

# The Townships

## BMP unions snarl at management

By Sharon McCully

**COWANSVILLE** — Union leaders at Brome Missisquoi Perkins Hospital say managers there are duping the public when they say the hospital has been granted new money for specialists.

"They do not say that in order to obtain these funds, it was necessary to make drastic cuts in the operating budget," union leaders stated in an open letter issued Friday.

"We denounce this absurd situation which has made it necessary to considerably reduce services to the population in order to obtain these funds," said the letter, signed by Raymond Theroux, president of one of BMP's six unions and endorsed by representatives of the other five.

The hospital's 570 unionized workers cite three reasons for the precarious financial situation at the hospital: bad decisions by the previous administration; a large but sparsely-populated territory, and higher expenses than the budget allowed by the Quebec government.

### EMPTY BEDS

Theroux says that to erase BMP's deficit — last year near \$3 million — patient beds were kept empty and jobs abolished, while administrative positions were re-opened.

The union claims that restrictions have been placed on surgery and the emergency room.

"The waiting list for elective surgery at BMP is between 500 and 900," Theroux said in an interview. Depending on the type of operation required, that can mean up to "nearly a year of waiting."

Theroux, who is also the workers' representative on the hospital's board of directors, added that the hospital is failing to meet its obligation of providing basic services, with only two beds in use in the pediatric ward. "Everything is geared toward specialization," he said, "and basic services are being ignored."

### 'AN ABBERRATION'

The union claims the service-sharing agreement ("complementarity") between Granby General Hospital and BMP has

damaged health care for BMP patients. "It's an aberration to have people travel from Mansonville or Abercorn to Granby for medical care," Theroux said.

In addition to the loss of a tumor-detecting scanner, the union missive states, BMP has lost a team of radiologists, pathology services, laboratory services for blood tests, and other diagnostic tests.

Theroux adds that after costly studies of the hospital's auxiliary services such as maintenance, food and laundry, management decided the laundry would close and the service move to Granby, resulting in a loss of jobs in Cowansville.

The Monteregion regional health council (CRSSSM) has ordered the laundry move delayed for another study.

### NO NEW JOBS

The union further claims the hospital has not respected the terms of an agreement to open new "posts" in May, 1991.

Finally, Theroux says, the hospital is contemplating a parking fee.

Union leaders are urging BMP users to find out more about what is happening at the hospital.

"The anglophone population in particular has made very generous donations to the hospital, but they don't always know what is going on," Theroux said.

Gilles Leduc, newly elected chairman of the BMP board of directors, characterizes the union claims as the "usual banter".

Leduc said since 1989, the

hospital has been working on a program to reduce the deficit while maintaining service.

### 'WAY AHEAD'

"We've made tremendous headway," Leduc said. "In fact, we're way ahead of our own target, mainly because interest rates have dropped." Leduc said BMP has there are two years to go on the three-year service-sharing agreement with Granby General.

"Most of the doctors find it is working well and administrators are giving it their best

shot," Leduc said. "The joint committee comprised of people from both hospitals is functioning well."

"The important thing to point out is that if after three years, we find it's not working well, we will opt out," he said.

"But I doubt that will happen — I think it's working."

Leduc said the union letter does not appear to reflect the good atmosphere he has observed between staff and administrators at BMP Hospital.

## Brome Lake council unafraid of court challenge on sewers

**KNOWLTON (SM)** — Brome Lake residents Marc Decelles and Guy Dion have advanced a step in their bid to seek a permanent injunction preventing the extension of the town sewer line to Fisher's Point and the Auberge du Lac condominiums.

Quebec Court has accepted a motion to hear their case for a permanent injunction.

Lawyers for the parties cited in the legal challenge have ten days to contest the hearing. Decelles and Dion hope to prove that Brome

Lake town council acted without proper authority in passing resolutions and issuing contracts for the sewer extension.

Brome Lake town manager Jacques Francoeur said the town will not oppose the injunction hearing.

"This is normal procedure," Francoeur said. "We have no reason at this time to intervene because it's just a deposit of amendments."

Francoeur added the town will have a strong case at the actual hearing.

## E.T. farmers among the best

**LENNOXVILLE (DH)** — Six out of nine finalists for a prestigious Quebec award for excellence in farming are from the Eastern Townships.

They were named at a special ceremony Sunday at the federal agricultural research station in Lennoxville.

The Order of Agricultural Merit has been awarded by the Ministry of Agriculture for 102 years. The three other finalists will be announced next Saturday in St-Hyacinthe.

Top winners, in gold, silver and bronze categories, will be announced in Quebec City on

Oct. 1.

Deputy Agriculture Minister Guy Jacob was on hand for the announcement. "These people set the example for others," Jacob said in an interview. "Even if they don't win these people are watched and imitated."

"I very happy that the Eastern Townships performed as well," he said, adding that area farmers must compete against farmers from regions like St-Hyacinthe, which is recognized as having more favorable farming conditions — notably better soil and a gentler climate.

The overall winners are picked by former award win-

ners and other appointed farmers. The competing farmers produce everything from cattle to milk to a variety of crops.

This year's finalist in the gold category are Ferme Besette et Frères in Waterville and Ferme Roumers Enr. in Stanstead East.

Silver finalists are Ferme Gilles Brodeur Inc. in St-Alphonse de Granby, Ferme J.P. Dionne et Fils Enr. in Cookshire and Ferme Séjour Inc. in Compton.

The area's bronze finalist is Ferme Melga Inc. in St-Herménégilde.

## Charges added to murder rap against Sherbrooke gunman

**SHERBROOKE (DH)** — A Sherbrooke man charged with murdering his ex-girlfriend appeared in court Friday to face additional charges of breaking-and-entering and making death threats.

Welfare recipient Jean-Paul Provost, 44, was also charged with using a dangerous weapon, pointing a firearm and violating probation.

Provost pleaded not guilty to all six charges.

On Aug. 30 Sherbrooke police found the body of Manon Leblanc, 29, inside the apartment she shared with her brother Alain after an armed man who had barricaded himself there

surrendered. She had been shot at least twice. The surrender ended a four-hour standoff with Sherbrooke police.

Provost was charged with pre-meditated murder the next day and pleaded not guilty.

Disclosure of evidence was to take place Friday but was postponed to Sept. 12.

Police say Provost threatened to kill Alain Leblanc, along with an unsuspecting Bell Canada repairman who came to the apartment door looking for directions. The repairman told reporters a man pointed a rifle at him.

### Correction

**SHERBROOKE** — Dave and Mary Picken will appear in court in Granby Tuesday and not in Cowansville today as reported in Friday's *Record*.

The error was the result of incorrect information supplied to the *Record*. The Pickets are disputing an order to remove a bilingual sign outside their Waterloo farm equipment store.

They are scheduled to appear at 2 p.m. in Room D.



Smiling finalists for the Order of Agricultural Merit.

RECORD DAN HAWALESHKA

## Have a hot dog with the PM: Public invited to Magog stop

**COWANSVILLE** — Local citizens will have an opportunity to meet Mila and Brian Mulroney when they make a short visit to Magog tomorrow.

The prime minister and his wife will be at Magog town hall between 5 and 7 p.m. on Tuesday.

Brome Missisquoi MP Gabrielle Bertrand is extending an invitation to the entire population to greet the couple as they tour the region.

A bus will transport local citizens free of charge to Magog from points throughout the region. Buses will leave the Centre Georges Perron in Bedford at 3:45 p.m., the municipal garage in Farnham at 4 and the town hall in Cowansville at 4. Free hot dogs, juice and coffee will be served during the informal meeting.

Some 500 people are expected to meet the Mulroneys in Magog. The prime minister will leave Magog Tuesday eve-

ning to attend a meeting of the inner cabinet in Sherbrooke on Wednesday.

For more information call (514) 263-4285, or dial 0 and ask the operator for Zenith 54320.



Mila Mulroney is bringing her husband to town.

## Sentier Massawippi votes to begin buying CP's land

**LENNOXVILLE (DH)** — Sentier Massawippi members gave their formal approval Saturday to the purchase of an abandoned railway line between Ayer's Cliff and Beebe.

About 25 members voted at the group's annual meeting to begin negotiations between Sentier Massawippi executive members and the Canadian Pacific Railway, which owns the railbed known as the Beebe Subdivision, stretching from Lennoxville to Beebe. Sentier wants to turn the land into a park for cyclists and pedestrians.

The town of Lennoxville has already bought the length of CP right-of-way from Sherbrooke to North Hatley.

In the North Hatley area CP is selling the land off in small pieces to adjacent landowners.

### \$15,000 DOWN

Sentier will try to negotiate a deal which would see the group pay a \$15,000 deposit on the land from Ayer's Cliff to Beebe, valued at \$249,000. The balance would be raised from various tourism and recreation groups which support the conversion, said group president Jacques Robidas. The

group has already raised money for the deposit.

A second resolution appointed Robidas and Sentier vice-president Keith Baxter as the group's negotiators.

In other business at the meeting, held at Bishop's University, members elected a new executive. Robidas was re-elected president and Baxter became the group's new v.p. Morency Rioux is treasurer and Lise Côté is secretary. Others elected to the executive were former secretary-treasurer Lise Gagnon, Frank Harding, Tom Vandermeulen, Michael Grayson and Terry Loucks.



Sentier Massawippi members Lise Gagnon and Jacques Robidas co-ordinated the group's annual meeting Saturday.

RECORD DAN HAWALESHKA