May 21

Tranquility you have been feeling of late enables you to listen more attentively to your inner self, Taurus. Take advantage of slow times to evaluate events and make important decisions.

GEMINI – May 22/Jun 21

You can look forward to an enjoyable week, Gemini. Career issues or family matters are nothing to worry about right now, as everything seems to be moving along smoothly.

CANCER – Jun 22/Jul 22

This week you may find satisfaction that will put a smile on your face and boost morale. You also may find yourself embracing some of the core values that

have been a part of your life.

LEO – Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, others may have been asking questions of you since you've uncharacteristically been out of the lime-light. Reveal what you want to share. Even you are allowed your secrets.

VIRGO – Aug 24/Sept 22

You have a tendency to avoid conflict instead of facing things head on, Virgo. If you've been circumventing something that needs attention, it is time to see it through.

LIBRA – Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, if you feel that your power has increased, it may be time to take on some more responsibility right now. Embrace your new role and remain confident in your ability to handle it.

SCORPIO – Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, right now you are going through a period where circumstances are trying to shed light on your hidden motivations. But you're not ready to show

everyone your cards just yet.

SAGITTARIUS – Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, your ego may take a hit this week, but you'll need to roll with the punches. You are finally understanding that simply willing something to happen won't always work.

CAPRICORN – Dec 22/Jan 20

Your actions lately have been going against your nature to want to please others, Capricorn. It will be difficult for you to get back on target, but not impossible.

AQUARIUS – Jan 21/Feb 18

It is becoming evident that you might need to bring in a little extra help on a situation that has been brewing for some time, Aquarius. Figure out who you can trust and go from there.

PISCES – Feb 19/Mar 20

Your powers of concentration and self-discipline are impressive, Pisces. There are lessons that others can learn about these admirable traits if you're willing to share.

The Grill Guide

EMILY HOCQUARD

NEW CARLISLE - Whether you're a seasoned pitmaster or a first timer looking to host a summer cookout, choosing the right BBQ is essential to getting the flavour and convenience you want and need. Grills come in many shapes, sizes, and fuel types, each offering unique benefits of their own. Here's a breakdown of the most popular types of BBQs you can buy and what makes each one distinct.

Charcoal Grills

These BBQ's are known for the smoky rich flavour they give the food. Using charcoal briquettes or lump charcoal, they do take longer to heat up versus a propane unit. Despite the longer wait, many grillers will swear by a charcoal grill for the authentic taste. Some pros to a charcoal grill are the fact that they have excellent high heat for searing and are typically less expensive upfront compared to other models. However, patience is key with this kind of machine. With charcoal comes longer prep, tricky

temperature control and lengthy cleanup time. Charcoal also must be bought and stored correctly. Despite the few cons, the traditionalists who prioritize flavour over speed will agree that charcoal is the way to go.

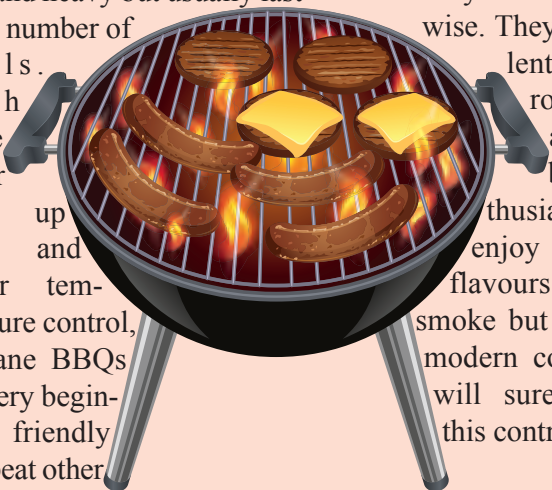
Gas Grills

Propane grills are the most popular type of BBQs due to their ease of use and quick startup time. Just by turning a knob, you can be ready to grill within minutes. Busy households stand by this kind of grill as a tool to efficiently cook outdoors, often faster and much tastier than they would inside their own kitchen! Propane tanks can be expensive and heavy but usually last a fair number of meals. With the faster heat up time and easier temperature control, propane BBQs are very beginner friendly and beat other

types of grills convenience wise. There may be less of a smoky flavour than with charcoal, but the grill lines on a juicy steak will remain and the shorter clean up time will make-up for it!

Pellet Grills

Pellet grills burn compressed wood pellets and are electronically controlled for precise temperature regulation. They're growing in popularity thanks to their different cooking methods and "set-it-and-forget-it" option. This unit does require electricity and pellet fuel and is known to be pricier upfront and to maintain. They are heavier and less portable but remain very versatile cooking wise. They are excellent to smoke, roast, grill and even bake! Enthusiasts who enjoy the deep flavours of wood smoke but appreciate modern convenience will surely choose this contraption!



Grill marks the spot

Jillian O'Connell
PORT DANIEL - On the Gaspésie, when the days get a little longer, the sun shines a little brighter, and the air smells of salt, sunscreen and cut grass... It's barbecue time! Whether you're flipping burgers on the grill for yourself or hosting a backyard bash with ribs, steaks and salads for your family and friends, barbecuing is more than just cooking outside, it's a full-on summertime mood.

It's smoky, full of flavour, and always features someone who is way too serious about the grill temperature. Whether your team gas, charcoal or pellet, the true joy is in the clink of the tongs.

Barbecue season reminds us that the best moments are often the simplest. A warm evening, a full plate and a few chairs in the grass is often all it takes to feel like everything is right in the world.

There's something about sharing food cooked over an open flame that brings people together. The smell drifts down the street and draws neighbours in like a magnet. Kids dart around with popsicles, someone's trying to DJ from their phone, and laughter hangs in the air like smoke from the coals.

The menu doesn't have to be fancy though it can be. A perfectly charred hot dog or buttery corn on the cob can be just as satisfying as a marinated steak or cedar-planked salmon. And don't forget the sides: potato salad passed down from grandma, fresh coleslaw, or grilled veggies still sizzling when they hit the plate.

Here on the coast, we know how to savour summer. The breeze off the water, the sound of nature all around us, and the pink skies stretching into night. These are the ingredients that make every barbecue unforgettable. So, grab your apron, fire up the grill, and soak it all in.

Because summer's short, but the memories made around the barbecue last all year.

Hooray for gourmet Hot Dogs!

The following article was published in the Volume 12 No 26 issue of The Gaspé Spec.

Now you can create a delicious gourmet hot dog for every day in July - a great way to celebrate Canadian Hot Dog Month.

As a ready-to-eat processed meat, the hot dog offers unlimited opportunities just to by changing the condiments. To further enhance the hot dog, consider the variety of buns and breads that may be used as a foundation. From the traditional hot dog buns to bagels, tortillas, croissants or crepes; rye, wheat breads or muffin, each will add a distinctive personality.

Now make your selection from among these topping ideas:

Hawaiian Dog - Combine crushed pineapples, sweet and sour sauce and chopped green peppers.

Greek Dog - Spread with chopped olives, top with a dollop of sour cream, onion

dip or yogurt.

Twin Cheese Dog - Mix shredded cheddar and shredded mozzarella cheese; sprinkle over hot dog; broil until cheeses melt.

Salad Dog - Top with shredded lettuce, chopped green onions, celery and tomato. Drizzle with one teaspoon of your favourite salad dressing.



Reuben Dog - Wrap hot dog in slice of Swiss cheese and place in centre of hot dog bun. Top with serving of sauerkraut; drizzle with one teaspoon thousand island dressing. Broil until cheese melts.

Pizza Dog - Top generously with prepared pizza sauce; sprinkle with shredded mozzarella cheese. Broil until cheese melts.

Barbecue Dog - Drizzle barbecue sauce over hot dog; top with crushed potato chips. To highlight the barbecue flavour, use barbecue flavoured chips.

Nutty Dog - Spread a layer of crunchy peanut butter the length of a hot dog. Sprinkle with crushed corn flakes or shredded coconut. If desired, place under broiler to toast coconut and slightly melt peanut butter.

Carrot Dog - Finely shred 1/2 cup fresh carrot. Add a tablespoon of crushed pineapple and mix together. Spread along length of hot dog. Sprinkle with celery seeds, if desired.

In addition to toppings, a number of marinades can be made quickly This is particularly good to use when hot dogs have been cut in chunks for kebobs. Apple cider, pineapple juice, beer, dry wines or soy sauce mixed with orange juice - all will add a special flavour to the hot dog after marinating for a few hours.

Get Fired Up for Summertime



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SCAN ME

Finding the perfect place to stay

HOLLY SMITH

NEW CARLISLE - Summer along the Gaspé Coast is a magical time. From the lush valleys near Matapédia to the rugged shores of Gaspé Bay, the region transforms into a vibrant playground for tourists and locals alike. Whether you're planning a week-long getaway or a quick weekend escape, finding the right accommodation can make all the difference in your experience.

With an array of options spanning cozy inns, seaside cottages, bustling hotels, and rustic campgrounds, the Gaspé Coast offers something for every traveller's taste and budget. This guide will walk you through what to expect and share useful dos and don'ts to help you enjoy your stay to the fullest.

Hotels and Motels: Comfort and Convenience

In towns like Gaspé, Percé, Carleton-sur-Mer, Bonaventure and Matapédia hotels and motels provide easy access to attractions, dining, and shopping. These establishments often offer amenities such as

free Wi-Fi, on-site restaurants, parking and air conditioning, comforts that make them a popular choice for families, business travellers, and visitors looking for convenience.

Dos: 1. Book early, especially in July and August when lots of people visit. 2. Check reviews online and look for deals. 3. Ask about cancellation rules in case your plans change.

Don'ts: 1. Don't wait until the last minute to book, rooms fill up fast! 2. Don't book without checking how close the hotel is to places you want to visit.

Bed and Breakfasts & Inns

For travellers seeking a more personal and authentic experience, the region boasts numerous bed and breakfasts and small inns. These accommodations often come with home-cooked breakfasts and tips about the best places to eat, hike, or visit.

Dos: 1. Talk to your hosts, they know the area well! 2. Ask if you can bring pets if you have animals with you.

Don'ts: 1. Don't expect the same privacy as a big hotel. 2. Don't forget to check if there is

parking or if the place is easy to get into.

Cottages and Vacation Rentals

Many visitors opt to rent cottages, chalets, or vacation homes for more privacy and flexibility. These can range from rustic lakeside cabins near Matapédia to modern seaside chalets near Percé or Gaspé. Vacation rentals are ideal for families, groups, or anyone wanting to cook their own meals and enjoy a home-away-from-home feel.

Dos: 1. Use trusted websites and read recent reviews. 2. Make sure you know exactly where the place is and what it has (kitchen, laundry, yard). 3. Ask the owner about how to check in and check out.

Don'ts: 1. Don't forget to count extra fees like cleaning costs. 2. Don't rent places without real photos or contact info.

Campgrounds and RV Parks

For those who love nature, the Gaspé Coast has a wide selection of campgrounds and RV parks. Some are simple tent sites, and others have electric-

ity and Wi-Fi. They are near hiking trails, beaches, and places like Forillon National Park.

Dos: 1. Book your spot early, especially in busy places. 2. Bring the right gear for weather that can change, even in summer, nights can be cool. 3. Follow the rules and keep your site clean.

Don'ts: 1. Don't assume every campground has the same facilities, check first. 2. Don't make too much noise or disturb others.

General tips

Book Early: Summer is busy, so plan ahead to get the best places and prices.

Ask Questions: Talk to your host if you have special needs or questions.

Support Local: Choose places owned by people in the community to help keep the area special.

Be Respectful: Keep noise down, follow rules, and respect neighbours.

Prepare for Less Service: Some places don't have 24-hour help or daily cleaning, so plan for that.

Pack for the Weather: Bring layers, rain gear, and sun-

screen because the weather can change quickly.

Things to Avoid

1. Don't wait too long to book, or you might miss out. 2. Don't assume everything is included, check for extra fees like parking or pets. 3. Don't skip reading reviews, they tell you if a place is good or not. 4. Don't forget to check how close the place is to things you want to do. 5. Don't forget to bring your own toiletries or kitchen items if needed.

The Gaspé Coast has many places to stay for all kinds of travellers, from people who love camping by a lake to families who want a comfy hotel by the sea. With some planning and respect for the area, your trip will be one to remember.



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