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Summer Issue 2025

# GIVER

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Waterford Green, Chatham  
Photo by Bonnie Coughlan

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**For more information contact Miramichi Community Wellness and Recreation at 623-2300.**

# 200th Anniversary of the Miramichi Fire: 1825-2025

By Charlotte Loggie, Miramichi Historical Society

The Great Miramichi Fire, or Great Fire of Miramichi, as it came to be known, was a massive forest fire complex that devastated forests and communities throughout much of northern New Brunswick and Maine. It ranks among the largest forest fires ever recorded in North America, and is still regarded as the most famous historical event to have taken place in New Brunswick. Because of the devastation and loss of life in the area roughly defined as Miramichi, the fire was named for this part of the province.

The summer of 1825 had been warm and dry. Some fire activity had been noted at Quebec City early in October, and a fire had devastated the Government buildings in Fredericton in September. The forests of Maine and New Brunswick were parched, with much vegetation on the ground. A spark from a lumberman's tool, a careless cooking fire, or other activity in the woods was likely the catalyst. The hot, dry weather and the overgrown, dense forests created the perfect environment for a fire. On the morning of October 7, 1825, a conflagration of fires erupted in the forests deep in the northwest of New Brunswick, and the flames whipped the winds into a hurricane force that swept eastward, devastating all in its path.

Accounts from 1825 are sparse and varied. There are stories of people escaping to the river, standing in the water all night; records of other people who dug holes in the ground in which to hide. The destruction of farms, livestock, homes, and outbuildings was huge. All told, at

least 160 people died, and over three million acres were destroyed. One of the buildings to survive the Fire was St.

Paul's Anglican church in Bushville. The church had been built 2 years prior and was in the path of the terrible flames. The church sexton, Mr. John Jackson, and his team of volunteers stayed at the church all night, keeping the structure wet by throwing buckets of water at it, and covering the roof with wet blankets.

Aid came in the form of goods sent by ship from England, Europe, and the "Boston States" (New England). This took many weeks to organize, so after the Fire, people lived on starvation rations without proper winter shelter and clothing. The Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick, Sir Howard Douglas, came by horse and wagon from Fredericton to set the relief in motion. After his visit, the village of

Gretna Green was renamed Doulastown.

## Book Signing and Presentation

As part of the commemoration activities surrounding this anniversary, **Dr. Alan MacEachern**, author of *The Miramichi Fire: A History* is coming to Miramichi to speak about his book. He will appear at St. Paul's Anglican church in Bushville on **Friday, August 22 at 7 pm**. A limited number of free tickets are available on the City of Miramichi website, through an Eventbrite link under the Events (Miramichi Fire) tab. ([www.miramichi.org/200th-year-miramichi-fire](http://www.miramichi.org/200th-year-miramichi-fire)). Dr. MacEachern will also sign copies of his book on **Saturday, August 23** at Mill Cove Coffee (time to be announced).

**Cover Photo:** A Summer Scene at Waterford Green, Historic Chatham Business District, photo by Bonnie Coughlan

*Giv'er is about enjoying your day, giving it your all, putting some muscle behind it, giving it some gas, all the while staying true to good Miramichi values. Send us your good stuff to talk about on the river! We're looking for events, stories, celebrations, pictures and articles about what's up, what's new, what's happening. Keep it positive, and we'll promote it .*

**Editor/Layout Design:** Stacy Underhill **Ad Design:** Cindy MacLean

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# Events

Find more local events at  
[www.mightymiramichi.com](http://www.mightymiramichi.com)

**June 30: Celebrate Canada with the Villagers** and friends at the Canadian music only concert at the Kin Centre on June 30, 2025 at 7p.m. Free will offering and 50/50 draw in support of Harvest House.

**August 2-3: Art in the Garden** Drop by Firefly Studio in Derby for Art in the Garden, a relaxed open house happening Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Explore the garden and browse artwork setup in the pergola and amidst the colourful blooms and hummingbirds. Hosted by local artist Laura Lea Harrison at Firefly Studio, 4837 Route 108, Derby from 12pm-4pm. For more info visit [fireflystudioderby.blogspot.com](http://fireflystudioderby.blogspot.com). Weather permitting.

## July 10-13 Sunny Corner Days

The Sunny Corner Arena and Ball Field will be the central hub for the celebrations, hosting a range of exciting events. The action kicks off on **Thursday evening** with a **parade through Sunny Corner**. The always popular **SloPitch Tournament** begins **Friday, July 11** evening with play continuing Saturday, finals on Sunday. **Saturday, July 12**, starts with a delicious breakfast and Farmer's Market from 8am to 11am at the



arena. Saturday also brings **Family Fun Day** from 12pm to 3pm, petting zoo, inflatables, face painting, mini putt and more! A **dance featuring "Spoiled Rotten"**, rounds out the day at 10pm. Sunday, don't miss the Sunny Corner Smelts minor baseball games and the slo-pitch semis & finals. New this year is the exciting **pickleball tournaments** 9am (competitive) and 2pm (recreational) For full festival details visit the Sunny Corner Days Facebook page.

## July 20: Cold Plate Dinner

Enjoy a variety of food including Turkey, Ham, Potato Salad, Cole slaw, Desserts

and more. Dine-in or Take Out from 4-6 pm. Please call to reserve your plate(s) Peggy 506-623-8191 or Lois 506-836-7647 or 506-627-6852. Tuadook Village Community Centre, 2282 Hwy 420, Sillikers. See Our Facebook Page for more events and details.

**August 14-17 Present Laughter – Comedic Play** CM Productions presents Noel Coward's classic comedy Present

Laughter (7pm) on the MVHS stage. At the center of his own universe sits matinee idol Garry Essendine: suave, hedonistic and too

old, says his wife, to be having numerous affairs. His line of harmless, infatuated debutantes is largely tolerated but playing closer to home is not. Just before he escapes on tour to Africa the full extent of his misdemeanors is discovered. And all hell breaks loose. Present Laughter features a who's who of MVHS Drama alumni including Drew Sobey, Herschell Berggren, Brianna Aube, Matt Sutherland, Raean Reynolds, Kate Barry, Bridget Perry, Trent Power, Taylor Banks, Franky Corcoran and honorary MV alumnus Naomi Wallace. Tickets are \$20 and can be reserved by calling/texting 625-2398 or purchased at the door.

## Aug 16: 3rd Annual Community Picnic & Washer Toss Tournament

Washer Toss, Axe Throwing, and Games for Kids. Hot dogs, Hamburgers, Pop and Water will be available for sale. Washer toss sign up - \$20 per team. Teams will be drawn at random. Prizes 1st place \$300, 2nd place \$200, and 3rd place \$100. Contact Lois at 506 836-7647 or 506 627-6852 to register or for more information. Tuadook Village Community Centre, 2282 Hwy 420, Sillikers. See our Facebook page for more events.

**Sept 20: Fall Market & Pie in the Face Fundraiser** Unique crafts, woodworking, gift ideas, baked goods, jams, pickles and

more at the market from from 10 am-12 pm. Free admission. Gift basket draw and 50/50. To reserve a table contact Karen at 506-586-0279.



**Pie in the Face fundraiser** 1-3 pm. Join us for a messy and exciting event. Who is going to get pied this year?! Pies will be thrown at local volunteers. Tuadook Village Community Centre, 2282 Hwy 420, Sillikers. See Facebook for more info.

## Wilson's Point Events

**July 19: Spirit Walk with Calum Lykan**, 6pm and 7:30pm

**July 26: Llamazing Adventures Under the Pines**, 11-3pm

**July 31: Tea with Intention-** Dr. Michelle Greenwell of the Cape Breton Tea company \$50/person, 11-3pm

**Aug 9: Pirates at the Point with the Grizzled Buccaneers**, 11-4pm

**Aug 26: Scottish Take-Away Tea with Celtic Fiddler Katherine Moller**, Scottish Athlete RJ Forbes, the Women of Wilson's Point and more, 11-4pm

**Sept 14: Sunday Scone Social**, 11-4pm

**Oct 11: Great Miramichi Haggis Hunt and Fall Fair**, 11-2pm

Wilson's Point, 8 Enclosure Rd, Derby Junction, Hwys 8 & 108. Tel: 506-627-0162. See Facebook page for more info and [www.wilsonspoint.com](http://www.wilsonspoint.com).

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The Village of Neguac, situated on the North shore of the Miramichi Bay, is the gateway to the Acadian Peninsula and the Oyster Hub of Atlantic Canada.

Here, you can swim in some of the warmest waters North of Virginia and enjoy the amenities of Hay Island; a boardwalk leading to a birdwatch tower, walking trails, floating docks, picnic tables, and a lighthouse. A trip to the local wharf will have you leaving with the freshest seafood around, and some great stories from local

fisherman.

Head over to Richelieu Municipal Park where the Savoie monument is located, commemorating the arrival of the first settlers of Neguac in 1757. While you're there, check out our canteen, Splash Pad, walking trails, and outdoor stage where you might catch local artists on our Musical Wednesdays.

## Festivals and Events

July 1: Canada Day Celebrations – Richelieu Municipal Park

July 3 to 5: Neguac Celebrates Summer

July 24 to 26: Neguac Country Festival

August 8 : Circus – “Éphémère, un cirque sous les nuages” – Richelieu Municipal Park

August 15: National Acadian Day

August 14 to 16: Festival Party du Champ

August 23 and 24: Esgenoôpetitj Traditional Pow Wow

August 28 to 31: Nashville à Lagacéville

October 5: Provincial Giant Pumpkin Festival

**Musical Wednesdays** Live Entertainment  
 6:30pm to 8:30pm at Richelieu Municipal Park

July 9: Gabi and Gerald

July 23: Susie and Don

August 6: Wild River

August 20: Michel Breau and Transistor

For more information on events: call 506 776-3950, visit [www.neguac.com](http://www.neguac.com) or the following two Facebook pages: Association des Loisirs St-Bernard Inc. and Village de Neguac – Officiel.

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# Celebrate Canada with The Villagers

Come and celebrate Canada with Miramichi's own choral group, the Villagers, along with Melissa Barry, Susan Butler, and the Miramichi Fiddlers. The show will feature **music made in Canada** like Joni Mitchell's "Both Side's Now," Gordie Lightfoot's "In The Early Morning Rain," and Ian Tyson's "Four Strong Winds".

Also included is the Canadian version of "This Land Is Your Land," or should it be OUR land, a Canadian arrangement of Green, Green, and a harmonized interpretation of "Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen.

In addition, the song, "Canadian Pacific," will have audience members experience a ride on a train trip through Canada: speeding up, slowing down and then in full



The Villagers, photo by John McFarlane.

throttle as they move across this beautiful country of ours.

The show wraps up with Susan Butler's "Proud to Be Canadian," accompanied by the Villagers, and a moving rendition of "This Is Our Canada," with an awesome ending. We invite you and your patriotism as we celebrate our Canada, Strong and Free!

Join us at the Kin Centre at 7pm on **Monday, June 30, 2025, on the eve of Canada Day**. Admission is a free-will offering, along with a 50/50 draw in support of Harvest House.

Come and enjoy the concert as you get your parking spots early for the annual Canada Day firework display, and all its splendor, behind the Kin Centre, after the show. All are welcome!

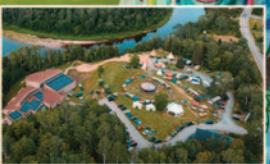
## Metepenagiag Powwow

Friday, July 25, 2025 11AM  
Sunday, July 27, 2025 12PM

The Metepenagiag Powwow is a journey into Mi'kmaq culture – colourful, spiritual, musical, and rooted in community.

- Sunrise Ceremonies
- Grand Entry
- Traditional Dance
- Host Drum and Invited Drums
- Vendors - Artisans and Food

Children and all ages participate freely. No alcohol or drugs allowed.



Metepenagiag Heritage Park  
2156 Micmac Road, Red Bank, NB  
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[www.CanadasIrishFest.ca](http://www.CanadasIrishFest.ca)





# CITY HALL UPDATES

## CANADA DAY DRONE & FIREWORK SHOW SPECTACULAR

**JULY 1ST | 10:30 PM**  
**MIRAMICHI AIRPORT – AIRPORT DRIVE**

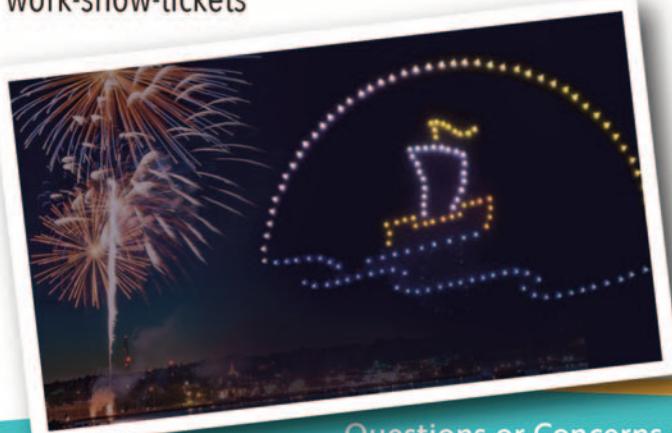
This Canada Day, prepare to be dazzled as Miramichi's night sky transforms into a canvas of light and motion!

At 10:30 PM, the city will host a spectacular drone light show, offering a modern twist on traditional celebrations. Hundreds of synchronized drones will dance across the sky, creating intricate patterns and animations set to a soundtrack of iconic Canadian music. This mesmerizing display promises a safe, eco-friendly, and unforgettable experience for all ages. In between the two drone displays, fireworks will light up the night sky.

- ★ All ages welcome
- ★ Free parking available
- ★ Bring your blankets and lawn chairs

Don't miss this cutting-edge celebration of Canada Day—an inspiring visual story in the stars!

FREE tickets available now (One ticket per vehicle) – reserve yours on Eventbrite at <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/miramichi-drone-firework-show-tickets>



## COMMEMORATIVE COINS

The City of Miramichi Commemorative Coins are available to purchase at Miramichi City Hall, 141 Henry Street, Miramichi. Each coin is \$25. There are a limited number available for sale.

The coins feature a logo designed for 30th Anniversary and a drawing created by Indigenous artist, Pauline Young for the 200th Commemoration of the Great Miramichi Fire. The drawing features the Rankin House and captures the story of Alexander Rankin who provided shelter to the Indigenous people of the area, particularly to the Natoaganeg First Nation during the fire. The story is featured on a storyboard at Rankin Park.



# Keeping His Dream Alive: Family, Faith, and Fixing Cars

## Sarkis Collision Center Celebrates 50th Anniversary

When Nazih and Rose-May Sarkis opened a small body shop on Dalton Avenue in 1976, they weren't just launching a business — they were laying the foundation for a family legacy.

Fifty years later, Sarkis Collision Center stands as a testament to that legacy — a trusted, family-run business known for integrity, craftsmanship, and unwavering customer care. From a modest 2,400-square-foot shop to a beautifully renovated 12,000-square-foot facility, the shop's journey is one of resilience, love, and community.

Nazih Sarkis came to Canada from war-torn Lebanon in the early 1970s, bringing with him a passion for repairing vehicles — a trade he began in 1974. While working in Toronto, Ontario, he met Rose-May, a Lagaceville native. "After just a few dates, I knew this was no 'hook and release,'" she laughs. "You know the song — and what a trip!"

The couple planned to travel and work across Canada, but a long road trip home to New Brunswick changed everything. "When we got to Montreal, Nazih thought we were almost there. By the time we reached Bathurst, he was ready to turn back," Rose-May recalls. "I fibbed and told him



Rose May and Nazih Sarkis

it wasn't much farther. In the end, he couldn't imagine taking me away from my family — and decided to stay."

Nazih started working at Flett Motors, where he earned his certification in August, 1974. By 1975, he was ready to strike out on his own. "He always wanted to work for himself," says Rose-May. She helped in the early days by cleaning cars and handling various duties while raising their four children: Allain, Nada, Adam and Georges.

From the time they were just five or six years old, Allain and Adam were drawn to the shop, eager to learn and be part of their father's world. Today, as co-owners of Sarkis Collision Center, they carry forward his passion and

dedication to quality with pride. "They each inherited their father's deep love for cars and a true commitment to making them shine," says their mother. Adam's wife Stephanie, their son Nazih, and brother Georges are also part of the team. It's a true family business, and one their father would be deeply proud of.

In 1995, Nazih passed away at just 46 years old. Rose-

Below: Sarkis Collision Center received the 2024 Maritime Performance Group Leadership & Excellence Award



May, then a mother of four teenagers, took over the business. “You just take it one day at a time,” she says. “Giving up was never an option.” Her perseverance, grounded in faith and family, helped the business grow despite hardships — including a devastating fire in 1998.

After the fire destroyed the original shop, a family friend, David Goodfellow, generously loaned them his building so they could keep operating. “We will always be grateful to him,” says Rose-May.

Today, Rose-May is a proud grandmother of five: Adam’s children Nazih (named in honor of his grandfather), and twins Ally and Lyla, and Nada’s son Malik and daughter Ellie Rose.

The family’s continued dedication was recently

recognized when Sarkis Collision Center received the 2024 Maritime Performance Group Leadership & Excellence Award — voted by industry peers for outstanding leadership and exceptional performance in the collision repair industry.

“Since the passing of my late husband, Nazih, his vision continues to inspire everything we do,” says Rose-May. “As I embark on this next chapter with my family, we remain dedicated to honoring his legacy — always focusing on quality, integrity, and the exceptional service our customers expect.”

As Rose-May puts it best:

“You meet everybody here... by accident.”



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# A Question of Faith

## The Miramichi Fire

by Doug Dolan

### October 07, 1825 7:30 am

The dawn cracked like a scar on the cloudless sky. Dew lay miserly on the few remaining plants. It had been four months since rain had fallen. John Johnson tended to his duties as Sextant of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Bushville. The small but dedicated congregation had erected the building in the spring and summer of 1825. It sat prominently on a knoll close to the river. John was honoured when he was asked to oversee its maintenance and operation. He and his wife Ann had lived in the Miramichi Valley for a decade. They had made the dangerous journey from their native Scotland with two sons, William and Charles. The boys now fifteen and thirteen were joined by three brothers and a sister (Margaret). The period leading to and a year after the voyage from Edinburgh had been unseasonably cold with constant rain. The crops failed forcing the Johnsons and thousands of other Europeans to escape famine. A volcanic eruption on Mount Tambora, Indonesia the previous year had spread a layer of ash across the globe, blocking out the sun for months. The memory of that uncertain period had dissolved with the promise of a brighter future for the young couple and their children.

### 11:00 am

John answered a loud rapping on the vestry door. A terror-stricken resident grabbed John's coat and pulled him outside pointing wordlessly to the western horizon. The azure blue sky was erased by a coal black cloud thirty kilometers wide and towering kilometers high. His first thoughts were the safety of Ann and the children. He raced to their home and directed William and Charles to gather the bedding and soak it in the river. He and the boys worked to place the wet materials on the wooden roof. Ann was busy distracting the younger children, while leading them to the cellar. He reasoned their stone house would not be a source of ignition. If the fire jumped across the

one quarter mile river, they would be secure in the earthen crawlway.

### 2:00 pm

Word had come from Nelson that Malcom's Chapel; the Catholic Church had been destroyed. In a miraculous turn of events, the rest of the community was spared. Several ships loaded with masts bound for England had been caught in a rain of flame and were charred to their water lines. Like most Miramichi residents, John Johnson

had no experience with forest infernos. But he had studied the historical documents brought from congregants' homes to make a church library.

One of the papers described previous incidents which occurred in the region. He recalled with fear and some hope one of the characteristics of a big blaze. Crowning is a product of the firestorm. The superheated embers are carried at extended intervals often giving the perception that a structure has combusted spontaneously. Johnson prayed fervently that this phenomenon would spare him and his family. John looked across to Rosebank and Douglastown. He wept as he witnessed a single sheet of flame nearing forty metres in height and

kilometres in length bore down on the area. Across the half-kilometre distance, he heard the shrieks of terror from man and beast as they sought a common refuge in the water.

John began to realize that the Bushville side was not experiencing the worst effects.

His thoughts turned to how he might save his church. He ran the short distance to the church where earlier he had placed buckets of water around and sheets provided by neighbours. He had placed a ladder high enough to gain access to the peak. Johnson spent the remainder of the night laying the wet materials across the roof. The valiant effort worked and as the grey smoke filled dawn broke, he felt a moment of joy and triumph. As the black curtain



Illustration by Terry Matthews

diminished, John recognized a fellow parishioner half stumbling up the wagon path from the direction of John's home. His clothing burnt and face blackened. His voice was strangled from acrid smoke as he told Johnson the unimaginable news that Ann and three of their beautiful children were dead.

### October 08, 1825, 8:00 am

John Johnson looked over the site of his massive defeat. His lovely Ann and three of their children were gone forever. Trapped in their stone house, they suffocated as the waves of flame stole any oxygen in the area. The remaining children had been taken to a temporary hospital. The sound of the painful screams calling for their mother reverberated in his head. Mercifully they later died from their injuries.

Conversations with his God, when he pondered risking the safety of family to save his Church, left him wanting. Johnson died alone six months later in February 1826. Ann and her children are buried in the cemetery of St. Paul's Anglican Church, which stands intact today, a conflicted symbol of religious devotion and the recognition of the price one person had paid for it.

### Conclusion

Statistics help explain the scope of the 1825 Miramichi fire. Sixteen thousand square km (6,000 sq. miles) of forest land was burned in an area extending approximately 150 km (90 miles) northeast of Fredericton. The track of the fire moved to Newcastle, Douglastown and Bartibogue on the west and Nelson, Bushville, Chatham and Napan to the east. One hundred and sixty people died. Nine hundred homes and structures were destroyed.

Over the years, an idealized version of the recovery has become a legend. The Miramichi is portrayed as a Phoenix, rising from the ashes, leading to the re-emergence of a prosperous region. The truth is somewhere in the middle. The

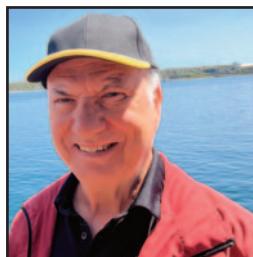
town of Newcastle suffered the most deaths and property loss followed closely by the hamlet of Douglastown. The initial fear that 3,000 woodsmen spread throughout the Miramichi Valley had perished was proven unfounded.

In addition, there was a common belief that the maelstrom had consumed all the lands. That also was overstated. Crown and spot fires leave sections of the forest untouched. A survey five years after the fire concluded that a large portion of marketable timber remained intact.

These notations do not diminish the courage and determination of the Miramichi people. Many immigrants decided to remain and rebuild their independent communities and eventually their commitment to a united city over a century later. As time went on, the population of the Miramichi Valley did not match the growth of neighbouring counties but it gradually recovered. The export of solid white pine masts to the British Navy dropped. That was a result of negative press more than a reduction in fibre availability. The vacuum was taken up as Britain expanded its colonial possessions, needing more ships and supplies. And so, the lapse in exports was short term.

The Miramichi region eventually assumed its place in the province of New Brunswick and the Confederation of Canada. The fire of October 7, 1825, has become a footnote of our history. The strength and determination of the people continue to grow.

**NOTE:** The author gratefully acknowledges Alan MacEachern's book, *The Miramichi Fire: A History* as a source document.



Doug Dolan was born and raised in Miramichi. He has published two books, "Stories From the River" and "The Mill". His third book, "Christmas on the River," will be released in November.

Terry Matthews is a well-known and recognized local artist

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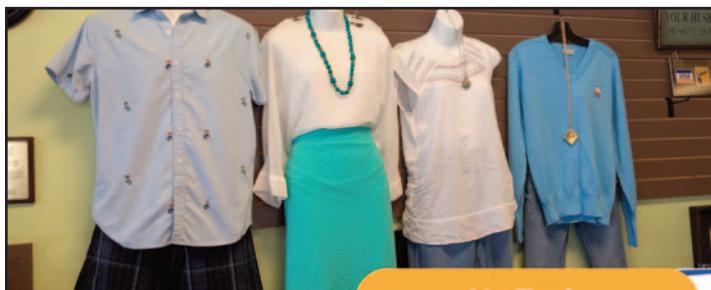
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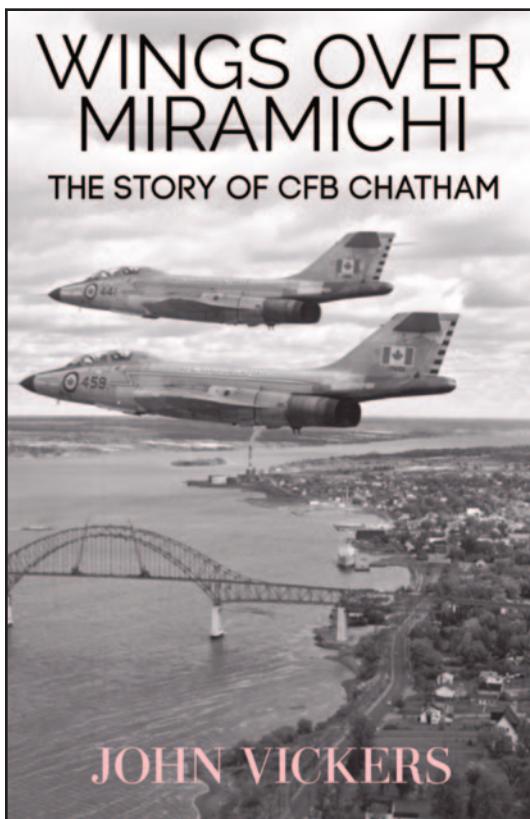

# Wings Over Miramichi: A Story That Belongs to Us All

By John Vickers

There are some places that leave a mark long after the noise has faded. For the people of Miramichi, CFB Chatham was one of those places. It was more than a military base—it was a neighbour, a workplace, a source of pride, and, for many, a way of life.

My new book, *Wings Over Miramichi: The Story of CFB Chatham*, begins during the Second World War, when the Royal Canadian Air Force purchased farmland on the outskirts of Chatham. The goal was to build an airfield to support the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan by preparing young pilots for the growing dangers overseas. What began as a wartime necessity became the foundation for a lasting presence in the region.

The story that follows spans over fifty years of Miramichi history—from open-cockpit biplanes carrying student pilots learning the basics of flight, to the steady growl of CF-5 Freedom Fighters flying low and fast over the river decades later. It's a history marked by change, growth, and a deepening bond between a military



base and the town beside it.

There are chapters on the Cold War years, the arrival of the first jet aircraft, and the technological changes that reshaped military aviation. But this isn't just a book about aircraft or operations. *Wings Over Miramichi* is also about community. It includes stories from Curtis Park, where families lived

side by side through constant postings, new neighbours, and the shared routines of military life. It's about childhoods shaped by Teen Town dances and CANEX snack runs, about parents juggling base work and family life, and about the strong connections between service members and civilians. Annual open houses, summer airshows, parades, and community events added to that mix.

The closing chapters follow the winding down of base operations and the effort to preserve what remained. Many of the buildings may be gone or repurposed, but the stories remain. They live on in reunions, in photo albums, in conversations around kitchen tables, and in the memories shared online by those who once called the base home.

For anyone who lived through those years—or who simply wants to understand a major part of Miramichi's past—*Wings Over Miramichi* offers a detailed and personal look at a time when the skies above told a much bigger story.

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# Retired Teachers Flood Miramichi

by Myra Mitchie, NBSRT/MARTA Staff Reporter

How's she all goin'? "The Very Best," I hope.

Some 157 retired teachers flooded into the Miramichi on May 13 & 14 to attend the NBSRT (New Brunswick Society of Retired Teachers) 50th AGM held at the Rodd Miramichi and hosted by MARTA, the Miramichi Area Retired Teachers Association. An additional 16 guests joined members for tours and social events. And boy, did they all whoop'er up and drive'er!

Festivities kicked off on Tuesday, May 13, with a slough of activities, followed in the evening by a Meet & Greet and a "Miramichi Night" of entertainment. Emcee, Dale MacRae kicked'er off and the host, yours truly (a.k.a. John Bosma), invited all the CFA's (Come From Aways) to become Honorary Miramichi citizens as part of the first-ever "Miramichi Whoop-In" held on The River.

The Honourable Francis Peabody, founder of Chatham (a.k.a. Donnie O'Neill), read out the steps for becoming an official Honorary Miramichi Citizen. First, they had to sing, in whole or in part, a Miramichi Folk Song, ending in a rompin' Miramichi Whoop. Next, they had to consume a Miramichi Libation (River Rum) or a reasonable facsimile of their choosing. Finally, they had to touch a Miramichi Log with one or both hands.

After completing all three steps, 52 CFAs were awarded an Honorary Miramichi Whoop-In Certificate, duly signed by our Mayor, Adam Lordon and Miramichi citizen, Myra Mitchie. They sang their hearts out as they all crooned the chorus of "With the Fly Dope On" and ended with a whoop that could be heard in Newcastle, if not in Blackville. In fact, the folk song they bellowed out recalled the 1956 visit to Ted Williams' fishing camp in Blackville by movie star, Marilyn Monroe and her new husband, Joe DiMaggio. Imagine!

Forty years later, in 1996, in an interview with CBC's Costas Halevrezos, the cook at that camp admitted that



Frances Peabody (Donnie O'Neill) and Folk Singer, Myra Mitchie (John Bosma) at the Miramichi Whoop-In

Marilyn Monroe had been there and swore up and down that: "She was just as pretty with the fly dope on."

*Come listen to these verses, They're all true don't you know: The time they saw a movie star, Her name, Marilyn Monroe. She went fishin' on the Miramichi In six days she was gone. Said the cook, "She's just as pretty with the fly dope on!"*

The evening continued with a very successful School House Trivia game, followed by live music and a lotta' dancin'. In keeping with the specific demographic, the night ended well before midnight. No glass slippers were left behind.

The event continued the next day with the official opening. Gretna Green School Grade 5 student, Aliyah Hossin, lead the attendees in the singing of "O Canada" followed by wonderful remarks by Deputy-Mayor Paddy Quinn and ASD-N Superintendent Dean Mutch. Then it was on to the business meeting which included several speakers. Members of the MARTA Planning Committee distributed the 162 page book, commissioned by the Committee, entitled "The Bell Rang 50 Years Ago: A Brief History of the NBSRT" to the delight of each attendee. A Buffet Luncheon was later served while Miramichi's very own talented violinist, Melissa Barry, provided the guests with some really great Bee-YOU-dee-ful background music. And the meal was some good too. The day then ended with the second part of the business meeting.

In the end, the event was proclaimed successful by many



Bass Rod winner Lucy McLaughlin with Grant Hendry (L) and Rick Hayward (R)

who attended: "Loved the Friendliness & Fellowship - Excellent event. Bravo to the planning team! - In a word, the whole experience was 'Awesome' - A great time! I love the 'Chi! - Five stars to the organizing committee! - Such a Great Experience! - What an amazing Miramichi experience!"

NBSRT Past-President Bob Fitzpatrick praised the Miramichi team for organizing a remarkable 50th Anniversary AGM, highlighting the warm hospitality, well-organized tours, and outstanding volunteer efforts that made all attendees feel welcomed and valued. He especially noted the success of the entertainment, the memorable opening ceremonies, and the thoughtful keepsake book, expressing deep gratitude and pride in being a Miramichier.

And our thanks go out to the Rodd



Tours Coordinator, Charlotte Loggie confers with Chairman Dale MacRae.



NBSRT Certificate of Merit went to Marjorie Sinclair, presented by President Rod Campbell

Miramichi Manager and staff, the 20 corporate sponsors, the 157 AGM attendees, MARTA President Charlotte Casey, and the Planning Committee Executive and Event Coordinators who included: Dale MacRae, John Bosma, Eleanor Watt, Patsy Kingston, Marjorie Sinclair, Trudy Underhill, Mary Alice Ahern, Connie MacRae, Peter Gadd, Lois Gilliss, Bob Gillis, Charlotte

Loggie, Andy Clark and so many other MARTA and retired teacher volunteers. Let me tell ya: All them volunteers were some hard work'n!

She was a Bee-YOU-dee-ful event on The River!

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# Campbell Family Reunion 2025

## Honouring Our Roots

From August 1–3, 2025, descendants of *John Campbell and Mary MacIntosh* will gather in Miramichi and Miscou Island, New Brunswick, for a meaningful celebration of family, history, and connection. This special reunion commemorates the journey of our ancestors who first settled in *Little Shippegan* in 1817. In the 1850s, some of their children moved inland to the Miramichi area, notably along the *Chaplin Island Road*, laying down roots that many of us continue to trace today.

Surnames such as **Campbell, Blakely, Duncan, McKay, Sobey, Hare, Walsh, Allison, Baisley, Hosford, and Waye** are now proudly carried by their descendants. This gathering offers a unique opportunity for generations of family to come together, learn about our shared past, and build lasting connections for the future.

The weekend will begin on **Friday, August 1**, with a scenic **boat tour on the Miramichi River**, a fitting way to set the tone for the reunion.

On Saturday, August 2, the historic *Seamen's Hospital* will host a day of connection and learning. The schedule includes a casual **meet-and-greet**, a **genealogical presentation**, and a **family history panel discussion**. A **group photo** will capture the moment, followed by an evening **banquet** where stories will be shared over a meal.

Sunday, August 3, offers an optional **guided bus tour to Little Shippegan and Miscou Island**. This day will include visits to meaningful sites, including the Campbell House, old cemeteries, and the iconic Miscou Lighthouse. The tour includes **lunch**, with an opportunity to hear stories from local descendants. Those who prefer may drive themselves and still participate in the day's activities.

While the **reunion itself is free (1 - 4:30 pm August 2)**, there are modest costs for the boat tour (\$25), Saturday banquet (\$50), and Sunday bus tour (\$60). Children under 12yrs eat free at the banquet.



To confirm your spot, RSVP to [evan.campbell@unb.ca](mailto:evan.campbell@unb.ca) or 506-424-0184 by **July 1**, especially if you plan to attend the boat tour, banquet or bus tour, which requires a minimum of 40 participants.

Let's come together to celebrate our enduring legacy, reconnect with cousins near and far, and make memories that will last for generations. We can't wait to see you there!



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# When in the Woods



By Gail Collette

A walk in the woods can be even more enjoyable when you consider a few tidbits from Peter Wohlleben's non-fiction book, *The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate*.

It may not be surprising that most trees are connected through their root system. But beech trees will even help an ancient tree stump by "pumping sugar ... to keep it alive."

Root connections among trees are especially strong in an undisturbed forest. But trees that are planted (forestation) do not seem to network. They "suffer from isolation," as does a solitary tree unprotected from wind and bad weather.

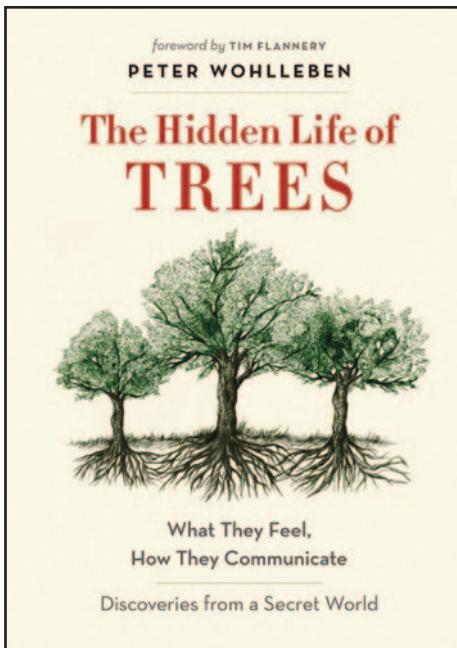
Scientists say that many tree species can communicate through smell, taste, and fungi.

A warning gas (ethylene) is released when an animal tries to snack on an umbrella thorn acacia. "The scent is carried to trees on the breeze" and alerts woods nearby. The animals look for food elsewhere.

Oak and other types of trees that have aphids can "taste" the saliva of the insect. The tree releases pheromones to attract the aphid's predators "that eagerly devour the insects."

Fungal connections can extend the spread of a tree's root system. Normally a tree's root system spans twice as far as the tree's crown.

A web of fungus can cover 100 acres and be a few



thousand years old. The fungus creates a "wood wide web" (Dr. Suzanne Sumard, 1997).

The fungi web passes along vital nutrients and information about drought, insects, etc. But, fungi demand up to a third of the trees total production of sugars in return for their services. Some fungi kill some trees, like saplings.

"Statistically speaking, each tree raises exactly one adult offspring to take its place." This is despite the tens of thousands of seedlings that a tree spreads. Animals love to eat tender branches.

Spruce trees in New Brunswick forests are well suited to severe winters. Their branches spread out to take in sun and rain. In winter the spruce let snow angle their branches down, so much of

the heavy white stuff can slide off the tree's straight shape.

The soil at the foot of trees holds "... more lifeforms ... than there are people on the planet." Trees take in carbon that becomes humus "deep in the soil."

Forests are "really a gigantic carbon vacuum that constantly filter out and stores this (carbon) component of the air." Over its lifetime a tree can "store up to 22 tons of carbon dioxide."

Nature organizes forests to protect themselves and help others as well.

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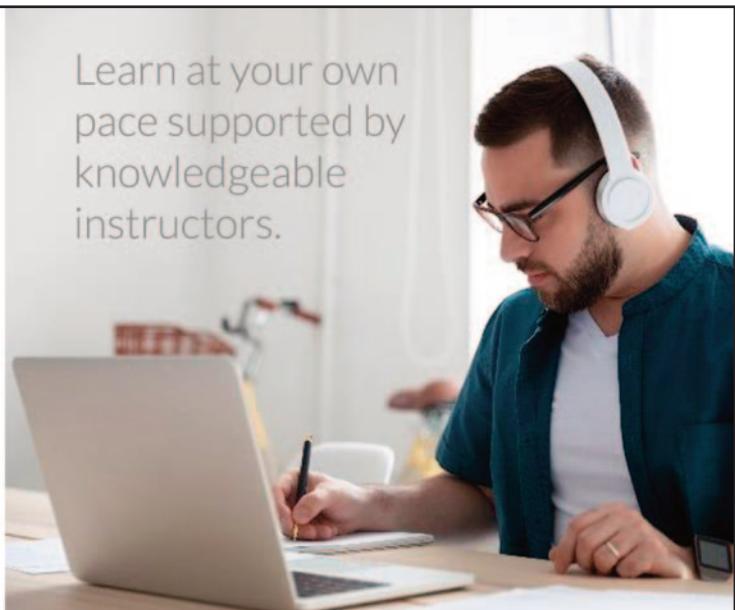
As of May 3, 2024 the GED program has been replaced by CAEC, the Canadian Adult Education Credential. **Your high school credits could count toward the CAEC.**



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# Young Hearts, Big Impact

## Shannex Honours Max Aitken Academy for Volunteer Week

Shannex Enhanced Care (Losier Hall and Bridgeview Hall nursing homes) have had a partnership with the Max Aitken Academy school since their opening in October 2019 and June 2020.

Over the years, hundreds of students have volunteered at the two homes. As part of their volunteering, the students engage in activities such as crafts, reading with residents, singing for the residents, visiting, and bringing Halloween treats.

Residents look forward to meeting the students and have developed meaningful connections with many of them. The most significant benefits of these visits are building trust, and respect for one another. This helps prevent ageism and encourages intergenerational connections.

Students from the Max Aitken Academy grade two French Immersion class joined residents of Losier Hall



and Bridgeview Hall as they presented a Volunteer Certificate to the school on behalf of Shannex.

The certificate recognizes the students' incredible volunteer contributions over the years and their continued involvement.



# Know Someone at Risk of Wandering? Project Lifesaver Can Help

By Paulette Arsenault

Project Lifesaver is a groundbreaking program designed to **protect individuals prone to wandering** due to cognitive conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and autism. Wandering is a common and dangerous behavior among those affected by these conditions, leading to potentially life-threatening situations. Project Lifesaver provides **wearable tracking devices** that enable caregivers and **Miramichi Ground Search and Rescue** (MGSAR) to swiftly locate missing individuals, significantly reducing search times and ensuring their safety.

Individuals with Alzheimer's and Autism often experience disorientation and may wander away from safe environments due to confusion or sensory overload. According to the Alzheimer's Association, an estimated **six out of ten** people with Alzheimer's will wander at least once. Similarly, research indicates that nearly **half of children with autism** are at risk of wandering, which poses grave dangers, particularly around bodies of water, traffic, or unfamiliar surroundings.

Project Lifesaver operates through a combination of radio frequency technology and trained ESS (Electronic Search Specialists) personnel. The program provides lightweight, wearable transmitters that individuals at risk of wandering can wear on their wrist or ankle. If a person wearing a device goes missing, caregivers can alert 911 and MGSAR, who use specialized receivers to track the unique signal emitted by the device.

**Project Lifesaver Miramichi** started in September 2024 with nine trained Electronic Search Specialists; we have since trained five new Electronic Search Specialists and are ready to accept new clients. The Project Lifesaver bracelet is offered to clients **free-of-charge** who are prone to wander. This includes maintenance and battery change every 45 days.

We currently have **10 active clients**, six living in Miramichi, and one each in Renous, Derby Junction, in Maple Glen, and Black River Bridge. Six are children with a form of Autism, and four are seniors living with cognitive impairment.

MGSAR is looking forward to expanding this program in the Greater Miramichi area and eventually include our partners from Acadie Chaleur Ground Search and Rescue. Social Services is very involved in the promotion of the project and are sponsoring registered clients.

If you have a loved one who requires constant supervision and has the potential to wander contact

MGSAR at [infoprojectlifesaver@mgsar.ca](mailto:infoprojectlifesaver@mgsar.ca). Project LifeSaver will help you.

Miramichi Ground Search and Rescue membership is composed exclusively of **volunteers**, women and men of all ages. MGSAR is always looking for new recruits, if you are interested, please contact us at [join@mgsar.ca](mailto:join@mgsar.ca)



MGSAR has trained Electronic Search Specialists to track the signal emitted by the Lifesaver bracelet.



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## Nursing Home Without Walls

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The Nursing Home Without Walls Miramichi team supports seniors in the Greater Miramichi area. Our dedicated team helps with program applications, conducts in-home social visits, organizes Alzheimer's support groups, and performs telephone check-ins.

If you're a senior interested in learning more, volunteering with us, or partnering with us, we'd love to hear from you! Contact our team at **506-773-4214** or **NHWWMiramichi@shannex.com**.

There is no cost to participate.

**Join our Alzheimer's Support Group on the first Tuesday of each month at Losier Hall, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**



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# Community Tidbits



**Allison Furlotte** (above left) presented **Francis Beaulieu** (right) with a violin recently at the Seniors Friendship Centre on Morrison Lane. The violin was a family heirloom, passed down from Allison's grandfather to his father, and then to him in 1949 when his father passed. He played it a few times but never mastered it, and now at 95 years of age he wanted to gift it to someone who would appreciate it. He knew Francis to be a talented musician, still young enough to enjoy it in his early 80's.

Allison is a retired Mining Safety Engineer, veteran of the Korean War, and member of the Canadian Guard. He can often be seen mowing lawns for other seniors.

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**Aug 20: Mug Rugs and Intro to Rug Hooking** with Shelley Clark \$50/person, 11-2pm

**Aug 27: Autumn Appliquéd Bowl Filler Pillows** with Shelley Clark \$40/person, 11-2pm

**Sep 3: Crazy for Ewe** needle felted landscape with Shelley Clark \$40/person, 11-2pm

**Sep 16: Water-colour painting** with Cathleen Richards-Green, \$45/person, 1-4pm

**Sep 24: Book paper Pine trees** with Shelley Clark \$35/person, 11-2pm

**Oct 1: Framed Button Pumpkin Art** with Shelley Clark \$35.00/person, 11-2pm

**Oct 15: Introduction to Glass Mosaics** with Louis Gignac \$95.00/person, 10-4pm

**Oct 22: Frazzled for Christmas** with Gill Wallace \$40/person, 11-2pm

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# In a Kid's Eye View

By Suzanne Major PhD

Summer is a special time of year for kids. School is out and there is no need to strive, to achieve and to excell. It's a time when kids are fine just as they are. They don't have to meet teachers and educators expectations and live up to their parents dreams. They get to take some distance from being in the precarious state of having to do better, reach the next stage and have the right answers. They can take some time to answer their own needs instead of responding to the expectations of others. They can explore at their leisure and experiment at their own pace. They can hear themselves thinking, recognize their emotions and define their feelings. Although the summer days they can discover themselves as they measure up to experiences and events. They can live their lives being aware of the present. The here and now instead of thinking about the future. And being in the real world instead of the virtual world.

They are the only ones who know what they are looking at when their eyes are focused on a scenery. The only ones who know what they are listening to when they hear words, sentences or sounds. What they are tasting or smelling, what their touch is revealing or what their prehension of the outside world is telling them. They control what goes into the space that is created in their mind when they encounter people,

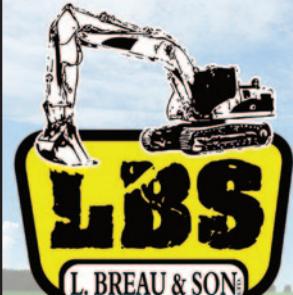
fauna, flora, weather, environments, experiences or events. But mostly what inhabits this intimitate space of theirs is secret. A secret place and secret thoughts that blissfully escape the scrutiny of others to carefully structure developing souls.

Summer is a time to live in the present and enjoy being alive. A time to see new things and meet new people. A time to notice sunrises and sunsets, blooming flowers and nesting birds. It's a time for kids to enjoy the quiet and peacefull state of being fine as they are.

Below: Oil painting by SuzMajor. Photography by Christian Cailliau.



  
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# From the Ashes: Honouring the Great Fire of 1825 Through Art and Story

Two handsome Miramichiers, Herb Curtis of Keenan Siding and myself, Bernie Colepaugh of Renous have put together a **volume of art and literature** to commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Great Miramichi Fire of 1825. *From the Ashes* includes work from a wide variety of sources, some published long ago, and some never published before.

The story, “**Two Loves**,” written by James Hannay, was published in The New Brunswick Magazine in 1905. It is a truly wonderful story, a tale of love and triumph emerging from tragedy.

One very prominent person, Sir Howard Douglas, the Lieutenant- Governor of New Brunswick in 1825, has a chapter devoted to him in this book. Considered the hero of the Great Miramichi Fire, he is remembered by the naming of Howards, near Blackville and Douglastown within the city of Miramichi.

Six dramatic poems, penned between 1825 and 2025 are included in the book along with 18 new works of art by Miramichi artists, all created specifically for this book.



Flames Dancing at Water's Edge, painting by Terry Matthews, one of several new works of art featured in the book, *From the Ashes*.

This is an all-Miramichi book, bringing together writers, poets, photographers, artists, storytellers, and printers to help ensure the Great Fire of 1825 is honoured and remembered by generations to come.

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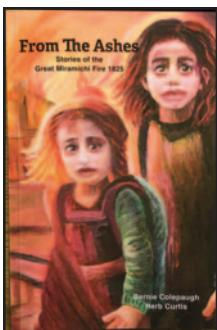
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## Book Launch for *From the Ashes*

There will be a book launch and signing at the Newcastle Library (100 Fountain Head Lane) on Saturday, **July 5**, from 2 till 4 pm, and again at Mill Cove Coffee (144 Newcastle Blvd) on Sunday, **July 6**, from 2 till 4 pm. Artwork from the book will be on

display at these and at other commemorative events scheduled throughout the year.

Copies of the book will also be available from the authors. Bernie Colepaugh can be reached at 506-625-3544; Herb Curtis at 506-457-2021.

Cover artwork by Gloria Savoie.

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# Photo Submissions

If you have photos or tidbits to share, we always welcome your submissions. Send high resolution jpg's to [submit@mcgmedia.net](mailto:submit@mcgmedia.net). Remember to include your name for the photo credit and the location where the photo was taken or description of the subject matter. Send in submissions to the **fall issue by September 5**.



Roses at Bartibog Church, photo by Bonnie Coughlan



Walking trails along the river, photo by Edna Trevors



Whispers of Tranquility - Oils - Cathleen Richards-Green - [www.cathleenrichards.art](http://www.cathleenrichards.art)



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**Top left:** Bobolink **Top right:** Cedar Waxwing eating apple blossoms. Photos taken at RiverTrail Orchard & Farm in Millerton by Phil Riebel. [www.philriebephoto.com](http://www.philriebephoto.com) Facebook: [@philriebelphotography](https://www.facebook.com/philriebelphotography)



Chipmunk in his hidey hole amidst the purple columbines, photo by Bruce Harrison



Friendly chipmunk by Stephen L Hachey, taken on a Sony Cyber Shot 20.1 mega pixels with a fixed 35x zoom lens.



Three locally made quilts were donated to the Vondy House Hospice by the Friends of Seamen's Hospital Craft Group. Pictured here with one of the quilts are Suzanne Matchett, Nurse Manager of Vondy House, and Judy Vautour, quilter and member of Friends of Seamen's Hospital Craft Group.

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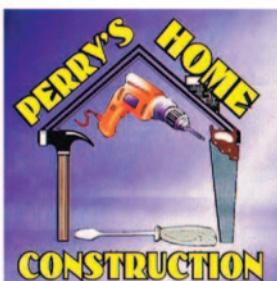
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