

E. Gagnon rebuilds site destroyed by September fire in Cap-d'Espoir

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ – Less than two months after a violent fire completely destroyed a warehouse containing a 350,000-pound lobster tank in Cap-d'Espoir, reconstruction of the site is progressing rapidly.

The day after the fire, Bill Sheehan, vice president of E. Gagnon et Fils, said the company wanted to rebuild quickly so the site would be ready for the next fishing season.

"We are finishing the pouring of the cement, and the structure itself should arrive very soon. Normally, by the end of the year, the exterior should be completed. The interior equipment will be installed in March," says Mr. Sheehan.

The contractors made the project a priority, and as soon as the insurance company cleared the site the next day,



The new building will be delivered in time for lobster fishing season.

Photo: Courtesy of E. Gagnon et Fils

the excavator was on site to demolish the rubble, which was completed within ten days of the September 22 disaster.

Since the building was constructed in 2021, the plans were up to date and could be reused, which has enabled such a rapid reconstruction.

"It was really just a matter

of cleaning up the site, recasting the cement slabs, and laying the pipes. We'll be ready for the start of next season," notes Mr. Sheehan.

Equipment such as chillers, seawater filters, and water temperature control systems will be similar to what was previously installed, which

simplifies procurement. The original construction in 2021 had cost \$5 million.

"We still managed to save the foundation, which was okay. We saved several hundred thousand dollars in a few weeks. We saved the excavation, the generator, and the evaporators that were outside.

The work of the firefighters made it possible to save this equipment. We may end up spending between \$2 million and \$2.5 million, including cleanup. We are pleasantly surprised," add Mr. Sheehan with relief.

Investigators believe the fire was most likely caused by an electrical fault. Surveillance cameras in the destroyed building helped determine where the fire started.

The building will be delivered in time for lobster fishing season, which is a relief for E. Gagnon et Fils.

"This tank represented nearly a third of our live lobster storage capacity. It would have had an impact. We would have had decisions to make. The best decision was to rebuild as quickly as possible. We wouldn't have been able to process the quantities we did this year without these tanks," says Mr. Sheehan.

Record summer in the Gaspé Peninsula

NELSON SERGERIE

MONT-JOLI – Tourist numbers continued to grow once again this summer in the Gaspésie region, peaking at 711,000 visitors in 2025, an increase of 5%. The economic impact followed the same trend, growing by 10% to reach \$468 million.

This is according to data provided by Tourisme Gaspésie for the period between May and September.

"We're always worried, but when the season ends, we're really happy. The most important thing is the economic impact. It's really interesting," notes Joëlle Ross, director of Tourisme Gaspésie.

Quebecers stayed in the province and traveled around the regions rather than going to the United States.

"People visited Quebec, not necessarily the Gaspé Peninsula," she adds.

Accommodation increases were relatively significant. In commercial accommodation,



Tourisme Gaspésie has been preparing for the winter tourist season for several weeks now.

Photo: Gilles Gagné

such as hotels, motels, and bed and breakfasts, growth is 7%; in short-term Airbnb-style accommodations, the gain is 11%; and campgrounds are seeing an 8% increase.

"Only ready-to-camp has seen a slight decline. Maybe you try it and then buy your own equipment the following year. Ready-to-camp is still new. At some point, we'll have better data," says Ms. Ross. The decline is 1%.

Respect from visitors has returned to beaches that had been overrun during the pandemic, with all the inconveniences that entailed.

"People are booking in advance. It's fun to enjoy a trip when you're comfortably settled in. It wasn't easy for people during the pandemic, but we don't see that anymore, and that's a good thing," says the director.

Tourisme Gaspésie has in-

vested more than \$1 million to ensure high visibility for the destination until the end of September among French and English-speaking customers in Quebec, including the Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie regions, as well as in the Maritimes market.

Annual conference cancelled

The annual tourism industry conference scheduled for mid-November in Carleton-sur-Mer had to be canceled due to a lack of registrations. Several recent events may have discouraged industry players.

"Despite an exceptional program, people make choices, and that's normal. There were provincial events held near us, including in the Bas-Saint-Laurent region. What we did was cancel the event that was scheduled to take place this week," explains Ms. Ross.

Training sessions will be held via webinar for those interested.

"Perhaps a conference should be held every two years. These are things we will be analyzing in the coming months," she says.

Winter preparations underway

Tourisme Gaspésie has been preparing for the winter tourist season for several weeks now. Although efforts are being made to diversify the tourist offering, snowmobiling remains the driving force.

"There is still skiing, back-country skiing, snowshoeing, and cocooning, which can be interesting. We should do well, as we do every year," she says. During winter, between 40,000 and 50,000 visitors spend approximately \$40 million.

"It's a season that shouldn't be overlooked. It allows hoteliers, restaurateurs, gas stations, and convenience stores to stay open 12 months a year. We're hoping for snow," concludes the director.

Most Beautiful Bays ask UNESCO to pressure Ottawa on mineral exploitation's assessment

GILLES GAGNÉ

NOUVELLE – The Baie-des-Chaleurs chapter of the World's Most Beautiful Bays is requesting the federal government to carry out an environmental assessment of the channel leading to the port of Dalhousie before any dredging or mineral exploitation is approved in that area.

The Baie-des-Chaleurs chapter is also demanding the World's Most Beautiful Bays Association to pressure UNESCO into asking federal minister Steven Guilbault, responsible for Canada's parks, to request an environmental assessment of the port of Dalhousie area.

The motion was adopted at the annual general meeting of the Baie-des-Chaleurs chapter of the World's Most Beautiful Bays, held in Nouvelle on October 21.

The motion does not refer directly to EcoRock Dalhousie's project to exploit pozzolan near the most urbanized portion of the Heron



Photo: G. Gagné

Gaétan Pelletier, president of the Baie-des-Chaleurs chapter of the World's Most Beautiful Bays, will make sure that letters are sent to UNESCO and Steven Guilbault in order to carry out an environmental assessment of the Dalhousie waterfront area.

Bay municipality, which includes several villages and the town of Dalhousie.

The motion is based on a certain number of considerations, one of them being that the large corporations have acquired mining rights and land along the estuary of the

Restigouche River and Baie des Chaleurs area.

The motion also establishes that waters of the Baie des Chaleurs and its citizens have been surrounded by heavy industrial pollution, including heavy metals, effluents from a pulp and paper

mill, mercury from a chemical plant and ore storage along the waterfront for well over 80 years.

Moreover, the motion mentions that reports exist outlining the dangers of disturbing these metals in the Baie des Chaleurs waters, and that promoters spearhead a mineral exploitation/mega quarry project that would result in ships exporting product, a characteristic requiring dredging of the harbour and surrounding areas.

The motion further underscores that this type of activity would disturb industrial pollutants, including heavy metals lying dormant in the bay and contribute to the spread of additional industrial pollution in the form of silica dust along the waters of the Baie des Chaleurs.

These activities, the motion adds, would lead to environmental contamination and harm fish populations, including Atlantic salmon and lobster.

Gaétan Pelletier, president

of the Baie-des-Chaleurs chapter of the World's Most Beautiful Bays committed "to do the follow up required to convince the World's Most Beautiful Bays to take stock of the motions" adopted on October 21 and "make sure that actions are taken."

The Nouvelle meeting was a way for the Baie-des-Chaleurs chapter of the World's Most Beautiful Bays to increase its presence on the Gaspesian side. Maria's Dorina Allard and New Carlisle's Jean-Marc Beaulieu, both involved in the movement opposing EcoRock Dalhousie's pozzolan project, are now members of the Baie-des-Chaleurs chapter of the organization.

Other parties are expected to voice their concerns about the EcoRock Dalhousie project before the end of 2025. The Mi'gmaq of Listuguj and Ugpi'ganjig, the latter formerly known as Eel River Bar, are two communities that are expected to take a stand soon on the dredging issue.

Pit Caribou blames former owner for odours

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ – The odours that have been detected for several months in the L'Anse-à-Beaufils area, which residents believe are linked to the Pit Caribou microbrewery, are the fault of former owner Francis Joncas, according to the current owners.

This is the claim made by Jean-François Nellis as the Ministry of the Environment continues its analysis of the new facilities put in place by the new owners and the latest odour complaint filed in September.

"The first question I would ask myself when addressing a lawsuit against Pit Caribou would be whether Jean-François Nellis and Vincent Coderre were aware that there was a leaking drain at the time of the acquisition. I had no idea about this, and we discovered it later," said Mr. Nellis.

"The other question is: assuming that Jean-François Nellis and Vincent Coderre had known this information



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Pit Caribou facilities in Percé.

at the time of the transaction, would it have been possible to complete the transaction? I don't have the answer," adds the co-owner.

The company invested in a centrifuge in 2022. "A centrifuge will remove 99% of the solid matter. Then, we reduced water consumption in

the plant by almost six times with the new facilities. We invested in the environment," explains Mr. Nellis.

The co-owner also confirmed that there is an ongoing legal dispute over this matter. "I can't say what will happen," he says. "We want Pit Caribou to grow. We want

Pit Caribou to meet standards. We are working closely with the Department of Environment. We are not burying our heads in the sand. That's the current situation," says Mr. Nellis, who would appreciate it if the people filing complaints would work with them to

find a solution.

The company has also invested in a new wastewater treatment system. "Audits are still ongoing following the inspection carried out on July 30, 2025, and the report received on September 2, 2025.

The ministry will ensure that all environmental obligations are met. If it concludes that there have been violations of the Environment Quality Act, the ministry will take appropriate action in accordance with its Directive on the Treatment of Violations," the ministry said in an email.

"We want to invest in Percé, in the Gaspé Peninsula. I would like us to work as a team rather than be at odds with each other," says the co-owner.

"Considering this dispute, on the advice of my lawyers, I will not comment publicly on the matter, except to say that I strongly deny their allegations," Francis Joncas replied by email to the comments made by the current owners of the microbrewery.

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Jacques Cartier Promenade under surveillance

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Erosion is weakening the Jacques Cartier Promenade, which connects Canada's Birthplace and the Musée de la Gaspésie in Gaspé.

The town has commissioned a study to get an accurate assessment of the situation and determine the necessary steps to protect the promenade.

"There are gabions that hold the walkway in place. They are falling into the sea, which is causing damage to certain sections of the promenade. Ninety percent of the promenade does not pose a major short-term problem. But there are some small sections that are showing signs of wear, and we want to take precautions before the sea erodes them," says Mayor Daniel



Photo: Taken from Travel Trips

Jacques Cartier Promenade in Gaspé.

Côté.

The town has been monitoring the promenade for several years, and erosion was first noticed seven years ago. Route 132 runs close to the promenade.

"We are far from deteriorating Route 132. We could

always try, but our chances are so slim that we won't spend much time on it. Safety measures don't cost millions of dollars. We're going to do the work. Maybe there will be some assistance? Maybe the

fact that Route 132 is adjacent could help us," the mayor adds.

The engineering firm Tetra Tech was awarded the \$55,500 contract for the study.

Rue des Touristes

A resident of Rue des Touristes in L'Anse-à-Val-leau, an area severely affected by coastal erosion for the past decade, asked the council about its future plans. Rockfill for the area is in preparation, with plans and specifications underway.

"Citizens' concerns are about their quality of life and access to the beach. In terms of views, the road is so high above sea level that it would take a phenomenal amount of riprap to hide the street. As for access, we will look at the options with the engineering

firm," says the mayor.

Once the plans are ready, citizens will be consulted. The Provincial Government will cover part of the rockfill costs.

The town has requested two options for the plans: one for the project supported by the Provincial Government and another for the entire project.

"We'll see how high the costs are. There will likely be two options in the call for tenders later on. If the costs are not excessive, we may be able to convince the Ministry of Public Safety to help us invest in the entire rockfill. Both options are on the table," says Mr. Côté.

The cabins along the promenade, which have become an eyesore over the years, will be demolished during the work.

Carleton-sur-Mer: erosion studies launched

NELSON SERGERIE

CARLETON-SUR-MER – The Town of Carleton-sur-Mer has awarded a contract to study the work to be done on Rue du Phare, which has been weakened by violent storms, high tides and ongoing coastal erosion.

"We have received funding from the Coastal Erosion Monitoring Office. To carry out work on Rue du Phare, the first step is to conduct an in-depth analysis of this area and four other areas in the territory to clearly define the actions to be taken," explains the Mayor of Carleton-sur-Mer Mathieu Lapointe.

The study was conditional on receiving \$1.7 million to carry out the overall project.

"We will use approximately \$260,000 for the study portion and the remaining amount for



Photo: Town of Carleton-sur-Mer

Studies are underway to protect Rue du Phare, which leads to the Carleton-sur-Mer campground.

the work," says the mayor.

No timeline for the project has been determined at this stage. "2026 will be too soon. As soon as we have a proposal, plans, and estimates for work on Rue du Phare, we can put it out to tender. For now, we don't

know when the tenders and work will take place," notes Mr. Lapointe.

If a severe storm were to occur in the meantime, the risks would be high. "We need to act quickly. If there are storms or high tides, this is a very vulner-

able area. The protection that was in place is no longer effective," he continues.

The mayor is keeping his fingers crossed. "We hope there won't be any problematic events. The most difficult area is the bike path. When there are high tides, our teams are called in to clean up debris, wood, or sand on the road. We've never had an episode where the road was really damaged. It's the bike path that has been damaged. We haven't paved it while waiting for the work to be done," explains the mayor.

In January 2024, a severe storm hit the region, causing significant damage to Rue de Phare. Obtaining funding in April proved challenging, as

the project did not qualify for existing programs since no residences were directly at risk.

The planned work is expected to span 10 years and is considered transitional, as long-term planning will be required to address rising sea levels, which could cause coastal flooding affecting the access road to the municipal campground.

This campground is a key economic asset for Carleton-sur-Mer, generating \$1.2 million in revenue and 28,000 overnight stays annually, with additional direct and indirect economic benefits for local business and the surrounding community from visitors coming from outside the region.

Bonaventure: Streetlights need to be replaced

Nelson Sergerie

BONAVENTURE – The Department of Transportation will have to replace all the streetlights along highway 132 in Bonaventure.

In the spring, the department noticed wear and tear on several aluminum poles along highway 132 and the promenade. To ensure the safety of both road and promenade users, 29 of the 57 streetlights had to be removed and 13 others were relocated to provide safe lighting at the intersections of Grand-Pré and Louisbourg avenues and route Forest.

New streetlights have been ordered to replace all 57 existing structures. However, due to delays in ordering, the replacement work originally scheduled for this fall will now take place next spring.

The department has opted for a different metal for the new streetlights. The bases, previously made of aluminum, will now be constructed from steel, and the fixtures have been redesigned to be streamlined and less sensitive to wind—an important consideration given the strong gusts common in the area.

According to the department, these changes should also eliminate the wind noise problems associated with the current streetlights.

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Gilles Gagné

Commentary

In the meantime, at Bonaventure airport

As the Liberal Party of Quebec is trying to untangle itself from the controversy created by the firing of chief of staff Geneviève Hinse by Marwah Rizqy, done without informing leader Pablo Rodriguez, Premier François Legault is benefiting from a little break, after a stormy stretch.

For the first time in at least two years, the spotlight is directed towards something other than the Coalition Avenir Quebec's (CAQ) ill-fated decisions, awkward statements and poor political leadership.

It will take much more for that party to get re-elected on October 5, 2026, but in the meantime, Mr. Legault and his cabinet should try to correct some of the mistakes made since the 2022 re-election.

In Montreal and Quebec City, the Legault regime is perceived as the "government of regions," mainly because of the numbers of rural ridings won in 2022. The 2018 election, in contrast, had been won with a significant share of suburban ridings. However, the CAQ's decision-making on regional matters is often lame.

The decision to transfer patients from the Baie-des-Chaleurs area to specialized facilities from Grande-Rivière airport rather than Bonaventure when air ambulances need de-icing, is an example.

In 2022, the government's Air Service, managed

by Transports Québec and responsible for the air ambulance, awarded a \$527,541 de-icing contract to Pascan Aviation for three years, 2022 to 2025, following a call for tenders.

During that stretch, the air ambulance landed 872 times in Bonaventure. On only six occasions was de-icing required. The unit cost of de-icing at Bonaventure therefore amounted to \$87,923. Annually, this averaged \$175,846.

Firstly, de-icing is like insurance. People are often reluctant to pay for insurance, but they are glad to have it, and hope never to need it.

Secondly, can this insurance cost less while maintaining the same level of effectiveness in case of emergency? The answer, in Bonaventure's case, is yes.

The example of Grande-Rivière airport speaks volumes about cost-efficiency. The facility is owned by the Rocher-Percé MRC. When the Quebec government's Air Service lands there, it pays between \$300 and \$500 per de-icing. The equipment belongs to the airport. Airport employees go there when the situation requires it.

Could this model be implemented in Bonaventure, even though the ownership structure is different, since this infrastructure belongs to the Quebec Ministry of Transport?

The answer is yes! If a government ministry can outsource de-icing to a private firm like Pascan Aviation, why couldn't a local level of government, such as an MRC or a municipal administration, achieve the same level of reliability, especially when a neighbouring MRC does?

A matter of safety

When de-icing is required at an airport, it's safe

to assume that road conditions may also be poor.

Bonaventure airport is located 45 kilometres from Maria Hospital, the main healthcare facility in the Baie-des-Chaleurs area. Grande-Rivière airport, by comparison, is 175 kilometres from Maria—a distance that takes two hours to travel in ideal weather.

According to Transports Québec, transferring patients from Maria to Grande-Rivière will not cause delays, since the Quebec government's air service team does not take off immediately from Quebec City upon request. An hour of preparation is required before takeoff. Through adding 50 to 75 minutes to the journey to the Gaspé Peninsula, depending on the type of aircraft used, the plane will arrive in Grande-Rivière two hours after the request for assistance. Weather and road conditions, however, can create unexpected additional delays.

Theoretically, the transfer vehicle that left Maria would arrive at about the same time—assuming ideal road conditions. But such conditions are far from guaranteed when de-icing is required.

These patients are not being transferred for a splinter in their finger. They are serious, critical, or worrying cases, stabilized in a primary hospital but extremely vulnerable on the road, far from advanced treatment facilities. And while the aircraft has competent staff and excellent equipment, it is not a flying hospital. Every minute counts, and risk management is essential in these cases.

Why risk a potential tragedy in the coming months? The Bonaventure MRC and its constituent municipalities already have on-call employees trained in several areas. Many of them would be perfectly capable of expanding their skills and performing aircraft de-icing.

What is Transports Québec waiting for in order to correct the situation?



Cynthia Dow

Guest Commentary

A Gaspesian mosque and the fight for freedom

I find it ironic that the petition against the establishment of a mosque in the Chandler area came at the time we celebrate Remembrance Day. Because what our troops fought for in the Second World War was exactly the freedom so many misled Gaspesians are now trying to deny to a small group of Muslims.

I was sick on Remembrance Day and, for the first time ever, could not participate in the laying of wreaths at the cenotaph, so I watched the ceremony in Ottawa on television.

I always cry when the Last Post is played, and it was no different this November 11. War horrifies me and always will. It is hard to accept the fact that some wars are worth fighting. The war against Hitler and the Nazis was definitely one such war.

But there is another silent war going on in Canada today, particularly in Quebec, and that is the war against "others." Racism and discrimination levelled at those who may not look the same, who do not speak the same language, who do not worship the same god. And this fills me with horror, too.

As I wrote this commentary, over 5,000 signatures have been gathered on a petition to prevent the building of a mosque in the Chandler area. I am heartbroken that Gaspesians of all people, who have often themselves been the victims of discrimination, should fall for the kind of ethnic nationalism garbage which the Legault government has been shovelling out for

years now.

I stand, and will always stand, with all the "others." I stand with our Indigenous neighbours against the ongoing harms of colonialism. I stand with our immigrant population, who receive so much unjustified pushback for wanting to be part of the best country in the world. And I certainly stand with the Muslim community, here and anywhere, who just want to pray in their own way.

One of my favourite quotes about religious tolerance was written by President Thomas Jefferson: "It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are 20 gods or no God. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg." This was written in 1786. Do we really need to take lessons on basic human rights from an 18th-century American?

The petition describes the establishment of a mosque as possibly creating "...significant cultural and social transformations, such as islamization." (My translation.) This is sheer nonsense. Has having Protestant churches along the Coast resulted in a huge number of Gaspesians becoming Protestant? Is it likely to?

The petition author also writes, "We have always shown mutual respect and openness, but we must also protect the unique characteristics that define our region." (My translation.) Just what would those characteristics be? Fear of change? Intolerance? Racism?

I have a lot of compassion for French-speaking Québécois. They seem doomed to consider their language and culture as tragically weak and vulnerable. As an Anglo-Québécois, I sure don't see it that way. I see around me a dynamic, vital and exciting society, with a vivid cultural and linguistic scene, and political and economic structures with all the tools at its disposal to promote itself and flourish — without having to crap on anyone else's parade.

That our provincial government is secular is essential in a modern democracy. But we don't have to

throw out the baby with the bathwater. Every Quebecker should still be free to worship, or not, as they please.

At the Remembrance ceremony in Ottawa, Rabbi Idan Scher spoke about the sacrifice of Québécois soldier Léo Major who single-handedly saved a Dutch village in the Second World War. Leo Major was not Dutch. He had likely never been in Holland before his regiment rolled in. He is quoted as saying, "I was fighting for those I do not know, so they could live in freedom."

We do not always know the names of the people we must stand with. We may not recognize their faces or understand their language or religion. But as fellow human beings on this tiny blue planet, they deserve our full support nonetheless.

I wonder what Léo Major would think of that petition?

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35 fires burned 86.3 hectares of forest

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – The 2025 forest fire season has finally come to an end, with SOPFEU reporting 35 fires that burned a total area of 86.3 hectares across the Gaspé Peninsula.

That's more than twice the number of fires recorded over the past ten years, when the average was 15 fires per year, and nearly six times the usual area burned, which averaged 15 hectares.

The 2025 season was quite long, with fires still burning in October.

"It's been a really unusual season. Normally, August pretty much marks the end of the season. There are small fires here and there, but since July, there has been so much accumulated drought that the territory has been vulnerable," says spokesperson Karine Pelletier.

"In October, we had never seen open fire bans before. We ended up with a surprise end to the season," added Ms. Pelletier.

The largest fire occurred on May 15 and was likely started by an arsonist. It burned 50.3 hectares in Pointe-à-la-Croix, making it the largest fire recorded in over 20 years in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Several firefighters, assisted by a helicopter and two water bombers, struggled to regain control as strong winds pushed the flames toward the forest.

The last time a fire of this magnitude occurred in the region was in 2004, with 59



Photo: Archives

No fewer than 35 fires raged in the Gaspé Peninsula this season.

hectares burned in the Rocher-Percé MRC.

Another major fire broke out on Serpentine Mountain, northwest of Gaspé. Started by lightning on August 13, it burned 9.2 hectares and required several interventions by water bombers and helicopter drops before being extinguished in early September.

The latest fire of the season occurred on October 7, caused by a poorly controlled campfire in a steep area north of Listuguj. Two water bombers were needed to fight the blaze that spread along the mountainside. Persistent drought conditions continued into October, and the summer's water shortages may foreshadow what's to come in 2026.

"Global warming is bringing longer periods of drought and heavier rainfall. It's more of a roller coaster than it was 30, 40, or 50 years ago," continues Ms. Pelletier.

The impact of climate change on forests is increasingly evident.

"The same lightning strike, the same cigarette butt, 40 years ago might not have caused a fire or might have caused only a very small fire. Today, it can set hundreds of hectares of forest ablaze. We can feel a difference in the vulnerability and severity of fires," says the spokesperson.

Even northern Quebec wasn't spared this year. The unusual conditions also allowed more Quebec forest firefighters to be deployed elsewhere in Canada.

"It's been a record year. While the fall was busy, the spring was quiet. This allowed our firefighters to lend a hand in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and even this fall in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. A record 620 people were deployed," Ms. Pelletier noted.

The 2025 season was simply the reverse of last year's. In 2024, the Gaspé Peninsula saw only 12 fires that burned 10.8 hectares, while in 2023 there were 29 fires that destroyed 54.2 hectares.

Police report

Deadly fire in Saint-Siméon: witness arrested and released

The Sûreté du Québec arrested a 43-year-old man from St-Siméon on November 19 in connection with the October 13, 2018 fatal fire that claimed three lives on Poirier Street in the same municipality. The man was questioned by investigators from the Unsolved Crimes Investigation Division, but released the following morning.

Seven years ago, the police investigation determined that the fire was arson and that killed Isabelle Lepage, 40, her son Philippe Lepage, 14, and his girlfriend, Laurence Lebrasseur, also 14, from Paspebiac.

"The man was released. The Director of criminal and penal prosecutions is continuing to review the evidence in the case," says sergeant Frédéric Deshaies, spokesperson for the Sûreté du Québec (SQ) for the Gaspé Peninsula.

The Sûreté du Québec had set up a mobile command station on October 30 to gather evidence that could move the investigation forward. In the week following the Saturday, October 13, 2018 tragedy, the SQ also set up a command station in Saint-Siméon for a few days.

Seven years ago, only one person managed to escape the burning house. Marilou Lepage, then 18 years old and the eldest daughter of Isabelle Lepage, first tried to save her family before going outside to alert the authorities so emergency services could make a final attempt, which was unsuccessful. The fire quickly spread through the entire house.

The fire occurred shortly before 5 am. Poirier Street is located in the heart of the village and near highway 132. The investigation is now being conducted by the Unsolved Crimes Investigation Division, which handles homicides cases dating back several years.

Denise Lepage, Isabelle's mother, made several public statements over the years urging anyone who knew something about the fire to come forward and speak with police.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Frédéric Deshaies points out that at the Sûreté du Québec, "a case isn't closed until it's solved. As long as information comes in, it will be processed. It's understood that a case is considered open as long as it is not resolved. The file never goes on a shelf. There are investigators who specialize in these kinds of cases."

Carleton man charged with attempted murder, linked to July 7 events

A 32-year-old man from Carleton, Gabriel Lafrance, faces charges of attempted murder, use of a firearm with the intent to injure with a prohibited firearm, uttering death threats against three individuals, possession of narcotics for the purpose of trafficking and possession of a prohibited firearm. He was charged on the afternoon of November 20 after being arrested late in the afternoon on November 19.

Most of those charges stem from a July 7 event that took place close to Gabriel Lafrance's home. The three individuals, who live in Quebec City, had been involved in an accident in the east part of Carleton very early in the morning. The circumstances linking Lafrance and the three Quebec City men are not released yet by criminal prosecutor Maxime Rocheville Paradis.

"They did not know each other but there was a factor that could have made a connection between them," he simply says, refusing to confirm that a drug deal could be the link.

A first police intervention took place at Gabriel Lafrance's place on July 11 but no charges were laid as a result. "However, that's when the prohibited firearm, with close-by ammunition making it ready to use quickly, and hard drugs were found," adds Maxime Rocheville-Paradis.

Gabriel Lafrance was arrested on November 19 following an intervention by the Sûreté du Québec tactical police group. "Additional charges will be laid as a result of the arrest. The accused will come back to court on Wednesday (November 26). He will remain in custody in the meantime," says prosecutor Rocheville-Paradis.

A 27-year-old woman was also arrested in the same Carleton house in November. "She was questioned and released, pending a promise to appear in court when she will be summoned to do so," concludes the prosecutor.

The court cases of the two Quebec City young adults and that of the young offender were previously transferred to the capital.

Illness explains fatal snowmobile crash

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – Coroner Donald Nicole has concluded that a 54-year-old snowmobiler from Nova Scotia suffered a heart attack before his fatal crash on the Cap-Chat ZEC on April 9.

In his report released on October 8, the coroner stated that the autopsy performed on the body of John Francis Canning, of Enfield, Nova Scotia, showed myocarditis, likely of viral origin, signs of atherosclerotic coronary artery disease, and a congenital heart defect.

In his account of the events, the coroner wrote that snowmobile trail 595 was well maintained, it was daylight, the weather was clear, and visibility was good.

The victim was alone on his vehicle and gradually veered to his left, leaving the trail, before being ejected when his snowmobile overturned on a downhill slope near a tree.

The police investigation revealed no visible signs of impact on the nearby tree or surrounding trees. No skid marks, signs of braking, or evidence of evasive maneuvers were observed at the scene of the accident.

According to his three friends who were with him, Mr. Canning had not complained of any particular problems.

Investigators ruled out speed, alcohol, signage, mechanical issues with the snowmobile, weather, and trail configuration as possible causes of the tragedy.

"Myocarditis, signs of severe atherosclerotic coronary artery disease, and congenital heart malformation observed at autopsy may have caused cardiac arrhythmia, which can lead to discomfort, loss of consciousness, and even death," the coroner noted.

In addition, the multiple injuries sustained during the crash suggest that the victim struck the nearby tree violently when his snowmobile overturned.

"All of the evidence gathered therefore suggests that Mr. Canning veered off the snowmobile trail following a cardiac episode and died as a result of the impact with a tree," said the coroner, who concluded that the death was accidental.

Gaspé Council's priorities for the new term

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Mayor Daniel Côté used the first public meeting of his new town council on November 17, following the November 2 elections, to outline the main priorities for the coming term.

"The main guidelines are based on the 2024-2034 strategic plan. If I had to prioritize three major areas, they would be infrastructure maintenance or replacement rather than new projects, citizen participation, which we want to emphasize, and supporting traditional economic sectors," says Daniel Côté.

The arena is undoubtedly at the top of the replacement list, as the current building has reached the end of its extended life. By the end of his term in 2029, the mayor hopes to have the arena project completed.



Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté, centre, surrounded by the six councilors for the next term.

Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Shipbuilding and wind energy also stand high on the Town of Gaspé priorities.

"Let's go after contracts from the Canadian fleet, but also from Quebec and private fleets. With all the service providers found in the Rivière-au-Renard industrial park, everything is in place.

Let the wind industry run turbines in Quebec, let's recognize the value of the Gaspé manufacturing sector for Quebec wind farms. I hope that this will be recognized and that our factories in Gaspé will make wind turbines run in Quebec rather than in the United States,

while Quebec sources its wind turbines from China," the mayor emphasizes.

He also hopes that the fishing will improve and that the region will benefit from it.

Regarding the arena, Premier François Legault promised at the end of September,

at the Quebec Federation of Municipalities convention, that he would launch a new call for PAFIRSPA (Programme d'aide financière aux infrastructures récréatives et sportives) projects would be launched in the coming weeks.

"I expect the premier's word to be implemented now. In the coming weeks, if we have to submit a project in January-February, they can make a decision by the summer, and that would be very good politically for them because they could make some nice announcements before the provincial elections. The timing is interesting," notes the mayor, referring to the provincial election scheduled for October 5, 2026.

Mr. Côté points out that the Provincial Government has promised a call for projects worth \$300 million.

Fisheries Officers fear reprisals

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

OTTAWA – Over the past few weeks, revelations made to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries suggest that fisheries officers do not have complete freedom to enforce the law.

"We are hearing revelations at almost every meeting. We are discovering that tongues are loosening and that a professor who met with fisheries officers (says that they) told her that they were terrified of intervening for fear of reprisals from their superiors," said Alexis Deschênes, Member of Parliament (MP) for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj and member of the committee.

Due to the information that has come to light, the MP intends to look into the matter further.

"We are told that reports are sometimes made, but fisheries officers do not intervene. Why don't they intervene? Do they lack the means, or are they under pressure from the Department of Fisheries not to intervene? This raises questions, and we will continue to ask questions. We cannot accept that the law does not apply to everyone," says Mr. Deschênes.

In a context where re-



Photo: Screenshot House of Commons

Alexis Deschênes before the Standing Committee on Fisheries.

sources are becoming scarcer in many fisheries, their role is essential.

"There is an issue of resource sustainability. There is also an issue of fairness for companies and fishermen who follow the rules and pay for their licenses. Is there an illegal fishing sector, and if so, is it significant? And if so, why is there no intervention?" asks Mr. Deschênes.

In response to these findings, Fisheries Minister Joanne Thompson said she is aware of the problem and has

requested human resources to strengthen the fisheries enforcement sector.

"We'll see how that goes. I'm still documenting the problem. What we're realizing is that every time we ask questions, people want things to be said. That's the first step in understanding the situation," Mr. Deschênes continued.

During the hearings, Members of Parliament learned that there is political interference preventing prosecutions from being brought against violators of the Fisheries Act, according to Daniel Fleck, who worked for 33 years at the Department of Fisheries.

Fisheries officers are limited in their work against illegal fishing by pressure from DFO senior management, according to Randy Nelson, who worked at the Department of Fisheries for 35 years.

Reports are made to fisheries officers, but no action is taken due to a lack of staff and political pressure, according to Jeremy Boudreau of the Gaspereau Marine Industry Association in Nova Scotia.

On November 6, Radio-Canada's Enquête program revealed that there is a parallel market for lobster fishing, with catches being sold on the black market in Quebec and

the Maritimes.

Alexis Deschênes took advantage of these new revelations to urge the fisheries committee to go even further on this issue.

"I find it hard to accept that in a G7 country where the rule of law must be respected, we see that the Fisheries Act is not being enforced in too many cases," the elected offi-

cial told his colleagues.

Following these revelations, he asked the committee to add three additional meetings and invite fisheries officers or their union representatives, Fisheries and Oceans Canada's conservation management team, the deputy minister, and representatives of the RCMP and the Coast Guard to testify.

Officers are doing their job, says fisheries minister

Nelson Sergerie

OTTAWA – Federal Fisheries Minister, Joanne Thompson, insists that fisheries officers are doing their job, even as the Standing Committee on Fisheries hears testimony that their hands are tied.

In the House of Commons on November 7, Alexis Deschênes, Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament (MP) for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj, used recent revelations about lobster smuggling in the Maritime provinces to question the minister about the work of fisheries officers.

He recalled political interventions that have allegedly hindered their work.

"Illegal lobster fishing endangers the species, and we can take action against illegal fishing: it's a matter of enforcing the law. That's all that the fishery stakeholders who come to the committee are asking for. Let the officers do their job, without political interference or reprisals. Will the government ensure that fishery officers can enforce the law?" asked the Bloc Québécois MP.

"I want to reassure my colleague: the work is being done. He needs only look at what is being done in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, or elsewhere in the country. Fisheries officers are out in the field. We support their work. They are making a difference. We do not tolerate illegal fishing," replied the minister.

In recent weeks, revelations made to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries have suggested that fisheries officers do not have complete freedom to enforce the law.

The Federal Government provides \$4.2 million to Exploramer and Chantier Forillon Shipyard

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Mentioned in the November 4 Champagne budget, the federal government has confirmed contributions totaling \$4.2 million to Exploramer in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and Chantier Forillon Shipyard in Gaspé.

Indigenous Services Minister Mandy Gull-Masty visited Gaspé on November 10 to promote the budget of Mark Carney's Liberal government.

Taking advantage of a visit to the shipyard, the minister announced a \$1.1 million loan on a total investment of \$1.5 million to modernize the shipyard's boat ramp. The project will boost the company's productivity and competitiveness while protecting skilled and well-paying jobs in the region.

"This is an upgrade to our current ramp. It's about taking the current equipment and upgrading it to another level to build heavier, larger ships," notes the shipyard's president and chief executive officer (CEO), Jean-David Samuel.

Suggesting the beginning of something new, Mr. Samuel elaborated on what's to come.

"We're looking at growth. New infrastructure, new buildings to build larger ships, 1,000-tonne vessels. We'll need a new building and new infrastructure for launching," Mr. Samuel commented.

The upcoming investments represent several tens of millions of dollars. "We want to build military vessels, but not submarines. Yes, defence vessels, military vessels. The Coast Guard is now part of the National Defence establishment, so this aspect is certainly not excluded," he explained.

The shipyard has just completed an \$80 million contract for ten search and rescue vessels for the Coast Guard and has begun construction of a \$55.5 million diesel-electric vessel for the federal Fisheries Research Agency.

"The current capacity of the shipyard's ramp is 725 tons, but only along one end of it. The \$1.5 million project will consist of increasing the capacity of the ramp over a longer part of it. It will increase our efficiency because we will be able to place larger units over a longer stretch of the ramp," explains Jean-David Samuel.

A study is underway with the MRC de la Côte-de-Gaspé to determine the extent of the economic benefits of the ship-



Photos: Nelson Sergerie

From left to right, the mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté, the president of the Forillon Shipyard, Jean-David Samuel, the minister of Indigenous Services, Mandy Gull-Masty, the director of Exploramer, Sandra Gauthier, the chief of the Gespeg Mi'gmaq Nation, Céline Cassivi, and the mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Simon Deschênes.

yard's presence.

"We are eager to see the results. It's one of the largest private employers in the region. It's an employer we support through the Federal Naval Strategy, producing a high-quality product that has earned it a reputation from coast to coast. We are proud of the team and we will continue to support them," explains Daniel Côté, mayor of Gaspé and prefect of the MRC de la Côte-de-Gaspé.

Gaspé will continue its efforts to position itself at the provincial level, notably in Lévis at the end of the month as part of a major gathering of Quebec's shipbuilding industry.

"We're doing this in partnership and in a complementary fashion with other Quebec cities. Gaspé's goal isn't to compete with Davie of Lévis. We're not in the same market. There are other cities that want to position themselves as suppliers. We want to develop a Quebec industrial cluster, and one of the few towns where ships are built in Quebec is here in Gaspé," the mayor maintains.

Forillon Shipyard is ranked third among Quebec shipyards, behind Davie in Lévis and Groupe Océan, which operates several shipyards across the province, including one in Les Méchins.

\$3.1 Million Grant for Exploramer

Minister Gull-Masty took advantage of her visit to Gaspé to announce what the missing link is to finalize the financing for Exploramer's Shark Pavil-

ion in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts. The Federal Government will provide up to \$3.1 million, an amount the organization's director, Sandra Gauthier, intends to use in full.

"The project was spearheaded by Member of Parliament, Alexis Deschênes. Mr. Carney's team was on the lookout. Fisheries and Oceans Canada had concerns regarding sharks, a current issue and a matter of public safety," notes Ms. Gauthier.

"Seeing it in the budget was moving. We still need to confirm the promised amounts, particularly from the Provincial Government, which is expected to add \$1 million. That will tie up the budget and allow the project to move forward," Ms. Gauthier hopes.

The \$18 million project faced numerous challenges, including skyrocketing construction costs during the design

phase, which coincided with the pandemic. The cost overrun was estimated at \$6.8 million.

Once expanded, a study projected that attendance would increase from 32,000 to 50,000 people annually.

"This announcement, which finalizes the funding, will allow us to become a key player in Eastern Quebec. It will consolidate the tourism cluster in our region," adds Simon Deschênes, mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

However, the issue of caribou conservation remains to be resolved before the entire recreational tourism component can be completed.

"It's clear we want to save them, and it takes strong measures to achieve that. We have to be careful about a form of coexistence. We can't be for or against the caribou. How do we maintain jobs in the

forestry industry and recreational tourism activities? I think it's clear we need to find solutions with both the Provincial and Federal governments," states the mayor of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts.

"The announcements we're making here will benefit many people. It was something special to see the name of your project. I'm a minister who comes from a rural background," states minister Gull-Masty regarding the Exploramer project.

The budget of Mark Carney's minority government needs opposition support to be passed.

"I would like it to be passed. I want to do the work for Canada rather than go into an election. I have confidence in the budget, and the public will recognize that we want to move things forward. We're starting our work; it's not the time to start over. It's time to move things forward," noted the minister during the federal ministers' tour across the country to "sell" the budget.

Absent from public life since the April 28 election, former Member of Parliament and minister Diane Lebouthillier was present at the Liberal government's announcement at the Forillon Shipyard.

With these two announcements, the minister emphasized that they are examples of investments made under the 2025 federal budget through the Strong Communities Fund—a \$51-billion, ten-year program aimed at strengthening local infrastructure, supporting regional growth, and building a stronger Canada from coast to coast. *(with the collaboration of Gilles Gagné)*



This ramp will be upgraded to allow for further progress in construction activities.

Elected officials' compensation: Chandler backtracks

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER – After adopting a retroactive regulation on May 1 concerning the compensation of elected officials, the Town of Chandler is backtracking and returning to the previous practices that were in effect.

The new council made this decision during its first meeting on November 10. There is no question of changing salaries though.

"There was a clause requiring attendance. We had to include this clause in the last term. We are returning to the remuneration that was in place before May. But there is no increase in the salaries of elected officials," said the Mayor of Chandler, Gilles Daraïche.

This decision followed the



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Chandler's new town council reinstates rules on council member absences.

arrest of former Newport district councillor Bruno-Pierre Godbout on April 15 by the Sûreté du Québec.

The 36-year-old man faces 12 charges related to incidents of sexual assault, armed as-

sault, assault, forcible confinement, and criminal harassment following an arrest warrant.

Without the regulation that came into effect on May 1, Godbout could have continued to receive his remuneration for

90 days, as provided for by law.

The regulation stipulated that an elected official had to be seated at the council table for the monthly meeting, with no exceptions, even for reasons of illness.

Currently, a councillor receives \$2,171 per month.

The regulation also notes that the mayor receives a salary of \$52,329 and an allowance of \$20,294, for a total of \$72,623.

Although Chandler is the second largest town in the Gaspé Peninsula, with 7,490 residents, mayors of smaller municipalities earn more.

In Gaspé, the largest town in the region, Mayor Daniel Côté, serving a population of 15,539, earns a total of

\$117,976.

In Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, the third largest town, Mayor Simon Deschênes, with 6,131 residents, receives \$79,197.

New Richmond, with 3,800 residents, pays its mayor, Éric Dubé, \$75,285.

"It's not something we focused on. We were asked to compare ourselves with other places. Of course, we pay less than elsewhere, but that's not something we focused on. We're happy with what we have," says the mayor.

The new council was sworn in half an hour before the public meeting.

Newcomers Marc-Olivier Legresley, councillor for Newport, and Sébastien Daignault, councillor for Chandler East, joined the council.

Proposed Islamic cultural centre in Chandler sparks debate

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER – The possible creation of the Gaspé Peninsula Islamic Cultural Centre in Chandler has sparked fierce reactions online, with some social media comments linking it to radical elements of Islam.

A GoFundMe campaign has been launched to help fund the centre. The campaign's initiator, Laurie Beaudet, a native of the region, explains the project. "The Muslim community in the Gaspé Peninsula is growing, but we lack a place of worship and gathering. Today, we are launching this campaign to open the first Islamic Cultural Centre in the Gaspé Peninsula, a space dedicated to prayer, learning, and sharing," she says.

"An Islamic cultural centre is simply a place for Muslims to gather and practice their faith," Ms. Beaudet explains in an interview.

The place is not considered a mosque, but rather a community centre open to all. "We chose Chandler because that's where the largest number of Muslims in Gaspésie live," said Ms. Beaudet, explaining the choice of municipality.

Some social media users have expressed concerns about terrorism and radicalism, prompting Ms. Beaudet to respond:

"I am a Quebecer, a Gaspé native. It's normal to be afraid. It's the unknown. Not many people in the Gaspé Peninsula have seen any religion other than Christianity. But that



Photo: Taken from Facebook

Committee spokesperson; Laurie Beaudet.

doesn't mean we're extremists. We just want a place to gather, pray, and come together as a community," she says.

The organizers are still searching for a suitable location in Chandler.

It is not a mosque. "A mosque has a sheikh, who is the equivalent of a priest. There would be imams and daily prayers. It would be very different from the centre, which is intended to be a gathering place," insists Ms. Beaudet.

The cautious mayor

Chandler Mayor Gilles Daraïche says three people had approached him in recent months about the potential centre, but no premises have been offered, and no formal proposals have been made.

He expressed some concern. "Absolutely. It concerns me. We are in the Gaspé Peninsula, where most people are

Catholic. We have to accept the people who come to our community. The population will have to decide. It will be a big decision to make," says the mayor.

There are no regulations prohibiting the establishment of a centre.

"We're going to look at what's being done elsewhere and see if there are any laws prohibiting it. There are people coming from other places. We'll see what we decide eventually," he says.

Gaspé not questioned

Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté says the town has not been approached regarding a similar centre and remains cautious.

"We are in a secular state. In a town, zoning rules. There is a category of places that are permitted or prohibited. We are not here to judge one religion or another," notes Mr. Côté.

When asked about his personal view on the idea of such a centre, the mayor framed it as a hypothetical issue:

"I don't have to answer that question as long as there are rules in place and as long as it's a hypothetical question. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. I don't have to take a position on an issue that is happening in Chandler. Here, if it happened, I think we would have to refer to our urban planning rules," he explains, noting that similar considerations apply to various religions.



Photo: GoFundMe

The establishment of an Islamic cultural centre in Gaspésie has sparked heated reactions on social media.

Online petition opposes Islamic Cultural Centre in Chandler

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER – A petition posted online on November 6 opposing the creation of the Islamic Cultural Centre of Gaspésie in Chandler gathered about 1,800 signatures in less than six hours.

The petition's initiator, Philippe Gionest, said he did not expect such a strong reaction. He initially thought he would collect a maximum of 300 signatures.

"It starts with an Islamic centre. Next, it will be a mosque. After that, it will be this, it will be that. I don't want them to denature the Gaspé Peninsula. That's all I want. We want to keep our values," says Mr. Gionest, referencing recent prayers near churches in Montreal.

He adds that the Gaspé Peninsula is generally a welcoming place. "But there comes a time when you have to stop letting people walk all over you," he says, hoping that the project will fail.

Mr. Gionest monitors comments on his petition to prevent hateful posts. By November 12, the petition had gathered more than 5,400 signatures.

The controversy was sparked by a GoFundMe campaign aimed at raising funds for the centre in Chandler, which is home to the largest Muslim community in the Gaspé Peninsula.

Call for calm

Faced with the debate over a potential Islamic cultural centre, Chandler mayor Gilles Daraïche called for calm in a social media post on November 6.

"No official project has been submitted to the Town of Chandler for the construction of such a facility. Furthermore, we have urban planning regulations that govern religious sites. Therefore, there is no possibility of adding a religious site without a zoning change, which requires a lengthy process, including citizen approval," wrote the mayor, who emphasized his great respect for all the citizens of his town.

"There is no need to start a petition; there is simply no project," says Mr. Daraïche.

Another major milestone for wind power in the East

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CACOUNA – Another major agreement has been signed between Hydro-Québec and the Alliance de l'énergie de l'Est, this time for up to 1,500 megawatts of wind energy in western Bas-Saint-Laurent and the MRCs of L'Islet and Montmagny.

The announcement was made with great fanfare on November 18 in Cacouna in the presence of Premier François Legault, Alliance President Michel Lagacé, Wolastoqiyik Wamsipekuk First Nation Chief Jacques Tremblay, and Hydro-Québec President and CEO Claudine Bouchard.

This announcement was similar to the one made in August in Gaspé announcing a possible 6,000-megawatt development between Hydro-Québec, the Alliance, and the three Mi'gmaq communities in the Gaspé Peninsula.

"1,500 megawatts have been identified in the Wetsok territory. The potential will be assessed. The next few years will confirm this," explains Mr. Lagacé.

In total, the Alliance, Hydro Québec, and the various Indigenous communities have the equivalent of 8,500 megawatts to develop.

Wetsok—which means "in the direction of the wind" in the Wolastoqey language—will generate significant economic benefits, and the partnership represents investments of up to \$4.5 billion in the targeted ancestral regions and territories, which will lead to job creation, workforce training, and diversification of income for communities and municipalities.

The agreement establishes equal partnership between Hydro-Québec and the Eastern Energy Alliance for any resulting wind power projects.

"It's a possibility. Will there be others? Quebec's energy needs have been identified as 10,000 megawatts and perhaps more in Hydro-Québec's updated strategic development plan," said Mr. Lagacé.

Next important steps

The partners will immediately assess the social acceptability of the proposed wind power developments. Consultations with local stakeholders aim to ensure the harmonious and responsible integration of projects.

Aware of the cumulative effects of wind power development, the partners will adopt a



Photo: Lou Landry, Eastern Energy Alliance

From left to right: Michel Lagacé, President of the Eastern Energy Alliance; Ian Lafrenière, Minister Responsible for Relations with First Nations; Jacques Tremblay, Grand Chief of the Wolastoqiyik Wamsipekuk First Nation; François Legault, Premier; President and CEO of Hydro-Québec; Claudine Bouchard, Minister of Energy Christine Fréchette, and Minister of Tourism and Minister responsible for the Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Amélie Dionne.

structured approach to ensure responsible growth of the sector while taking into account the evolution of the transmission grid.

"Hydro-Québec recognizes the Alliance de l'énergie de l'Est's great capacity for project support, but above all for positive project support," says the Alliance president.

With 8,500 megawatts identified, Mr. Lagacé indicates that a tremendous amount of work has been done.

"Is there more to come? I would say that perhaps in the coming decades, we will discover more. But the ones that have been announced are the ones that have been optimized in relation to the local populations. I think we've covered all the bases in terms of potential," he believes.

Economic benefits

Since 2017, \$100 million has been distributed in royalties to the MRC shareholders of the two energy boards in Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine with two projects producing 300 megawatts.

"We are developing 1,426 new megawatts. That's not counting the 1,500 megawatts. For 1,426 megawatts, we estimate \$1.2 billion in profits distributed to shareholder communities over 30 years. When you add up 8,500 megawatts, I had expressed a wish to one day be a billionaire in terms of distributable income. We already are. We can hope to be billionaires a few times over," calculates Mr. Lagacé.

It is difficult to predict what the recent announcements could mean in terms of bene-

fits.

"What we also want is to offer the best possible price for Quebecers. For us, it's very important that electricity remains accessible to people living in vulnerable situations. We don't want to get rich knowing that people could become poorer," says Mr. Lagacé.

Well received in Gaspésie

The Eastern Energy Alliance's new development is

welcomed in Gaspésie. Mathieu Lapointe, president of the Table des préfets, highlights both the strength of the Alliance and its economic benefits.

"Yes, there will be direct economic benefits from construction, but also indirect ones. We have suppliers in the region who have developed expertise in wind power. This will consolidate all these organizations, not to mention the major benefits for all municipalities," notes Mr. Lapointe.

The PQ wants Quebecers in wind power

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – The Parti Québécois (PQ) is demanding that future wind farms built in Quebec to include components manufactured in Quebec.

The PQ's request comes after a wind farm in the Quebec City region was equipped with components from China.

Despite months of pressure from Gaspé Mayor Daniel Côté and others, the Legault government has shown no willingness to require local sourcing.

"The government's reluctance to require local content is somewhat inexplicable. Fortunately, the people of the Alliance de l'Est are succeeding in doing so," says PQ energy spokesperson, Pascal Paradis.

He added that, given the changing international trade environment—particularly the trade tensions with the United States—it is critical to promote local manufacturing.

"We must buy local and create a local value chain. Wind turbines are a way to produce energy, but also to benefit local partners who are loyal to their region," Mr. Paradis explains.

The Eastern Energy Alliance is using towers produced by Marmen in Matane for its wind farm near Rivière-du-Loup, but the blades will not come from Gaspé because LM Wind Power has not joined the project.

"It can be done. We can work around the rules. It's not true that our hands are tied because of international trade. It can be done, especially when our international trading partners have no qualms about doing so. We just have to look at what's happening in the United States. We have to win in Quebec by producing as much as possible here and buying locally," explains Mr. Paradis.

The Eastern Energy Alliance has the potential to develop 8,500 megawatts following agreements with Hydro-Québec.

"It's an inspiring model. I'm happy to see local parties moving forward. It's a promising model. In the Gaspé Peninsula, there is a shortage of transmission lines. Projects like these have the potential to shape the region's energy and economic future," says the spokesperson.

"Hydro-Québec has presented an ambitious plan. We have been waiting years to see the government's overall vision for energy development. Hydro-Québec has presented its plan. (...) It is a plan that focuses on renewable energy. There are opportunities. I like the Alliance de l'Est, the First Nations, and the local stakeholders who are seizing these opportunities," says Mr. Paradis.

The Quebec government and Hydro-Québec aim to double green electricity production in the province by 2050 to meet growing business demand for decarbonization. Hydro-Québec plans to develop over 10,000 megawatts of new wind power capacity in collaboration with First Nations and municipalities in the coming years.

The issue of Gaspesian components supply for these future wind farms remains a concern. "Discussions are currently underway. We want to ensure that the alliance is also competitive," says the president.

Status of the Wocawson and Gespe'gewa'gi agreements

Unveiled in 2024, the Wocawson wind development project is the first initiative to emerge from the partnerships between Hydro-Québec and the Eastern Energy Alliance.

Over the past year, preliminary consultations have been held with land users and environmental organizations to give the partners a better understanding of local conditions. A public event is planned for mid-December to present the study area for potential projects.

Finally, the agreement announced in August in Gaspé for wind power development in the Gespe'gewa'gi territory, concluded in partnership with the Mi'gmaq Nation, the Eastern Energy Alliance, and Hydro-Québec, is also moving forward. The partners are planning next steps to ensure responsible development that aligns with community and environmental expectations.

Obstetrics hangs by a thread in Maria

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

MARIA – Following in the footsteps of Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, which is experiencing obstetrics service disruptions and closures, the Eastern Quebec Union of Nurses, Nursing Assistants, and Respiratory Therapists is denouncing what is happening in this care unit at Maria Hospital.

The CISSS de la Gaspésie had announced service disruptions for the Baie des Chaleurs hospital from November 1 to 4. However, the union representing nurses claims that these disruptions multiplied during the week of November 10, without patients and citizens being notified.

"The obstetrics department is not running smoothly at the moment. There are a large number of nurse absences in the field. The employer is lax in posting replacements, which means that there are more and more shortages," says union president Pier-Luc Bujold.



Photo: Allen Doug Shaw

Maria Hospital.

According to him, during this period, sometimes it is at night, sometimes it is in the evening. "Patients must be transported to Chandler, but the employer cavalierly requires nurses to perform less risky deliveries with the help of a midwife. But this is detrimental because you never know. Could it become more complicated? And the nurse is left alone to handle every-

thing related to resuscitation, medication administration, and monitoring, and if there is a C-section, the nurse is left alone. This creates a safety issue for women and nurses," notes Mr. Bujold.

According to him, if managers had been proactive, the situation could have been avoided. "For several months now, nurses have been raising their hands to indicate that we

are heading for a wall," says the union representative.

Currently, ten positions are temporarily vacant due to illness, maternity leave, or because the individuals have been assigned to other departments. Only seven nurses remain on staff to provide service, and the CISSS has just posted a single replacement as of November 11, 2025. The union claims that some of the seven nurses say they are mentally and physically exhausted from working long hours to keep the service running.

"The fact that the employer is not proactive in posting replacements to fill these shifts in accordance with the collective agreement has led to where we are today," he laments.

The CISSS defends itself

The CISSS admits that this period was a one-time challenge. "Four nurses had to be taken off work due to flu-like symptoms. When you take four specialized nurses

off work, it puts a lot of pressure on the department," says Director of Nursing Maxime Bernatchez.

Two replacements are posted, and one nurse will be returning, for a total of eight nurses and two retirees who will be lending a hand for the coming week. One new candidate is also training in obstetrics.

"In the Gaspé Peninsula, there are 47 vacant positions. Nurses can choose to work in the department they want," says the manager. "The situation we are experiencing in Maria is no different from what we are experiencing in other hospitals. We have small teams. These are specialized care services, and our nurses work hard to provide safe and accessible services," continued Mr. Bernatchez.

Requests for independent workers to support the department have been made. As of November 19, 11 nurses were active in the department: eight regular staff, two retirees, and one agency nurse, out of a normal total of 17 caregivers.

Birthing room in Gaspé is a priority for the CISSS

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – As recently mentioned to SPEC by the President and CEO of the CISSS de la Gaspésie, the Maison de la famille Parenfant de Gaspé has received confirmation from the organization that the expansion project, which will include a birthing room, will be funded in the next fiscal year.

The centre indicates that the collaboration with the CISSS is "constructive and fruitful."

"Following several discussions, we are pleased to see the CISSS included it in its next budget, subject to any guidelines and restrictions that may

be issued by Santé Québec," says coordinator Marie-Andrée Nadeau. Formal funding confirmations are expected when the CISSS budgets are tabled in March 2026.

The Family Centre is planning an expansion of its current facility in downtown Gaspé. The existing building will be enlarged and will essentially double in size to accommodate a birthing room, a recovery room, and a large multipurpose room.

This expansion will allow families to give birth in a neutral, non-hospital setting with the support of midwives.

"The plans and specifications are about 80% complete. We

had a successful fundraising campaign that raised nearly \$275,000. We're continuing," she says. The \$300,000 goal is achievable, and the coordinator is confident following the official announcement from the CISSS de la Gaspésie. As soon as we have confirmation that we'll be within the CISSS budget, we can launch the call for tenders. We hope to begin construction at the start of the summer," says Ms. Nadeau.

The project is estimated at \$1.2 million.

"We haven't redone the assessment, but we had already planned for a contingency. That's something we'll do again in the coming months,"

the coordinator explains. The project did not have to be modified despite this financial constraint.

The next step is to hire a midwife, which falls under the CISSS's jurisdiction. The family centre's team is now complete.

"Knowing that the project will go ahead, we hope it will attract people to our region," says Ms. Nadeau.

Last December, the project was delayed due to budgetary constraints announced by the Legault government, which required the CISSS to find \$40 million in cuts to stay within its budget. Despite the delay, the organization's board of directors kept the project alive.

Initially, the birthing room and its services were expected to be operational by next winter.



The expansion project to house, among other things, the birthing room.

Photo: Courtesy of Maison de la famille Parenfant de Gaspé



**COMMISSION SCOLAIRE
Eastern Shores
SCHOOL BOARD**

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the Eastern Shores School Board adopted the following amendments to By-Law 8: To Set the Time, Date and Location of the Council of Commissioners and Executive Committee Meetings for the 2025-2026 school year.

Dates	Executive	Council	Location
December 2, 2025	8:30 a.m.	-	Hybrid
December 9, 2025	-	9:00 a.m.	New Carlisle
January 27, 2026	8:30 a.m.	-	Hybrid
February 3, 2026	-	6:30 p.m.	Hybrid
March 17, 2026	8:30 a.m.	-	Hybrid
March 24, 2026	-	6:30 p.m.	Hybrid
April 21, 2026	8:30 a.m.	-	Hybrid
April 28, 2026	-	6:30 p.m.	Hybrid
June 2, 2026	8:30 a.m.	-	Hybrid
June 9, 2026	-	9:00 a.m.	New Carlisle

Given at New Carlisle, Quebec on this 10th day of November 2025.

Denis Gauthier
Secretary General

Demonstration at the Carleton-sur-Mer campus

NELSON SERGERIE

CARLETON-SUR-MER – Unionized staff at the Carleton-sur-Mer campus of Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles staged a demonstration on November 19 in front of the institution to “stand up” against the authoritarian and financial abuse of the CAQ government.

Members of the teaching staff, support staff, and professional staff unions joined forces to get their message across.

“We are protesting against the \$151 million in cuts made last year and the impacts we are experiencing on a daily basis, as well as Minister Boulet's new bills that attack workers' union rights,” says Marjorie Dallaire, president of the teaching staff union.

“We wonder if there will be



Photo: CSN

Union members denounce the CAQ government's authoritarian and financial abuse.

further cuts, at least in the coming year. As for the next government term, we'll see who will be at the helm,” she notes.

Union members are linking the cuts in CEGEPs to the billions lost in CAQ projects.

“SAAQclie, the failed digital shift in healthcare, and the

losses at Northvolt, Lion Electric, Recyclage Carbone Varennes, and Airbus are a harsh reminder that the government's poor choices are depriving the Quebec government of the funds it needs to provide quality services to the population,” protests Annie Léonard, member of the executive committee of the Carleton-sur-Mer Campus' Support Staff Union.

The unions point to the dramatic consequences for the public college system: hiring freezes, neglected infrastructure, caps on paid hours, cuts in funding for equipment purchases, reductions in research grants, and diminished regional continuing education budgets.

Regarding Bill 89, the unions emphasize that striking is always a last resort.

“We always escalate pres-

sure tactics, starting with milder measures, but striking remains our last resort when we see that negotiations are not progressing. It's the only way we have to put pressure on the employer. Restricting this right by various means weakens the unions' right to make demands,” says Ms. Dallaire.

“It's very funny coming from the government. All unions make their finances public. Our financial statements are available and even approved by my union members. There are no unreasonable expenses,” she argues.

The unions will send a press release to Bonaventure Member of the National Assembly Catherine Blouin and request a meeting to share their concerns. A national demonstration is also scheduled for November 29 in Montreal.

Some 40 people want to avoid the black hole

NELSON SERGERIE

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

GRANDE-RIVIÈRE – On November 17, approximately 40 people gathered in Grande-Rivière to speak out about the impact of the “black hole” on their lives. Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament (MP) for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj Alexis Deschênes was present to take note of their concerns.

The meeting, held at the Grande-Rivière Golden Age Club, was organized by the Pabok Unemployment Action Movement. The black hole refers to the period during which a person receives no income between the end of their unemployment insurance benefits and the resumption of seasonal work.

“It's very difficult for people. With the black hole at the end of winter, people who have no income are under a lot of stress. The season isn't long enough. The system needs to be adjusted to take this into account. It doesn't make sense for people who live like this,” explains Denise Cloutier, manager of a tourist shop in Percé.

Recruiting staff is also difficult because employees leave for year-round work as soon as it becomes available.

“When you're in a black hole, you're not entitled to anything. You have to make do. If you don't have an income, how are you supposed to pay for everything? If you get sick, what do you do? The government forgets about us. We don't



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

The forty or so people present were keen to talk about their experiences during the black hole.

exist. We're forgotten,” says Suzanne Cyr, a processing plant worker in the fishing industry. For her, the black hole represents a significant financial loss for nearly two months.

“If you don't have a partner, what do you do to get by? What do you do to eat? Pay for your medication?” Ms. Cyr asks.

The Mouvement Action Chômage Pabok (Pabok Unemployment Action Movement) is taking note of people's requests. “They are asking for 35 weeks of unemployment insurance and for the divisor, which currently ranges between 18 and 20, to be lowered to 15 weeks,” explains coordinator Nadia Mongeon. The divisor determines benefits based on a worker's “best weeks,” calculated as total insurable earnings divided by the number of required weeks, then multi-

plied by 55%.

The Liberals promised to reform the system in 2015.

“We must always remain hopeful. Will it be resolved now? We can't let up the pressure. It has to be resolved. The five-week pilot project is not realistic. It should be 15 weeks,” she notes.

Political support

Alexis Deschênes, Member of Parliament for Gaspésie-Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine-Listuguj, was present to hear the unemployed workers' demands.

“My takeaway is that we are dealing with hard-working, resilient workers who are victims of an unfair system that does not treat them with dignity,” says the Bloc Québécois representative. The Bloc Québécois plans to table a bill

to “correct” the system.

“In recent weeks, the Carney government has decided to discriminate against workers in Gaspésie and Îles-de-la-Madeleine, notably by saying that I will give 20 more weeks to long-term workers, i.e., people who have not had to deal with employment insurance in recent years. Our seasonal workers are being left out,” notes the elected official, referring to steel and auto workers in Ontario who are victims of the U.S. tariff war. “The system is already flawed, and the Carney government has made it even worse,” he says bluntly. “This was one of our budget requests. Commit to reforming employment insurance. Looking back, why aren't we treat-

ing these people with dignity? There is enough money in the employment insurance fund to treat people properly. We have one of the least generous programs,” says the MP.

The mayor of Grande-Rivière, Gino Cyr, was there to support the seasonal workers.

“These people need to be able to escape the infamous black hole. It's a social issue. There are families, children. I know that in April, there are children who show up at school and, with the lack of income, these young people suffer. It's a period of worrying uncertainty. The federal government should be able to ensure that seasonal workers avoid the black hole,” says Mr. Cyr.

Unemployment rate jumps in October

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – The seasonal slowdown in economic activity pushed the unemployment rate up 0.7% to 5.7% in October, according to Statistics Canada.

Some 1,600 jobs were lost between September and October. The federal agency estimates that 38,000 people were employed last month. Of these, 32,300 were full-time and 5,700 were part-time, representing decreases of 1,400 and 200 respectively compared to September.

The region had 2,300 unemployed, up 200 from September. The unemployment rate was 5% in September.

Fewer people at work over the past year

The number of workers declined more significantly when comparing October 2025 data with October 2024. Last year, 39,100 people were employed, representing a decrease of 1,100 year-over-year, including 1,000 full-time jobs.

The unemployment rate was 5.1% in October 2024.

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The year of 1989 was all over the place

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – Reading about 1989 is breathtaking, as the year appears decisive in so many areas. Language and signage restrictions stemming from Law 178, pushed by a Liberal Party government, a recently re-elected Progressive Conservative federal government that opted for huge VIA Rail cuts, provincial transfers, economic development shifts, and fiscal cuts; dwindling fish resources; and so much more filled that year.

Vol 15. No 1
January 10, 1989

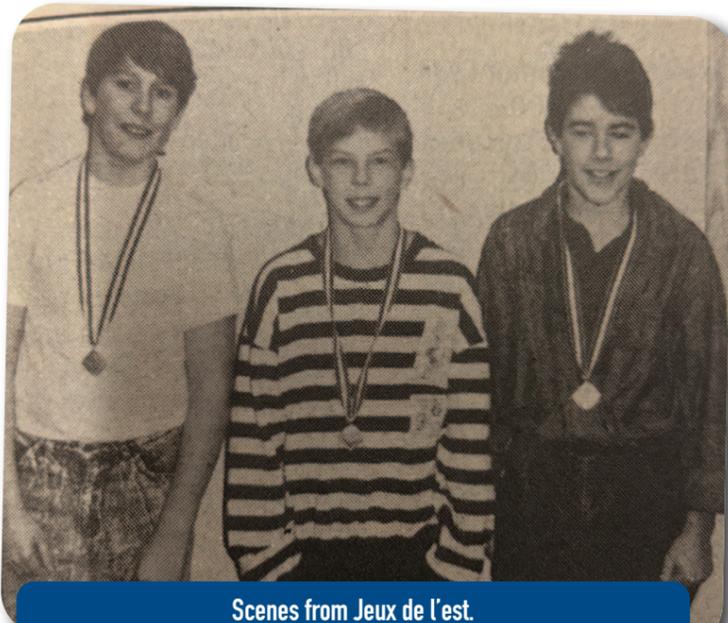
- In issue 1, dated January 10, two good economic stories make the headlines, “Mine set to reopen” in Murdochville, an operation that will resume on February 1, and “Fish plant starts winter operation” in Newport, where 200 workers will process Russian cod. A fire closed the mine on April 1, 1987. About 250 employees were called back for the cleaning operations and the resumption of mining activities. The smelter operated with imported ore. “Gaspé town council presents 1989 budget”, “Marin announces grants” and “Local athlete excels in distances”, for Wakeham’s Jean Perry, who does Ironman meets, also make page 1.

Vol 15. No 2
January 17, 1989

- “Gaspésians set to oppose new language law” takes almost the whole front page of issue 2, dated January 17. Anglophones are complaining about the Liberal Party Law 178 about signage. “Lévesque house not a historic site, says Quebec” because of weak architectural value, “Teachers adopt language policy”, “New Richmond to get community-tv channel” and “Crime statistics go up in Gaspé” are the other page 1 titles.

Vol 15. No 3
January 24, 1989

- “Levesque defends Law 178” makes the headline of the January 24 front page. He calls it “a necessary compromise be-



Scenes from Jeux de l'est.
Left to right: Jason Sams, Troy Boulay
and Brad McDonald, gold medal winners in judo.

tween two irreconcilables”. “Illegal dumps still in use”, notably in Ristigouche-Sud-Est, “Ensuring road safety biggest challenge: Sûreté” and “Suspect found in Bonenfant case” complete page 1. Sonia Bonenfant, of Bonaventure, was murdered in April 1988. The suspect, Mario Bourdages, 26, is charged with unpremeditated murder.

Vol 15. No 4
January 31, 1989

- “High fluoride levels in (Maria) wells”, “CASA reveals strategy on Law 178” and “Post office under study” in Douglstown are the main titles of issue 4, dated January 31. CASA’s strategy consists of voicing “our concern about the survival of our culture to the French community”, says spokesperson Howard Miller. “Forest industry quotas to increase” by 26%, “Beaudin soft peddles Law 178” and “Bad weekend for VIA passengers” complete page 1 titles. In VIA’s case, the Montreal-Gaspé trip took 47 hours instead of 17 due to electrical problems.

Vol 15. No 5
February 7, 1989

- “Gaspé fights rail abandonment” and “Snowmobile touring in the Gaspé” make the February 7, issue 5, main titles. CN is asking for the abandonment of the Pabos to Gaspé stretch, which puts in jeopardy VIA Rail’s service. CN is losing \$1 million on average yearly on that part, reimbursed

by the government. “Bonaventure student charged with assault”, “Bonaventure mayors dodge signs issue” and “Sanatorium Ross changes name” are the other main titles.

Vol 15. No 6
February 14, 1989

- In issue 6, dated February 14, “Tearing up Bonaventure County” refers to important road work that will include water treatment betterment in New Carlisle, Bonaventure and New Richmond. “Gaspé vets oppose Sauvé trip to Hirohito funeral” covers the region’s war veterans’ reaction upon learning that governor general Jeanne Sauvé will attend the funeral of Japan’s emperor. Up to 200 Canadians died in Japan’s camps during the 1939-1945 war. “School board to set up computer centre”, “Provincial basketball tournament comes to Gaspé”, “Jeux de l’est in Gaspé a success” and “CDE struggles to survive” also make page 1.

Vol 15. No 7
February 21, 1989

- “Mines Gaspé opts out of campaign against rail abandonment” headlines issue 7, dated February 21. Mine director Richard Faucher explains that the firm, facing line abandonment since 1985, has found alternatives to send its anodes to Montreal. CN also increased its rate constantly over the past years, which made using the rail prohibitive. “UPA presents (MP Darryl) Gray with bill for

acid rain damage”, “Environmentalists demand action as N.B. okays (Belledune) power plant” and “Mt. Bechervaise ceases use of pesticides” also appear on page 1.

Vol 15. No 8
February 28, 1989

- In issue 8, dated February 28, “Mines Gaspé resumes underground mining”, “Nine HLM duplexes set to go” in Douglstown and “Fight against Sunday shopping gathers steam in Bonaventure County” are the main front-page topics. “Murdochville girl (Sharon Scott) serves in Pakistan” and “Small schools provincial basketball tournament – a great success” also make that page.

Vol 15. No 9
March 7, 1989

- “Murdochville - The rebirth of a mining town” makes the main headline of issue 9, released on March 7. Paul Zaleski writes a long feature on the mine reopening, 23 months after the April 1987 fire that killed a miner. The return of workers is lower among anglophones though. “Cubs and scouts winter Olympics”, “CSST regionalizes operations in Gaspé”, “Plans underway for Douglstown Irish Days”, “Inshore fishermen’s association holds annual meeting” and “Group to set up handicapped workshop in New Carlisle” also make page 1.

Vol 15. No 10
March 14, 1989

- “New Richmond experiencing water shortage”, “Artist (Jean-Paul Dubé) sculpts “biggest ever” salmon” and “Pollution, language stir town meeting” make the front-page of issue 10, dated March 14.

Vol 15. No 11
March 21, 1989

- “Drug bust nets cash, cocaine”, “Gaspé Cathedral - \$700,000 in repairs needed” and Nouvelle “Residents burn toxic firewood” make the front-page of issue 11, dated March 21. The street value of the drug bust ranges between \$75,000

and \$120,000. A Newport man, Gérard Smith, is arrested in that affair. The wood burned by Nouvelle residents came from Hydro-Québec poles treated with highly toxic preservatives.

Vol 15. No 12
March 28, 1989

- “Consol to cut air pollution” and “Battered women’s Centre opens” almost entirely fill page 1 of issue 12, dated March 28. The centre for women is l’Aid’Elle in Gaspé. Grants totalling \$95,000 allowed its existence. As for New Richmond’s linerboard mill, a \$2.2 million investment will reduce sulphur emissions from 200 parts per million to 30-40, which will still be higher than Quebec’s norm of 20. “Fishermen’s management course offered” and “Bonaventure mayors want more police” also appear on page 1.

Vol 15. No 13
April 4, 1989

- In “Mines Gaspé adopts preventive programs for town”, readers of issue 13, dated April 4, see that the firm will remove five to seven centimetres of soil on every Murdochville property, since the smelter emits lead while processing copper concentrate. “Major drug bust in Gaspé”, drugs valued at \$35,000 seized in a bud parcel, also makes a headline. “Mata-pedia to offer boat tours” and “ESL (English as second language) flourishes in Maria”, a small business started by Lisa Mosher, also make page 1.

Vol 15. No 14
April 11, 1989

- “Volunteers rescue plane crash victims” covers 80% of issue 14’s front-page, dated April 11. The crash occurred on Mount St. Joseph in Carleton. The pilot died but the five passengers survived. Four of them work for GID Design, consultants coming to New Richmond and Paspébiac to appraise two historical sites, the Gaspesian Heritage Centre and the Site du Banc de-Pêche. Fog caused the

From Page 13

pilot to lose sight of the ground. “RSBG entices students to Gaspé”, “United Church moderator to visit St. Andrews” and “PQ unveils new platform” also appear on page 1.

Vol 15. No 15
April 18, 1989

- “CASA, unions protest over Bourassa visit” covers the front-page of issue 15, dated April 18. Premier Robert Bourassa was in Gaspé to sign a \$118 million four-year development agreement. He was greeted by anglophones angry at signage Law 178. “Homecoming Festival inks Charley Pride”, “Possible air link between Gaspé and Bonaventure” and “Union quit fish plant after workers protest” in Gascons are the other page 1 titles. Inside, “Cascapedia Hotel burns to the ground” appears on page 7.

Vol 15. No 16
April 25, 1989

- A lobster trap photo mentions “It is that time again” on issue 16, dated April 25. A second photo entitled “Cascapedia bridge closed without notice” appears just under. “Knife incident mars youth party”, “Summit delay slows regional investment”, “Future of ski area up in the air” and “Gold cards for polyvalent students” also make page 1. The bridge story refers to CN’s sudden decision to repair the road section. The ski story covers the battle between mount St Joseph and Pin rouge.

Vol 15. No 17
May 2, 1989

- “Levesque blasts federal budget” and “Loyalist Village launches publicity campaign”

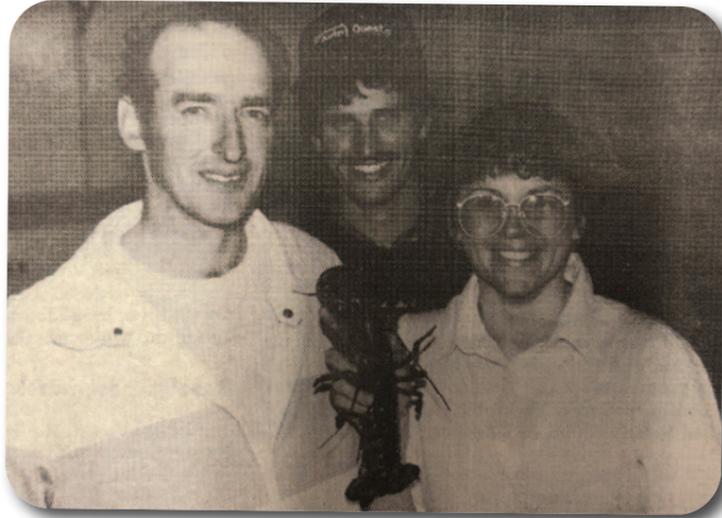
dominate the titles of issue 17, dated May 2. Gérard D. Levesque points out that the federal budget cuts will have a big impact on Quebec’s budget and the regions. In New Richmond, the Loyalist Village gears up for its first season. “Pressure mounts to pave (little) Park road”, “Gaspé students sweep public speaking awards” and “Gaspé Alzheimer’s chapter formed” are smaller page 1 titles.

Vol 15. No 18
May 9, 1989

- “Car, truck collision kills two in New Richmond” and “VIA Rail essential: Gray” make the headlines of issue 18, dated May 9. The accident occurred at 3 a.m. The car was speeding. The other story pertains to MP Darryl Gray’s reaction to the \$400 million cut applied by his Transport colleague, Minister Benoit Bouchard, to VIA Rail’s \$600 million annual grant. “Exchange students invade Carleton”, Paspebiac’s “Novi-Pêche to reopen with government support” and “English health services a step closer” also appear on page 1. Inside, Robert Pidgeon resigns as mayor of Gaspé after having been named a Superior Court judge.

Vol 15. No 19
May 16, 1989

- In issue 19, dated May 16, “Government dissolves Restigouche Band Council” follows an Indian Act interpretation pertaining to the number of councillors. Chief Ronald Jacques remains in power. “Lack of English service at New Richmond postal outlet” and “Child-psychiatry service dropped” at Mgr. Ross Hospital in Gaspé because of a refusal by the Quebec Health Insurance Board to pay Quebec City specialists make up page



A Port Daniel fisherman found himself the centre of attention at the docks last week when he came in with a rather unusual catch, a blue lobster. Pictured left to right: Daniel Sullivan, Barry Crozier and Louise Sullivan.

1. Inside, a 35-foot steel fishing boat, Viking 5, is launched at Lynken Fabrications, a small New Carlisle shipyard.

Vol 15. No 20
May 23, 1989

- “Gold search intensifies on coast”, in Maria, New Richmond, Saint-Jogues and Murdochville, “The dream of the Blue Lobsters”, a rare specimen found by Daniel Sullivan, and “End of illegal dumps in sight”, fill the front-page of issue 20, dated May 23. “Freeze on milk prices, Wilson (federal) budget angers local farmers” also makes page 1. Inside, Gérard Poirier remembers when CN took over the Gaspé line in 1929, a series’ first article, and Alberta Thompson turns 102.

Vol 15. No 21
May 30, 1989

- “Nurses begin pressure tactics on coast” to improve their working agreement takes most of the front page of issue 21, dated May 30. “Restigouche re-elects militant band council”, “Crab season over after six weeks”, “Hospital foundation is launched” and “Local groups sharpen attack on federal budget” complete page 1

titles. In Restigouche, nine of the 12 councillors are chief Ronald Jacques’ supporters. Bonaventure’s Mario Bourdages, who earlier pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the 1988 death of Sonia Malenfant, gets a two-year prison term.

Vol 15. No 22
June 6, 1989

- “New Carlisle road project delayed to end of summer”, a \$13 million initiative, “Old Hydro poles – What do you do with them?” and “Volunteer group moving to New Carlisle”, namely Meals on wheels, cover most of issue 22’s front-page, dated June 6. A picture shows athletes taking part in the school year end regional track and field meet at New Richmond High School.

Vol 15. No 23
June 13, 1989

- “VIA to chop Gaspé route” fills almost completely the front-page of issue 23, dated June 13. The article reports on a “working document” leak mentioning that all of Quebec’s regional trains, including Gaspé’s will be axed, a consequence of the Federal Government’s decision to bring VIA’s

annual grant from \$650 million to \$250 million. “Gaspésians ride the rails”, “Quilt stitched across Canada”, “Commission refuses to re-zone Loyalist Village”, “Renters face housing shortage” and Restigouche “Natives sign fishing agreements” also make page 1. Regarding VIA, 100 Gaspésians took the train from Gaspé to Matapédia to voice concern about its possible disappearance.

Vol 15. No 24
June 20, 1989

- Issue 24, dated June 20, headlines “UI cuts will affect region” and “Paper mill delays cleanup”. The proposed unemployment insurance changes call for 11 weeks to qualify for benefits instead of 10, with the period of benefits covering 36 weeks, not 42. In New Richmond, Stone Consolidated delays the start of a \$2.2 million sulphur emission reduction project due to higher cost. Inside, Gaspé Cegep unveils a plaque to honour René Lévesque.

Vol 15. No 25
June 27, 1989

- “Bonaventure truckers protest lack of work” and “Conservationists knock province over Restigouche fishing dispute” fill most of issue 25’s front-page, dated June 27. The Quebec Atlantic Salmon Association says the Quebec government puts too much emphasis on the natives’ sustenance fishing and not enough on commercial overfishing. “New health policy threatens recruitment of specialists”, “Local artist (Enid Legros) unveils sculpture” and “Gaspé Mines expands mining operations” also make page 1.

Page 15



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From Page 14

Vol 15. No 26
July 4, 1989

- “Crash of spray plane kills four” and “Net fishing closed on Cascapedia and Restigouche rivers” make the headlines of issue 26, dated July 4. The Conif-Air crash occurred about midway between Sainte-Anne-des-Monts and New Richmond. The removal of the nets on the two rivers followed an agreement between the Quebec government and the communities of Restigouche and Maria.

Vol 15. No 27
July 11, 1989

- In issue 27, dated July 11, readers see a photo of a New Carlisle apartment building ravaged by a downtown fire. There are also two pictures of the Canada Day parade and antique automobile show in New Carlisle. In “Minister asks for Legion help”, Gerald Merrithew asks members of the Royal Canadian Legion to help find 4,500 widows and widowers who lost pensions when they remarried.

Vol 15. No 28
July 18, 1989

- “Community hearing to save train”, “Loyalist Village opens its doors” and “United Church moderator visits New Richmond” are the main titles of issue 28, dated July 18. The first topic deals with the August 2 hearing organized by the Chamber of Commerce and Rural Dignity, to save the passenger train. “Small turnout for Défi du cap de la Vieille” completes page 1 titles.

Vol 15. No 29
July 25, 1989

- “Government annuls Maria Band election” because 20 non-residents voted over the previous fall, and “Port Daniel East and West agree to fusion” make the headlines of issue 29, dated July 25. The fusion agreement doesn’t solve the choice of the MRC, Bonaventure or Pabok. A picture shows a group of entertainers at the

Wakeham-York Homecoming Festival. The last page 1 title is “Plans for new bridge underway” in St. Jules and Cascapedia.

Vol 15. No 30
August 1, 1989

- Issue 30, released on August 1, carries “Chandler mill to curtail production” and “Pointe-à-la-Croix residents in need of water” as headlines. The Gaspesia plant slowdown comes from sluggish markets and the necessity to complete a \$50 million modernization investment. The Pointe-à-la-Croix situation derives from dry weather. “Bear attack victim recovering well”, “Automania in Nouvelle”, “Province to spray chemicals near Escuminac” and “Drop in attendance marks Expo” in New Richmond also appear on page 1.

Vol 15. No 31
August 8, 1989

- “We want the train to stay” takes 80% of issue 31’s front-page, dated August 8. The August 1 Paspebiac hearing drew 500 people from all over the Gaspé. “We pay the same taxes as every other Canadian and we expect to have the same basic services”, says Ethelyn Vautier, of the Women’s Institute of Bonaventure County. MPs Darryl Gray and Charles-Eugène Marin are absent. “Farmers protest federal policies”, “Over \$365,000 granted for fisheries development projects” and “Another good salmon fishing season” also reach page 1.

Vol 15. No 32
August 15, 1989

- “Oil spill cleanup complete” makes the headline of issue 32, dated August 15. The spill came from the Irving Oil tanker Irving Nordic in Sandy Beach. Gérard-D. “Levesque will seek re-election” in Bonaventure for the September 25 election is another page 1 article. “More funding delays for New Carlisle community centre”, “Shigawake Fair celebrates 80th anniversary”, “13,500 trout lost at Gaspé Fish Hatchery” and “2nd Bay View Folk Festival are other page 1 titles.

Vol 15. No 33
August 22, 1989

- “Landmark destroyed by fire” covers Campbell House’s end in issue 33, dated August 22. The house was a restaurant called Moby Dick. “Doyer and Beaudin to run in the next (provincial) election” in Gaspé, “PQ in disarray in Bonaventure, where the party is still looking for a candidate before the September 25 poll, and Port Daniel “Research project aids aquaculture” complete page 1 titles. Danielle Doyer represents the PQ in the 1989 election. Inside, Paul Zaleski interviews Lorne Cottage manager, Warren Gilker.

Vol 15. No 34
August 29, 1989

- In issue 34, dated August 29, “Heritage Centre closes door” makes the headline, the closure forced by the Agricultural Land Protection Commission because the premises are still considered agricultural. “Municipal water woes multiply” in New Richmond, “Park caribou face extinction” as there are only 200-250 left, “Meeting demands action on road project” from Nouvelle to Escuminac, “CEGEP in Carleton opens its doors” and “Need for seniors home critical report” also make page 1.

Vol 15. No 35
September 5, 1989

- “PQ launches campaign in Bonaventure” with Emmanuel Lebrasseur as candidate, “CEGEP support staff on temporary strike”, “Nurses set for strike action”, Local literacy



100 years old. Mrs. Dorothy Coull, centre, in the company of her son Roddy and daughter Mary.

Vol 15. No 36
September 12, 1989

drive facing uphill battle” and “Residence opens at Gaspé Polyvalent” make the front-page of issue 35, dated September 5. Inside, a “Gaspé VIA committee (is) formed.”

- “Unity Party formed in two counties” reports on the anglophones’ reaction to Law 178 on English signage. Ferne Howatson in Bonaventure and Howard Miller in Gaspé will represent the party. Issue 36, dated September 12, also shows “Race for mayor heats up in Gaspé”. Three men want the position, Yvon Caron, Raymond Gagné and Amédée Dumaresq. Inside, the British Gaspesian Heritage Centre gets the go-ahead to run the site despite activities other than agriculture.

Vol 15. No 37
September 19, 1989

- “Parizeau angles for fishing votes” makes the main title of issue 37, dated September 19. A picture-caption combo shows nurses demonstrating outside Maria Hospital. Inside, SPEC gives a lot of room to the provincial election. CASA runs a big supplement in this issue for its 15th anniversary.

Vol 15. No 38
September 26, 1989

- “100 years young” makes the biggest headline of issue 38, dated September 26. Grand Cascapedia’s Bessie Harrison turned 100 on September 12. Amédée Dumaresq is the “New mayor for Gaspé”. “English Seniors Residence

prepares fundraising”, “Minor hockey adopts new program”, “Community Centre gets federal funding” in New Carlisle and “Fish processing plants in crisis” also make the front-page. The latter article mentions dwindling stocks and recent additions of processing plants as problems.

Vol 15. No 39
October 3, 1989

- In issue 39, dated October 3, Ken Gilker’s “Trucking firm searches for capital”, as he, the St. Jules truck owner, needs cash to cope with slow-paying customers. “Beaudin regains seat despite language controversy”, “Gaspé VIA line to be cut” according to Canadian Press, and Gérard-D. “Levesque triumphs easily in Bonaventure” also make page 1. Inside, an article reports on Paul Willett’s rise in professional hockey.

Vol 15. No 40
October 10, 1989

- In issue 40, dated October 10, “Rural Schools Conference draws record turnout” in Escuminac, “Environmentalists to represent Gaspé at Belledune (power plant) hearings” and “VIA service slashed in region” to three trains a week, make the headlines. “NOMAD scientists come to Gaspé”, Amédée Dumaresq presides over first town meeting”, “Railroading in the snow” and “Literacy contest winners” also make page 1.

Page 16

From Page 15

**Vol 15, No 41
October 17, 1989**

- “Gaspé environmentalists protest at public hearing” in Belledune headlines issue 41, dated October 17. It is an attempt to convince the New Brunswick Power Commission to install a scrubber at the future coal-burning power plant and reduce acid rain. “Local reaction to three-day (VIA) service” has Cynthia Patterson saying that the local drive to save the train was instrumental in the service’s partial salvage.

**Vol 15, No 42
October 24, 1989**

- Issue 42, released on October 24, shows a big picture of David and Brian Bélanger playing in the family yard. “Municipal elections spark renewed interest”, “Gaspé train to run on off days”, days that don’t match regional needs, “Seniors residence takes shape” in New Richmond, “Riding with two local game wardens” during moose hunting, and “A choice for mayor” in Murdochville round up page 1 titles. Inside, Dorothy Coull turns 100.

**Vol 15, No 43
October 31, 1989**

- “Undersky farms in class of its own”, a photo and the title, takes most of issue 43, October 31 front-page. Elton and Gloria Hayes won a silver medal and a certificate of “very great merit”, awarded by the Ordre du mérite Agricole. “Fishing industry in dire straits”, “Gaspé Golf Club waits for government money” in order to take off, and “Forillon Park ready to save waterfowl” are some other page 1 titles.

**Vol 15, No 44
November 7, 1989**

- In issue 44, dated November 7, “Firemen watch as house burns, don’t intervene” reports on a fire that occurred in Bonaventure East, in front of which New Carlisle fire-



New Richmond mill director Peter Campbell, left, and local journalists examine a fragment of disintegrated chip machine. The half ton piece of iron flew through the roof of the building in the background and landed 200 metres away in the truck yard.

fighters were forced to stand still, because of a dispute between the two towns. Bertrand “Poirier elected in New Carlisle”, “Carleton man charged in poaching incident”, “School board runs deficit of nearly \$1 million” and “SPEC stays on straight and narrow”, through a profit of \$4,529, also make page 1.

**Vol 15, No 45
November 14, 1989**

- “Commissioners sack RSBG director-general (Lynden) Bechervaise” due to deficit of over \$500,000, deriving in part from communicating it too late to school board administrators, is the main issue 45 title, dated November 14. “Gaspé region to lose tax exemption – report” makes another headline, if the Conservative government adopts the recommendations of a national study group on the issue. Inside, Marc “Jalbert (is) elected in Murdochville”.

**Vol 15, No 46
November 21, 1989**

- “Port Daniel fusion hearings draw crowd”, as some people favour its inclusion in the Bonaventure MRC while others prefer the Pabok MRC, makes the main title of issue 46, dated November 21. “Maria native (John Vicaire) honored in United States for work with A.A.” (Alcoholics Anonymous) following his passing at 63, “Two dead in head-on collision on Murdochville road”, “Gray on abortion law: I am neutral”,

\$65,000 to be shared by the municipalities. “RSBG adopts revised budget, chops some educational services”, “Bonaventure Polyvalent hosts drug awareness week”, “Rural Dignity continues pressure to save VIA”, “New Richmond refuses to withdraw bid for ski area” and “Gaspé MRC seeks more control in recreation spending”, also make page 1.

**Vol 15, No 48
December 5, 1989**

- “Spectacular accident at New Richmond mill - no injuries reported as wood chip machine disintegrates” makes the only headline of issue 48, dated December 5. Production will not stop because of accumulated fiber provisions. “Haldimand – life in a bottle”, “Gray opposes track abandonment”, “Marin hints at resignation if ‘global plan’ (for the Gaspé) not accepted”, “New directors for Gaspesian British Heritage Centre” and “Nez Rouge kicks off another season” are smaller page 1 titles.

**Vol 15, No 49
December 12, 1989**

- Mike Foster, who has been writing out of Gaspé for a few

months, runs “Two Murdochville children overexposed to lead” in issue 49, dated December 12. The study is small scale. The lead level is high, but under the dangerous level of 400 micrograms per litre of blood. “Bilingual areas issue returns” between CASA and nationalists, “Singing trainman protests VIA cuts”, Val-Rosiers CLSC needs doctors”, “Hopetown house burns down” and “Gaspé misses chance to start industrial park this year – (Gaston) Langlais” also make page 1 titles.

**Vol 15, No 50
December 19, 1989**

- In issue 50, dated December 19, “Gaspesians arrested as part of international drug ring” makes the headline. The bust dismantled a network that wanted to deliver \$1 billion worth of drugs to various fishing ports of the Gaspé Peninsula using a fishing boat Marie-Jo. Seven men and one woman from Grande Rivière to Pabos are notably charged. “Maria Man accused of sexual assault” and “Newport man killed by train” also reach the front-page. Section two of the December 19 issue is filled with a Season Greetings supplement.

Railway service articles dominated 1989 news, as they often do in 2025

GILLES GAGNÉ

NEW CARLISLE – Gaspesians have thick skin. They have to, in order to deal with all the blows, especially those coming from the government or government-related bodies, the hardest ones to hit Gaspesians that year. CN was still a publicly-owned corporation, slated for eventual privatization by Brian Mulroney’s government. This allowed the transporter to unduly increase its rates, discouraging its main freight customer between Pabos and Gaspé, Murdochville’s Gaspé Copper Mines.

After years of rough times, that firm was reopening its mine and increasing the capacity of its smelter. Instead of trying to regain that tonnage, CN kept doing what it had done over the previous years, increasing its rates, sometimes by more than 10% yearly.

That threat over the Pabos-Gaspé stretch was amplified by the Mulroney government’s decision to cut VIA Rail’s network in half, leaving Gaspesians with three weekly passenger trains instead of seven, a change that erodes ridership more than proportionately. When travelers have to memorize an inconvenient schedule, they often choose another mode of transportation or stay home. Gaspesians still fight for VIA’s service today. A passenger train remains a necessity, 36 years after the huge cuts announced in 1989.

Gaspésia land suitable for development

NELSON SERGERIE
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE

CHANDLER – A study commissioned by the Town of Chandler to assess the possibility of building on land formerly owned by the Gaspésia mill along the commercial street reveals that eight of the sites could be developed.

The level of contamination would not be an obstacle to commercial and residential development.

Last summer, the town commissioned a characterization study to determine the construction potential on these sites and measure the contamination levels after decades of paper mill operations in the heart of the town.

“We already have offers for housing and commercial development. We are fortunate to have a positive outcome in this regard,” says the Mayor of Chandler, Gilles Darâiche, who had high hopes for the redevelop-



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Housing remains a priority for Chandler's mayor.

ment of a commercial street worthy of the name in the heart of downtown.

The enthusiasm for the street is palpable with the arrival, in recent months, of a pastry shop, a pizzeria, and a barber shop.

Last summer, the mayor floated the idea of attracting more businesses to revive

Commercial Street “as in the good old days,” recalling the bustle that once existed there when the pulp and paper mill was in operation.

Housing remains a priority for the mayor, and the C-Métis organization has also shown interest.

“For affordable housing. Some are currently being built,

but it costs \$1,200, \$1,500, \$2,000 a month. There is a market for that, but people need affordable housing because they can't afford very expensive housing,” the mayor notes.

Discussions are still at a preliminary stage, with further exchanges expected in the coming weeks.

In September, the Regroupement des MRC de la Gaspésie and C-Métis created the Société de Développement Economique (SDE).

The goal of this new organization is to enable the construction of apartment units outside the region's urban centres.

The target is ambitious: to build 300 off-market units per year, including 66 affordable housing units to meet urgent needs, 134 intermediate housing units to prevent the next crisis, and 100 unsubsidized units to meet industrial demand.

The buildings will be prefabricated in partnership with Maison Laprise to achieve economies of scale through a standardized design that can be built anywhere in the region.

Percé also on board

Percé wants to tackle the housing shortage in each of the municipality's six sectors.

“We're no different from anywhere else in Quebec. We need to find solutions that work for Percé. We're not a big city like Rimouski. We can't build large public housing projects. We're six villages, and we need to build everywhere. But there are solutions we want to work on, and I want to discuss them with the Economic Development Corporation (SDE) if they're willing to support us in this,” says the Mayor of Percé, Daniel Leboeuf.

The current lack of resources in urban planning is slowing progress on this issue.

Newport pharmacy reopens

Nelson Sergerie

CHANDLER – A year and a half after their pharmacy was destroyed by fire, residents of Chandler's Newport neighbourhood are getting their service back following a \$2 million investment.

Pharmacist owners Michel and Terry Whittom officially opened the store on the morning of October 16.

“It was a necessity for the community. It was essential to rebuild a new pharmacy in Newport that offered pharmacy services,” explains Terry Whittom.

As soon as the disaster struck on April 24, 2024, the decision was made to rebuild.

“Right from the start, it was clear that we were going to rebuild the pharmacy. Of course, rebuilding everything was a real headache. It's beautiful, and we couldn't wait to show it to the public,” said Mr. Whittom, who will own the building along with his brother.

In the meantime, pharmacy customers were never without service, as the pharmacist also owns the Jean Coutu pharmacies in Chandler and Grande-Rivière.

“We had the support of the Jean Coutu Group and the Brunet Group, which are now part of Metro. In the early hours, we started making plans and organizing what needed to be done to rebuild. It was done quickly,” explains Mr. Whittom.

The old building had an area of 3,000 square feet, half of which was devoted to commerce, with the rest being a medical clinic that was no longer in operation.

“It's really an expanded pharmacy with 2,500 square feet of space and an exceptional laboratory,” says Mr. Whittom.

The transition was ensured by employees who remained loyal to the pharmacist.

Eight people currently work there, and if business volume is strong, it is possible that the number of workers will increase.

Previously under the Jean Coutu banner, the new branch now carries the Brunet banner.

“Much like in the grocery business, when it's a smaller municipality, a Brunet banner is more appropriate. That's the choice we made in Newport,” explains Terry Whittom.

The 2024 fire caused an estimated \$500,000 in damage, not including the store's inventory

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One year later, Chandler's new daycare centre still operating at reduced capacity

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER – One year after the opening of the new La Belle Journée daycare centre near downtown Chandler, not all 71 new spots are available due to a shortage of early childhood educators.

The facility opened on October 7, 2024, welcoming only 18 children out of a capacity of 71. A year later, the situation has not improved: only 16 children were accepted at the start of the September school year, with some groups, particularly for 4-5 year olds, remaining closed.

Director Hélène McInnis explains that 15 educators are



Photo: CPE La Belle Journée

Only 16 spots are available at the new facility that opened a year ago.

on leave for various reasons. As staff return, more spaces will become available. She hopes the facility can operate at full capacity by September

2026.

The Ministry of Family Affairs is aware of the situation, which poses a financial challenge since part of the

funding is based on occupancy. This is expected to result in a slight deficit for the current fiscal year.

Intensive recruitment ef-

orts are underway, supported by initiatives such as Stratégie Vivre en Gaspésie. The prefect of the Rocher-Percé MRC is also looking into the challenge of finding educators. "I have several meetings with the René-Lévesque School Service Centre and the Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles to see what we can do to ensure a new generation of workers and allow people to work in these facilities," notes Samuel Parisé. A college certificate program could be created to quickly train qualified educators.

The construction of this new daycare centre represented a \$3.2 million investment.

Operation Nez Rouge Gaspé

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Operation Nez Rouge in Gaspé is preparing for its 34th edition, which will begin on November 28, offering eight evenings of rides home.

The youth centres in Gaspé and Rivière-au-Renard have been tasked with organizing the 34th edition for the third consecutive year and are looking for volunteers to provide the service.

"The first night of rides is November 28. Between now and then, we are looking for volunteers for these nights.



The Gaspé organization is preparing to launch its activities on November 28.

Photo: Operation Nez Rouge

That's what we're focusing on," notes François-Pierre Gagnon, coordinator of Nez Rouge and

manager of the Rivière-au-Renard youth centre.

To volunteer, visit the Oper-

ation Nez Rouge website and register.

"Once we receive your registration, our team will contact you and determine which evening you will be assigned to," explains Mr. Gagnon.

Last year, the youth centres in Gaspé and Rivière-au-Renard raised \$4,900 with 254 rides thanks to the contribution of 176 volunteers.

This year, operations will take place on November 28 and 29, as well as December 5-6, 12-13, and 19-20.

In 33 years, nearly \$179,900 have been raised.

This will be the only opera-

tion in the Gaspé Peninsula, despite the organization's attempts to find other groups interested in setting up similar activities.

The national organization notes that groups often have limited time and resources to establish an operation.

Youth and amateur sports remain the primary beneficiaries of this organization.

The last operation in Bonaventure took place in 2012 with 428 rides, in Chandler in 2015 with 396 rides, and in Paspébiac in 2017, although the number of rides there was not recorded.

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A survey on future of Rocher-Percé Airport

NELSON SERGERIE

CHANDLER – A consultation has been launched to determine what could become of the Rocher-Percé MRC airport.

“This is part of our organization's strategic planning process. We want to know what citizens need and dream of for our airport,” says Samuel Parisé, prefect of the Rocher-Percé MRC.

For example, cargo transport, regular air service, and charter flights are being considered, whereas the airport is currently used by private pilots and government aircraft.

Cargo transport has been on the radar for about ten years, particularly for exporting lobster caught in the region. “This is the kind of thing we are looking into to see if it is possible to



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Housing remains a priority for Chandler's mayor.

do, also taking into account the distance from certain centres. We want to make sure that if we turn to cargo, it will be something that is efficient and profitable for entrepreneurs. We want to ensure that the

product stays fresh. The survey is being conducted to explore these possibilities,” notes the prefect.

Regular air service is also a possibility, even though the Bonaventure and Gaspé air-

ports already have such flights.

“We are open to having a carrier in the territory. It is one of the MRC's objectives to have complementary and efficient transportation services. If there are discussions to be had, we will certainly have them,” says Mr. Parisé.

The airport has undergone a complete overhaul since 2020. A year ago, the new terminal was inaugurated at a cost of \$2.5 million. In 2020, the airport's runway was extended. The weather station and runway lighting were also upgraded at a cost of \$10.4 million for facilities that dated back to 1986, when the site was built.

“Currently, these are private and medical flights. The volume has remained the same. The service is more adequate and adapted. The primary ob-

jective was to have safe facilities to ensure efficient medical transportation for the population. With the survey and strategic planning, we want to develop further,” says the prefect.

“We are now in a new phase. Currently, with the facilities and modifications made, there are certain costs that need to be absorbed. We are aiming for profitability,” he adds.

The airport also has an aircraft deicing service, which is important since Bonaventure has now lost this service.

“What we want is to come out on top. The goal is to have a service that meets a need, either by extending the tourist season or becoming a year-round tourist destination,” concludes the prefect.

The report is expected to be submitted in early 2026.

Building at Côte Surprise Hotel must be relocated

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ – Like the Frederick-James Villa, which had to be relocated to protect it from coastal erosion, one of the buildings at the Côte Surprise Hotel complex in Percé will now face the same fate.

The historic district has been vulnerable to erosion for the past fifteen years, particularly due to increasingly severe storms that are weakening the coastline.

“The Department of Public Safety has been monitoring this building since the early 2020s and has noticed cracks. In 2025, they observed falling debris that endangered one of the three buildings,” explains the Mayor of Percé Daniel Leboeuf.

The hotel owners are turning to a departmental program to relocate the building.

“I hope it won't cost them \$25 million,” says the elected official jokingly, referring to the cost of restoring Frederick-James Villa at the other end of the natural borough.

The mayor has been working to protect l'Anse du Sud since he was first elected in November 2024. “Things are progressing slowly. They put out a call for tenders to model the scientific data. Next will be the plans and specifications, and there will be no ac-



Photo: Côte Surprise Hotel website

The view from the hotel complex is magnificent, but coastal erosion will force the relocation of one of the buildings that has become unsafe.

tion before 2027 unless there is an emergency,” said the mayor.

Beach replenishments have been ongoing: the first in 2017, another in 2022, and an emergency measure in 2023 following severe weather. The current study examines marine and geological movements to determine whether the replenishment model needs updating, with the goal of ensuring it lasts at least 15 years.

Elsewhere, projects such as l'Anse du Nord, which is also vulnerable to erosion, are delayed due to limited provincial funding. “It's still valid, but the budget will be

empty in 2025. We'll see what happens in 2026. This year, Maria needed it more than we did. At some point, with sea levels rising, they will all become priorities. Will budgets keep pace with sea level rise? Some people are going to be left high and dry,” he warns.

On Coin-du-Banc beach, wooden pilings near the railroad tracks were restored in 2023 and 2024. “These structures are not eternal. Some parts may need to be restored. It won't cost \$25 million,” notes the mayor. Further east, waves were passing through the pilings on November 17, eroding the road along the shore.

QS spokesperson: 9% for Yv Bonnier Viger

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ – Even though he only obtained 9% in the race for co-spokesperson of Québec solidaire (QS) on November 8 in Quebec City, Dr. Yv Bonnier Viger is far from discouraged.

Taking stock on November 10 after the party convention in Quebec City, which chose Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Sol Zanetti, the former regional director of public health made this observation.

“Not at all (discouraged). I was certainly the least well-known of the three candidates among Québec solidaire members. This result was to be expected. I'm not disappointed either, because I undertook this campaign to exchange ideas, and my main message was to strengthen local associations if we want to take power one day,” explains Dr. Bonnier Viger.

When asked about his real chances of winning, he declined to speculate.

“It's hard to know what you can do to influence the electorate. I had no idea. For me, the odds were even. I expected to be forced to go to Montreal,” he says, if he had been chosen by the members.

Nationalist MNA Sol Zanetti will be a good spokesperson. “I think so. It was an inspiring speech. You can feel that there is great energy between the two of them,” he says, noting that Mr. Zanetti will team up with female co-spokesperson Ruba Ghazal.

Activists have given Ms. Ghazal the mandate to become premier if the party takes power in 2026.

“We are revitalizing the party after the difficulties it has experienced, and that's a good thing,” points out the man who remains coordinator of the Gaspé county association.

“We are actively looking for a woman from the riding to run as a candidate. We will also lend a hand in the Bonaventure riding. I may be asked to help out at the national level,” he says.

Despite his recent campaign, the idea of running in the 2026 election does not appeal to him.

“Honestly, when I look at my fellow parliamentary members locked in the bubble of the National Assembly, it doesn't give them time to serve the party and activists and meet other people. I'm not sure I want to be there. It's not the most interesting job,” says Mr. Bonnier Viger, who prefers to meet with Quebecers to build a country.

He will continue his work at the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Public Health Department while helping out in another region, namely Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

Saucette de Percé's million-dollar goal

NELSON SERGERIE

PERCÉ – The 14th edition of the Saucette benefiting Opération Enfant Soleil de Percé, to be held on December 13 at the fishing harbour near the wharf, could push total donations past the \$1 million mark.

To date, \$815,000 have been raised, and exactly \$184,585 are needed to reach this symbolic milestone since the first edition was held in 2011.

“That's really our goal. We're working together with the dippers to make it happen,” says Marie-Eve Trudel-Vibert, co-founder of the Saucette.

On November 7, six days before the fund-raising campaign even began, \$54,337 had already been raised. So far, 293 dippers have registered out of a maximum capacity of 300, grouped into



Photo: Nelson Sergerie

Dippers at the 2024 edition in Percé.

30 teams, which will set a new record, as last year 236 brave souls took the plunge.

“If we had the space to accommodate thousands of dippers, we would. We have 29 teams registered. It's incredible. The enthusiasm is great,”

says the co-founder, expressing great pride.

“Half of the teams are new recruits, and most of them are local businesses,” Ms. Trudel-Vibert notes.

The original organizers never imagined reaching the

million-dollar mark. “It's really crazy when you look at how far we've come. We started with word of mouth.

The fact that we're on the internet now, with 300 dippers, means 300 different networks. We never imagined

it. It wasn't a goal. But now, 15 years later, here we are,” she comments, already thinking about a special edition for next year that could take the form of a celebration of the past 15 years.

For the 14th edition, the Suzanne-Guité space will be busier than Quai street. Kiosks will be set up to sell promotional products, and a food corner will also be available.

In recent years, Mother Nature has cooperated, offering temperatures around zero degrees and sunny skies.

“I really have a feeling that the snow will return, that we'll have a winter dip. I can't believe that we'd be so lucky again. Our photos show an exotic dip!” says the co-founder.

People who would like to contribute can donate through the Saucette's social media pages.

Wind power leader B.B. Brake Pads files for bankruptcy

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – A 45% drop in sales in a market facing high trade tensions between Canada and the United States proved too much for Gaspé-based B.B. High Performance Brake Pads, which filed for bankruptcy on November 3.

But there is hope for a revival, as buyers are reportedly interested since the company still has supply contracts with customers in Europe.

The company, also known under the trade name Kuma Brakes, specializes in the design and manufacture of wind and industrial braking systems.

A flagship of the Gaspé wind industry founded in 2009, the company has carved out a place for itself in the international market among wind farm operators and manufacturers through its innovation, technical expertise, and commitment to quality.

The unique design of its brake pads make it famous worldwide. However, the protectionist policies of United States President Donald Trump, led the company's customers south of the Canadian border to purchase pads in their domestic market, dealing a serious blow to the company.

“We tried everything we could to preserve jobs and maintain our operations in



Christian Babin with his products.

Photo: Canada Economic Development

Gaspé. However, the sudden drop in American orders made the situation untenable,” says company president and founder Christian Babin in a press release, declining our request for an interview before it was made public.

Once contacted by SPEC, the company subsequently issued a press release.

In the notice to creditors from trustee Mallette, it is noted that the company owes nearly \$2 million to its suppliers and bankers.

Fondation is the main loser in the bankruptcy with \$1.1 million in claims. Canada Economic Development follows with \$430,000 and the Fonds Régionaux de Solidarité FTQ with \$283,000. Together, their claims total just over \$1.8 million.

The assets were estimated at \$440,000 by the trustee.

The mayor is confident

The mayor of Gaspé is saddened to see this flagship of the wind industry in his town fall victim to American protectionism.

Daniel Côté notes that this is a private matter, but he is staying in close contact with the company, hoping for a revival.

“On the MRC side, if there is a buyer, there are programs that exist, as there are provincial and federal programs. What I want at all costs is for the expertise we have developed in Gaspé, to continue to develop here. This is a company with great potential,” notes Mr. Côté.

Bonaventure: citizens choose Mini-golf

Nelson Sergerie

BONAVENTURE – The autonomous mini-golf project at the Bonaventure municipal campground is the one that citizens selected as part of the municipality's participatory budget.

Nearly 350 votes were cast, with more than half going to the winning project, demonstrating strong enthusiasm for this initiative, according to the Town.

The stand-alone mini-golf project at the campground aims to provide a fun and accessible recreational space for everyone, both residents and visitors alike, in the heart of the site.

The participatory budget amounted to \$100,000. Funding for the project is expected to be included in the municipality's 2026 budget.

Other projects submitted for public voting included the construction of a safe water-access ramp for boats near the footbridge parking lot and three proposals to make the tourist information office site more welcoming.

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

Marie-Thérèse Forest, a pioneer of women's rights, passes away peacefully

GILLES GAGNÉ

MARIA – On October 17, Marie-Thérèse Forest, a pioneer in the recognition of women's rights in the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands, followed through on a decision made a year ago: she opted for medical assistance in dying, weary after 39 years of struggle against spastic ataxia.

This farewell came on the eve of the World March of Women in Quebec City, 25 years after the first such event. Marie-Thérèse Forest was, in fact, at the first march in Quebec City in 2000.

She was serene on October 15 in a meeting with SPEC.

“For two months now, my friends have been coming here to pay their respects,” she said, summarizing what had occupied a large part of her daily life for months.

“I called my closest friends. I was protecting certain people. My friend Huguette, when she found out, came here crying, and there I was, comforting her, in my arms, about my death! The same thing happened with my friend Bertin. People came here to grieve, but I realized that I, too, had to grieve. I knew it in my head, but now I've experienced it in my heart,” she said in June.

Marie-Thérèse Forest experienced her first balance problems due to spastic ataxia after the birth of her daughter, Mathilde, on April 18, 1984. The “ataxia” component is a neurological problem that causes a lack of coordination. The “spastic” component manifests as muscle rigidity. The disease primarily affects the legs and arms, and even speech. Ms. Forest had “the whole package.”

This disability, however, did not prevent her from advocating for women's rights for thirty years.

“I've been using a wheelchair since 2002. I used a walker before that,” she noted.

Many people watched Marie-Thérèse Forest find the strength, for over 30 years, to get in and out of vehicles despite her illness, braving the rain and snowbanks, with the physical and moral support of other women.

Throughout all these trials, she demonstrated dignity, composure, and respect in her advocacy.

“I had worked with regional authorities, like the Re-



Photo: Courtesy of Catherine Blouin's office

Catherine Blouin presented the National Assembly Member's Medal to Marie-Thérèse Forest on October 3 in Carleton, with friends of Ms. Forest in attendance.

gional Health Authority. It was important to have clear, precise, and non-attacking statements. That's what people appreciated about me. Maintaining my calm and sense of humour, even when things got tough. It's this appreciation from the world that helped me grow,” she said.

A well-considered decision

She settled on the decision to leave in November 2024 in order to live a winter, a spring, a summer, and the beginning of autumn. She also wanted to avoid a long stay in an intermediate care facility and enjoy life in an environment so close to her beloved nature.

“I'm leaving with that feeling in my heart. I'm 72 years old; I never thought I'd end up here. I've enjoyed life to the fullest, but now, I've had enough!” she summarized.

“I love flowers and birds. They bring me beauty. I'm in paradise, too. I've explored the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands more times than I should have, and I've never seen a spot as beautiful as my house,” she added, referring to her little home in Maria, near Rivière Verte.

On October 14, she hosted her “angels” for supper.

“They're seven people who have come here morning and evening to help me for the past few years, to check that everything was alright,” explained a very grateful Ms. Forest.

A gradually developing feminism

After completing her master's degree in literature in

1987, she returned to the Baïdes-Chaleurs region and worked on launching Femmes en Mouvement, an initiative that coincided with the emergence of support centres and shelters for victims of sexual assault.

“At the time, there was no women's group coordination table specifically for the Gaspé Peninsula and the Magdalen Islands. There was only one, for both regions: Bas-Saint-Laurent-Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine. I went to Rimouski to advocate for one for the Gaspé Peninsula. Bas-Saint-Laurent was too far away. It took a couple of years, and

then there were two separate tables. The Gaspé Peninsula was already immense,” recalled the founder and first coordinator of the Gaspé-Îles-de-la-Madeleine Feminist Roundtable.

The tragedy at École Polytechnique in Montreal on December 6, 1989, galvanized her commitment.

“My colleague Diane Robert and I took the train to Gaspé, and then Polytechnique happened. We were watching the news reports on television. In English, they were emphasizing ‘they're all women, it's an anti-feminist act,’ while in French, the tone was more nuanced. I thought to myself, ‘This is the last straw.’ That's when I became a committed feminist,” she said.

The increased awareness of women's issues generated by the Bread and Roses March in June 1995 was a turning point.

“We marched on both sides of the Gaspé Peninsula, all the way to Gaspé, to reach a large gathering at the cathedral. In my memory, when we held the other gathering in Carleton, with all the women arriving from out of town, singing, it was extraordinary. I can't think of any other memories that compare to it. It was the Bread and Roses March that led to the World March of Women in 2000,” added Ms. Forest.

Recognition that extends far beyond the Gaspé Peninsula

On October 3, Catherine Blouin, Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, presented the National Assembly Member's Medal to Marie-Thérèse Forest in Carleton.

“Through her vision and determination, Marie-Thérèse Forest embodies the change that has moved our communities forward. Her feminist commitment, pursued with courage and conviction, has profoundly marked our region and contributed to the advancement of equality between women and men. By presenting her with the Member's Medal, I wish to acknowledge her exceptional career and remind everyone that her work continues to inspire and guide us,” said Catherine Blouin.

“We are all heirs to Marie-Thérèse Forest. We are heirs to her struggles, her vision, her determination. We owe her a great deal. She is one of the great builders of the region, and it is up to us to continue her work so that our region, Quebec, and even the world become more just, supportive, and inclusive spaces,” said Nastassia Williams-Valois, current coordinator of the region's Feminist Roundtable.

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Annual General Meeting

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December 10, 2025

AT 6 P.M.

**New Carlisle
Town Hall**

More Information
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Email: holly.smith@globetrotter.net
Zoom link available upon request.

Listuguj councillor Cathy Martin passes away

GILLES GAGNÉ

LISTUGUJ – Listuguj councillor Cathy Martin, who held a doctorate in education, passed away on November 7, after a battle against cancer. She was 57 years of age. Her path was a busy and successful one, touching many fields.

Her passing was announced on November 10 by the Listuguj Mi'gmaq Government. She was the sister of chief Scott Martin.

“Dr. Cathy’s extensive education, work experience and achievements are truly remarkable and serve as an inspiration to those who knew her. She was a strong advocate for education, addressing homelessness and First Nations community issues,” mentioned the message released by the band council.

The list of her achievements and contributions is long. She served as an elected councillor of Listuguj at various times since 2004, at one point earning the title of chief councillor after having received the greatest number of votes during an election.

She also received a doctorate degree in educational leadership from the University of Phoenix, Arizona. She worked with methods and re-

sources at Listuguj’s Alaqsitew Gitpu School. She held several speech-language pathologist roles - including running her own business, Chitter Chatter.

She was a published author, having released Strengthening Canadian Indigenous relationships and decision-making processes, and she was a trustee member of the First Nations Adult Education School Council. She filled various educator and facilitator roles at numerous schools and institutions.

She also provided consultant services to Listuguj Restorative Justice and Listuguj Social Services.

She worked for the homeless

More recently, she was a founder and chairperson for the Epgwas’g Temporary Shelter in the community, which unfortunately closed in March due to federal funding programs that were ill-adapted for shelters in rural areas.

In a January article published by SPEC, she said “our board eagerly reached out to this program only to be told that the majority of this funding is reserved for In-



Photo: G. Gagné

In January, Cathy Martin tried to save the Epgwas’g shelter for homeless.

igenous populations living in the urban centres of Montreal, Quebec City, Amos, Sept-Îles and Gatineau, leaving minimal amounts to be shared amongst the reserve communities,” explained Ms. Martin.

“It’s as if homelessness doesn’t exist on reserves, in smaller communities. Why prioritize urban centres? There’s also homelessness in rural areas! We don’t understand this way of seeing things. Homelessness can happen anywhere and affect everyone! We saw it here for three years,” she added.

The Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government adds that “Dr. Cathy was a trailblazer for In-

igenous women and a respected leader in the community.”

Her burial ceremony occurred on November 13, at 2 p.m., at the Listuguj cemetery.

Bid for the AFN top position

In the spring of 2021, amidst the pandemic, Cathy Martin ran for National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, the country’s largest Indigenous political organization. She did not win but later qualified the experience as valuable.

Earlier in 2025, she was also a candidate for the lead-

ership of the Assembly of First Nations Quebec-Labrador.

Doctor Martin announced at the end of September that she intended to file a lawsuit against the Mi’gmaq community government, which she believed had violated her rights during a meeting held on June 19.

In a statement she made public, she also indicated that she planned to file a second defamation lawsuit against members of the band council and the community who had demanded her resignation as councillor at that same meeting. The legal action did not proceed before her passing.

These legal actions were related to the death of a young woman from Listuguj in an apartment attached to the elected official’s residence.

In 2004, Cathy Martin was a member of a Listuguj group opposed to a contaminated soil incinerator projected by Bennett Environmental in Belledune. The facility was built and ran some tests but never reached full-scale operations. The opposition of Baie des Chaleurs First Nations was instrumental in the popular movement that tried to block the project.

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Community and Compassion at Work

MARY ROBERTSON

NEW RICHMOND - The Réseau de Protection Animale de la Baie-des-Chaleurs was created to help stray pets and improve animal welfare in the Bay of Chaleurs. Through the tireless efforts of many volunteers, this small non-profit organization has been able to care for countless lost, abandoned, and homeless animals in our local communities. They work to raise awareness about the importance of caring for animals and preventing cruelty. They also provide emergency assistance, shelter, and help to find forever homes for the animals that end up in their care.

Since its founding in 2015, the Réseau has been operated by dedicated volunteers who depended on donations to keep their doors open. But in September 2023, with limited resources and no financial support, the volunteers could no longer keep up with the many demands of caring for the animals of the region, and they were forced to close their doors. It was a loss felt by many who had come to rely on the organization as caretakers for lost and abandoned pets.

In October 2024, a funding package from the MRCs of Avignon and Bonaventure made it possible to hire a coordinator to manage the day-to-day operations of the Réseau. The non-profit organization has now become a key partner and a priority for several municipalities, assisting with dog registration, managing strays, and promoting community education on animal welfare.

At this time of year, as the cold weather sets in, there are even more demands for emergency animal care. According to France Charest, President of the Board of Directors of the Réseau, colonies of stray cats across the region need to be cared for before the snow accumulates. Due to financial difficulties, some people can't afford to have their cats sterilized, and those cats go on to have litters of kittens every year. To help address this ongoing challenge, the Réseau, with the help of local veterinarians, offers a public clinic each year to sterilize cats for a small fee. They also host other events to educate,



Photo: Courtesy of the Réseau

Since December 2024, the Réseau has taken in nearly 170 cats, with close to 120 of them finding new homes through adoption.

support, and bring attention to the needs of the small animals in their shelter, as well as those who are abandoned or have never had a home.

Dog registration plays an important role in helping owners find their lost dogs. Registration is mandatory, and it helps both the community and the Réseau make the recovery process faster and more efficient. In addition, the funds collected through dog registrations stay within the organization, supporting its ongoing efforts to care for animals.

Since December 2024, the Réseau de Protection Animale de la Baie-des-Chaleurs has taken in nearly 170 cats, with close to 120 of them finding new homes through adoption. Between December 2024 and June 2025, the organization made 89 posts on its Facebook page for stray cats and dogs and 62 posts for lost pets, resulting in at least 65 successful reunions. Cases like these occur regularly, with several new ones each week, showing the ongoing need for the Réseau's vital work in helping animals and their owners. These efforts highlight the organization's important role in promoting animal welfare and bringing people together to care for their four-legged friends.

While funding from the two MRCs helps cover some of the Réseau's basic needs, more community support is required. With limited shelter space, food, and access to necessary medical care, the number of animals they can take in depends on the amount of money they are able to raise. This is why businesses like L'Auberge du Marchand in Maria raise funds for the shelter. Kim MacInnis, owner of Garage Pizzeria in New Richmond,

hosted a fundraiser in October and raised \$1,137 for the Réseau.

When asked why she organized the event, she said that she loves animals and wanted to help the organization continue its work.

The Réseau encourages people to take part and support their mission, as stray and abandoned cats and dogs continue to be found across the two MRCs. While dedicated volunteers work hard to help them, the need to have pets spayed or neutered remains one of their main concerns. People who lose their dogs or cats now depend on the organization to spread the word on their very active Facebook page, asking local citizens for help in finding them.

France Charest says that one of the goals of the Réseau is to have a larger and more suitable facility that will be able to house and care for more animals. Fundraising for this initiative has already begun. However, their current focus remains on maintaining a permanent coordinator and an employee to respond to stray animal calls from across the territory. They also need a strong network of volunteers and resources to continue their work.

There are many ways to support the Réseau, including volunteering for their special events and activities or by becoming a foster family to take in an animal until a forever home is found. They also need people to help transport animals and they accept donations of all kinds. To get involved and help the Réseau meet the growing demand for animal care services, contact them at operations@rpabdc.org or visit their Facebook page, Réseau de Protection Animale de la Baie-des-Chaleurs.

Reflections

by

Diane Skinner Flowers



You can't step in the same river twice

I'm a lover of idioms, those cool expressions that present ideas in an interesting and different way. We all use them, likely daily. They include sayings like "Call it a day," "Beat around the bush," "Getting something out of your system," and "Speak of the Devil."

Can you step in the same river twice? Well, yes and no. If you are stepping in the Matapedia River today and then again tomorrow you could step in the same river. However, if we take that idiom to mean the flowing water is always changing, then we cannot step in the exact same river twice. Things are different and always changing. That's what that idiom means.

Everything changes constantly, the world changes, and so do we. I am thrilled to be writing for the Spec newspaper again! I am stepping into the same river, but much has changed in the last 20 months.

Since March 2024 the world has experienced significant political events: Donald Trump's re-election and his profound effect on Canada, intensified conflicts in the Ukraine and Middle East and lots of natural disasters and extreme weather events. Remember climate change? It is still impacting the world, though political turmoil has been grabbing all the headlines. The 2024 Summer Olympics were held in Paris and who can forget those controversial opening ceremonies or people swimming in the polluted waters of the Seine?

Over the past year and a half, we can reflect on people we have lost, births, health issues and many of the things big and small that make up our daily lives. If you sit down with paper and pen and jot down some of the changes you have faced since March 2024, you may be surprised at how many things you have lived through. That's life, always changing, no two days exactly the same.

I am going out on a limb here, but change is mostly a good thing, barring catastrophes. The positive side of change is that it gives us a chance to do better as human beings, teaches us how to handle new situations and allows us to experience new things. The downside is that change can be negative, and too much change, too quickly, can be stressful.

Have you seen the movie Groundhog Day? It is a 1993 fantasy film where a tv weatherman is forced to relive February 2 repeatedly. The character, played by Bill Murray, is being punished for his selfishness. A life without change and no opportunity to do better would be a dreadful punishment. Through his repeated days, he learns to be better.

The Gaspé Spec has changed too. We are now published bi-weekly, but we are still here, bringing local news and concerns to keep you informed about happenings on the peninsula, in Quebec and sometimes beyond. Keep reading, we appreciate your support.

I'm so glad to be back writing for the Gaspé Spec! My last published piece was March 20, 2024. Time sure marches on and quickly! I'm sure that you have heard the expression, "The days are long but the years are short." I look forward to writing more and hearing your feedback about our articles. See you here in 2 weeks!



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Announcements



In Memory

ANNETT: Kevin

In memory of a dear son, brother, and uncle who passed away November 27, 2020.
*Your memory lives forever on,
 And though our hearts still ache.
 We cherish every thought of you,
 Each moment we're awake.
 In our dreams we laugh with you,
 And live with you once more.
 In oceans between life and death,
 We'll meet you on the shore.*

Always remembered and sadly missed by Mum, Dad, Chrissie, Sarah (Ryan) Emily (Allen) Nephews Henry, Charlie, Ethan, Austin and niece Addison.

FLOWERS: Howard

In loving memory of a precious grandfather who passed away November 3, 1984.
*Those special memories of you,
 Will always bring a smile.
 If only we could have you back,
 For just a little while.
 Then we could sit and talk again,
 Just like we used to do.
 You always meant so very much,
 And always will too.
 The fact that you're no longer here,
 Will always cause us pain.
 But you're forever in our hearts,
 Until we meet again.*

Lovingly remembered and cherished forever in our hearts by Carol and Richard Smollett.

FLOWERS: Oliver

In loving memory of a dear uncle who passed away suddenly October 1, 1998.

*He bade no one a last farewell,
 He said goodbye to none.
 The heavenly gates were open wide,
 A loving voice said "come inside."
 Twenty seven years have passed since that sad day,
 When the uncle we loved was called away.
 God took him home, it was his will,
 Within our hearts he liveth still.
 Though absent, you are ever near;
 Still loved, still missed and always dear.*

Forever loved and remembered by Carol and Richard Smollett.

SMOLLETT: Robert Milton

In loving memory of a very dear father who passed away October 12, 1984.
*May you always walk in sunshine,
 And be guided by God's love.
 We know you are always with us,
 As you watch us from above.
 We know God must have needed you,
 As he took you home to rest.
 His heaven must be beautiful,
 For he has only the best.
 Softly the leaves of memory fall,
 Gently we gather and treasure them all.*

Always loved, remembered and sadly missed by son Richard and daughter-in-law Carol.



Farewell to Olive

I was saddened to hear about the passing of former director, Olive Smollett.

We were on the board together over ten years ago, and Olive was always so dedicated and certainly knew how to get things organized.

Our meetings were held in Chandler, no Zoom at that time. Sharon Renouf, the publisher, Olive and I

had great conversations on our road trips.

At our AGM, it was often her delicious food that we enjoyed after the meeting. Anything she made was delicious.

I extend a heartfelt thank you to her, and much respect to all of her family.

On behalf of our staff, volunteers and current board, we extend our deepest condolences.

Elaine Sexton

**The New Carlisle
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 extends sympathy to the family of
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*With Deepest
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GASPÉ:

Christmas Carol Service

December 5: The Christmas Carol Service will take place at the Rosebridge United Church at 7 p.m. Come out and join us with singing of carols, a Christmas message, followed by fellowship with hot chocolate and goodies. Everyone welcome.

BARACHOIS:

BADC

November 29: The 10th anniversary Barachois Christmas market will begin at 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Belle Anse School (in the basement) 1298 Route 132 East. Handmade Christmas gifts and decorations, art, local crafts, baking, knitting, jams and more. To reserve a table contact Sandy Coombs at 581-887-1417.

BARACHOIS:

Mountain View Golden Age

Tuesdays: Weekly indoor curling beginning at 1:30 p.m.

Wednesdays: Weekly evening card games at 7 p.m. starting October 22.

HOPE TOWN:

Sports club

December 13 : Christmas gift bingo beginning at 7 p.m. at the Hope Town Community Centre. Organized by the Hope Town Sports club.

UNITED CHURCH HOPE TOWN

Sunday, November 30

10 a.m. Service

Sunday, December 7

2 p.m. Service

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.

UNITED CHURCH NEW RICHMOND

Sunday, November 30

10 a.m. Service

Sunday, December 7

10 a.m. Service

NEW CARLISLE:

New Carlisle Legion

December 6: Annual Christmas gift bingo.

December 13: Christmas dance with Tammy Adams.

December 14: Santa visits the legion.

December 31: New Years eve dance, details to follow.

CASCAPEDIA-ST-JULES:

50+ Club

December 6: From 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. the Cascapedia 50

PARISH OF GASPÉ

Sunday, November 30

St. Paul's, Gaspé

10 a.m. Advent lessons and Carols Service

Sunday, December 7

St. Andrew's, York

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

plus club will be hosting the grand opening of our new book room. There will be a book reading for children. Come take a tour of our beautiful new book room.
December 21: Annual General Meeting beginning at 6:30 p.m.

ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Sunday, November 30

New Carlisle

3 p.m. Holy Eucharist

Shigawake

10 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Sunday, December 7

New Carlisle

7 p.m. Festival of lessons and Carols

Hope Town

9 a.m. Holy Eucharist

Port Daniel

11 a.m. Holy Baptism

On the Lighter Side...

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



WINTER WONDERS WORD SEARCH

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 A T S L H Z A D P I B N R E C D V K O I
 Y F L T Y Z B M L O G F C P A Y K S N L
 O P P U A S E L G H M I U Z T F W I V T
 S C A R F T P K R B L A N K E T P R I F M
 H U D P G V A K R A P C F D Y K E B L F

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

WORDS

BLANKET
 BLIZZARD
 BRISK
 BUNDLE
 DOWNHILL
 FROZEN
 HAZARD
 HEAVY
 ICECAP
 ICE SKATING
 LAKE
 MITTENS
 MOUNTAIN
 NOR'EASTER
 PARKA
 SCARF
 SKIING
 SLED
 SLIPPERY
 SNOWMAN
 TEMPERATURE
 WINTRY
 WOODBURNING
 WOOLEN



SPELL IT OUT!

 I _ _ S _ _	 S _ _ _ _
 S _ _ _ _	 I _ _ _ _
 M _ _ _ _	 S _ _ _ _

Help this squirrel find his acorns.



CRYPTO FUN

Determine the code to reveal the answer!

Solve the code to discover words related to winter. Each number corresponds to a letter. (Hint: 21 = E)

A. 25 16 24 4 10 7 20 5 21
Clue: Individual piece of snow

B. 17 9 23 7 7 26
Clue: Slightly cold

C. 25 4 21 20 22 21 13
Clue: Warm, knitted shirt

D. 25 22 24 13 11
Clue: Bad weather

Answers: A. snowflake B. chilly C. sweater D. storm

HOROSCOPES - November 24 to November 30

ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

Right now you are inspired to roll up your sleeves and clear away the clutter so you can focus on what counts, Aries. Your productivity soars this week.

TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

Your words will carry extra weight between this week and next, Taurus. Don't hold back on speaking about what is in your heart. You may navigate your way to romance.

GEMINI - May 22/June 21

Gemini, this week you may feel energized to pursue new connections with family and friends. Plan a few long overdue catch-ups, and bask in that feeling of contentment.

CANCER - Jun 22/Jul 22

Some may call you timid, Cancer, but not this week. You put all of yourself out there the next few days, and others may be hanging on your every

word.

LEO - Jul 23/Aug 23

Money is at the top of your priority list, Leo. You may be dreaming big or content to just make sense of finances that have gotten a bit off the rails.

VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 22

Virgo, it's all about honesty this week and letting others in. Don't sugarcoat things with the people you love. They will love you even if you're in need of some support.

LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

Libra, release what is draining your energy, especially before the busy holiday season is in full force. Wrap up lingering projects and bow out of obligations that are stretching you too thin.

SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, you are selective about your social circle, but stay open to new friendships. New allies bring surprising opportunities if you simply let them in.

SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

Your ambitious streak is on fire right now, Sagittarius. Partnerships and acquisitions are very much within reach, so start conversations now. It's time to network as much as possible.

CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

You pride yourself on telling it like it is, Capricorn. But candor can sometimes be costly. A measured approach in a delicate situation this week can serve you well.

AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

Typically "what you see is what you get" is your mantra, Aquarius. Yet, this week you might hold something back to be a bit more mysterious. Others may not catch on right away.

PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

Relationships take center stage in your life, Pisces. Talks of further commitment could come up more often than in the past. This is an important time.

HOROSCOPES - December 1 to December 7

ARIES - Mar 21/Apr 20

Your energy is contagious this week, Aries. Expect bursts of creativity and spontaneous fun to ensue. Perhaps an unexpected adventure will pop up? Take the lead in social situations.

TAURUS - Apr 21/May 21

It might be a week for indulgence in the best ways possible, Taurus. Treat yourself to something delicious or cozy, and don't feel guilty about it. Patience will pay off in work projects.

GEMINI - May 22/June 21

Curiosity is your superpower this week, Gemini. Choose a new hobby or explore a class at the community college. You might discover hidden talents or interests.

CANCER - Jun 22/Jul 22

Cancer, this is your week to shine emotionally. Reach out to friends or family who you haven't spoken with

in a while. Small acts of kindness can come back to you in surprising ways.

LEO - Jul 23/Aug 23

It's time to hear that roar, Leo. Your charisma is unstoppable right now and you're ready to step into the spotlight. Share your ideas and achievements with anyone who will listen.

VIRGO - Aug 24/Sept 22

Your knack for organization is a ticket to smooth sailing this week, Virgo. A little planning goes a long way right now. However, don't forget to add some fun, too.

LIBRA - Sept 23/Oct 23

This week you may find yourself effortlessly charming all of those people around you, Libra. Social events or collaborations may be particularly festive.

SCORPIO - Oct 24/Nov 22

Scorpio, this week brings opportunities to dive in deep with something you are passionate about. Your

intensity attracts attention, so embrace your magnetic personality.

SAGITTARIUS - Nov 23/Dec 21

Adventure is calling, Sagittarius. Whether it's a small trip over the weekend or a new hobby, your week is packed with excitement and energy. Your optimism is contagious.

CAPRICORN - Dec 22/Jan 20

Determination and hard work this week will have personal or work projects moving along faster than expected. Remember to reward yourself along the way.

AQUARIUS - Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, innovation is on your mind right now. Ideas and originality shine through in all you do. Expect some playful debates or spontaneous collaborations.

PISCES - Feb 19/Mar 20

It is alright to let your imagination run wild this week, Pisces. Creativity flows easily, and your intuition can guide you to some unexpected things along the way.

Remembrance Day marks inauguration of Kind Ribbon in Escuminac

GILLES GAGNÉ

POINTE-À-LA-GARDE — The Kind Ribbon, a project initiated in 2017 by a small group of Escuminac citizens, came to fruition on Remembrance Day, November 11, thanks to the hard work of very engaged committee members. The art piece, consisting of a big aluminum ribbon and the Memorial Cross, pays a tribute to veterans, past and present, who made a sacrifice to protect freedom.

In 2017, the Kind Ribbon, or Ruban bienveillant in French, was an idea in the mind of Michel Perkinson, a former Canadian Armed Forces member who wanted to pay a tribute to his grandfather, Joseph Tennier, who had also served in the military, but during World War One. Mr. Perkinson first spoke to then-mayor Bruce Wafer and Tom Eden, who at the time was working for CEDEC, the Community Economic Development and Employability Committee.

“From there, a request was filed with the Department of Veterans Affairs by Michel Perkinson and the small group that had been formed. The group wanted an artistic and commemorative project to put up a place of contemplation and reflection,” explained Robert Belzile, a member of the Kind Ribbon committee, who was an Escuminac municipal councillor eight years ago, and who was the acting master of ceremony on November 11.



Joe Wilmot, Bruce Wafer, Stéphane Cyr, Tom Eden, Marsel Ritchie, André Lafrance, Robert Belzile and Jean-Marc Vallée were on hand for the November 11 inauguration of the Kind Ribbon in Pointe-à-la-Garde. They are either members of the committee that conducted the project, or veterans. Marsel Ritchie is the artist.

New Richmond artist Marsel Ritchie was selected to design the Kind Ribbon. He praised the trust in his art skills expressed by other Kind Ribbon committee members, Robert Belzile, Bruce Wafer, Jean-Marc Vallée and Stéphane Cyr, among others.

“I wanted a place where visitors can sit and pay a tribute to veterans. You can notice that there is no artillery, no tank around. I wanted a peaceful place, and I wanted to express a message of thanks in the three languages spoken in the area, Welalin, Merci and Thank you, in order of (settlement) appearance,” explained Mr. Ritchie. Those words appear on three benches placed in front of the monument.

Mr. Ritchie also reversed the usual colours of the Memorial ribbon. Here, the ribbon is

grey and the Memorial Cross is mauve.

Veteran Jean-Marc Vallée humbly thanked the committee members Robert Belzile, Bruce Wafer, Stéphane Cyr and Tom Eden for landing the project.

“We all worked and I also want to thank the artist. I wanted this project to work out because it was important for me to show the value of past veterans’ contributions. We owe our freedom to them,” said Mr. Vallée.

Tom Eden, director general of the Baie des Chaleurs Military Museum in New Richmond, underlined that the initiator of the project, “Michel Perkinson, didn’t have the chance to see the art piece, as he passed away in 2019. I also want to praise the team for its efforts.”

Mr. Eden took the opportu-

nity to recite the “Ode of Remembrance”, a Laurence Binyon poem that has been recited to commemorate wartime service and sacrifice since 1921. Mr. Eden then invited the attendees, about 30 attendees to remain silent for a moment.

Veterans on hand for the ceremony

A few veterans were among the attendees. Joe Wilmot of Listuguj was one of them.

“I was in the service for three years, from 1971 to 1973, first in Cornwallis for basic training, then in Borden, Ontario, where I received a training as a traffic technician. I was in charge of all the materials needed for different exercises, at the hub where all the teams gathered,” he explained.

Mr. Wilmot did the translation in mi’gmaq of the plaque explaining the Kind Ribbon.

André Lachance also attended the Pointe-à-la-Garde ceremony. “I am originally from Saint-Alexis but I am living in Pointe-à-la-Croix. I was in the service for 25 years, from 1984 to 2009. I was first posted in Valcartier, then in Petawawa and later in Ottawa. I was mainly a recruiter for the anti-terrorist unit. I went to overseas missions three times, twice in Cyprus and once in Bosnia, during the war out there in 1994,” he explained.

When asked why it took eight years to complete the project, former Escuminac

mayor Bruce Wafer, pointed out that the “Covid pandemic was a major factor, plus little problems here and there.”

Despite pulling out of politics, Bruce Wafer said that he remains active as a citizen. “I am still involved in development. It is just that I am no longer available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.”

The cost of the project amounted to \$80,000, excluding the cost of land. Contributions came from citizens, the Municipality of Escuminac and many private contributors. When he was the Member of the National Assembly for Bonaventure, current Escuminac mayor Sylvain Roy also made a contribution to the initiative.

There are three categories for the private contributions, Oak, marked by donations from Groupe GDS and Eurovia, Maple, with donations coming from Caisses Desjardins, and Birch, where Innergex, Groupe Lebel and Groupe Cellard contributed.

The sentence on a plaque installed in front of the Kind Ribbon says: “Inspired by the Canadian Armed Forces Memorial Ribbon with the Memorial Cross at the centre, this work acknowledges the contributions of Veterans from the three cultural and linguistic groups of the region.”

The rest area where the Kind Ribbon was installed is located in Pointe-à-la-Garde, the western part of the municipality of Escuminac.

Good weather brings out 125 at New Richmond

CYNTHIA DOW

NEW RICHMOND — “It’s the first time in many years we had decent weather on Remembrance Day,” James Martin told SPEC, estimating the crowd numbered about 125 on November 11. Mr. Martin, long-time member of Chaleurs Bay Legion Branch 172, served as the MC of the ceremony held at the cenotaph in New Richmond.

As usual, prayers were said in Mi’gmaq, French and English. The wreath for the Mothers of Canada was laid by Myrna Robertson McCormack, whose son Raymond served in the Armed Forces. Her grandson Corporal Ryan Cyr, laid the wreath on behalf of the Canadian Armed Forces.



On the left, New Richmond Mayor Eric Dubé is a mainstay at the New Richmond cenotaph, as is Legion member James Martin (right), who led the ceremony.



Betty Martin of Gesgapegiag lays a wreath as Dwight Coull, Sgt at Arms of the Legion looks on.



Photos: Darlene Dimock

Remembrance Day at SPDS

NEW CARLISLE - Remembrance Day takes place on November 11 every year to honour those who have served and sacrificed in the Canadian Armed Forces. People wear red poppies to symbolize remembrance, as the flowers grew in the battlefields of Flanders, Belgium, during World War 1. Every year on November 11 at 11 a.m., Canadians pause for two minutes of silence to honour and remember those who have served in war.

This year, Grade 5 and 6 students from Shigawake Port Daniel School (SPDS) went to the Cenotaph in New Carlisle to remember the ones who fought for our freedom. People, including some of our SPDS students, placed wreaths to show remembrance for veterans and soldiers. Back at SPDS, the other staff and students assembled in the cafeteria to show their respect. Two grade 4 students read *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae, both in English and in French, followed by two minutes of silence. *By Benjamin, Mckenna, Aubree, Tori, Leah.*

For Remembrance Day, we interviewed Rodney Flowers, a veteran and relative of Lily Major, one of our journalism club students. We really appreciate him taking the time to answer our questions and hope you enjoy reading them.

Why did you join the military? I joined the military to serve my country. In the military, I would have the opportunity to learn skills, be able to travel, as well as have a good career. To be honest, if somebody would have told Little Rodney, that's me, by the



Photo: Holly Smith

Grade 5 and 6 students from Shigawake Port Daniel School (SPDS) were excited to attend this year's Remembrance Day ceremony at the New Carlisle cenotaph.

way, that one day you'll be a police officer, I would have never imagined it. But not only was I a police officer, but I also had the chance or the opportunity to serve all over the world. So, for some people, it's really good. But for others, it's just not their cup of tea, if I can put it that way.

How old were you when you joined? I applied right out of high school, when I was 18. However, I moved to Montreal, and I was working there while I was waiting. There was some confusion in my file, and it had to be transferred back to Rimouski, so I was 20 when I joined the military.

Did you go to military school? First, when you join the military, you must go through boot camp. After boot camp, I went to Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu for French language training. After that, to learn my trade, which was military police, I went to Canadian Forces School of Intelligence and Security,

(now it's simply called the Military Police Academy). So I went there for six months to learn my policing skills, and then, I went to my first posting, which was in Winnipeg, to do policing.

What was training like? What kind of exercises did you do? Well, first and foremost, I think training starts when you're a child. I know for me, throughout my life, I was always very active. Once we were in training, there were a lot of pushups, pull ups, running, and lots of drill (when soldiers are all formed up during a parade). Sports were also part of our training. Basically, everything you guys do, the skills you learn throughout your schooling and in Phys. Ed, is pretty much the same kind of stuff we would do. Mind you, some of it was for disciplinary reasons. That's where most of the pushups came from.

What was bootcamp like? I was well prepared for

boot camp throughout life. It started at 6 o'clock in the morning with Reveille. Then we prepared for our inspections. The first thing you did after you showered was make your bed, and it had to be specifically made very precise and very firm. They would take a quarter and throw it up, and if it didn't bounce off the bed, you had to do it over again. From there, we would go to breakfast. Throughout the day, we would do different classes and different types of training to get us ready for our basic soldier skills. In the evenings after supper would be the time that we would use to prepare our kit, our clothing, our lockers, our ironing for the uniforms we were wearing the next day, shining of our boots. Everything that we needed to get done before lights out at 10 p.m. The next morning, when you got up, you started the whole routine over. This lasted for ten weeks.

What age did you retire?

I retired at the age of 52.

Did you form any friendships in the military? There's something that has to be said about the bonds that you make in the military. It's incredible. Like, I have friends from years and years ago, and when we see each other, it's like we've never lost touch. It's like if somebody's been on a sports team for a long time, you have that bond with the other players. You take that, and your times it by at least 100. Well, you go through things that nobody else would go through together, right. So you share stuff that the typical person would not share, meaning experience wise. You got their back and they got yours.

What advice would you share with us? The military is not for everyone. Just keep in school and work hard, study hard and be respectful. That's the one thing I tell everybody, always be respectful. Not only to each other, but to your teachers, your parents and anybody you meet.

The Soldiers That Lost Their Lives

*The soldiers fight,
for what is right.
They fight for freedom,
their stories are now
in a museum.
We feel their pain,
but their story
will never drain.
We wear poppies
to remember them,
the poppies are as
pretty as a gem.
They protect the land,
until the last stand.*

*By Leony, Alex,
Liam, Lucy.*

Gaspé pays tribute to its heroes

NELSON SERGERIE

GASPÉ – Approximately 200 people gathered at 11 a.m. on November 11, to pay tribute to the heroes of war as part of the Remembrance Day ceremony in Gaspé.

For once, the weather was exceptional, with temperatures above 10 degrees and clear skies, in contrast to the wind and rain of recent years.

"Personally, I don't want to forget what our ancestors did. They built a country for us. They gave us a good reputation among other countries. I don't want to forget what they did for me and our country," said Veteran Kimberly Fournier, who hosted the Remembrance Day



Photo: N. Sergerie

Kimberly Fournier hosted the ceremony and agreed to talk to SPEC about her military experience.

ceremony.

Ms. Fournier served in the Canadian Armed Forces for 34

years, first as an aircraft electrician and then as a flight engineer.

"I went on three missions: one in Afghanistan and two flying over Iraq," she said. In Iraq, she conducted surveillance flights following the Gulf War and worked with the U.S. Army.

"Their system is a little different and they have a lot more people in their air force, which makes a difference," notes the veteran.

During her career, she was stationed in Bagotville, Saguenay, Trenton, Ontario, Gagetown, New Brunswick, Winnipeg, Manitoba and Oklahoma City, United States, when she was under U.S. command.

Her spouse was also in the military, which made their fre-

quent transfers easier to manage.

"I managed to find my place. I was quite lucky. I always worked with good groups. There were some clashes with others," says the woman who has a strong character.

Seeing a woman lead the Canadian Army, General Jennie Carignan, is a source of pride.

"Definitely. It shows that we are as good as men at leading the army," says Ms. Fournier.





Photo Credit: Sara Gagnon



SOCIÉTÉ
DU CHEMIN DE FER
DE LA GASPÉSIE

The Société du chemin de fer de la Gaspésie would like to inform residents of the Baie-des-Chaleurs region that rail traffic will soon be active 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, between New Richmond and Port-Daniel.

Trains will also continue to operate between Matapédia and New Richmond.

Please stay alert at railway level crossings, obey all signage, and avoid trespassing railway property at all times.

**These precautions are essential for your safety and the safety of your loved ones.
Thank you and be careful.**