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Fall Issue 2025

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Barnaby River in Autumn
Photo by Laura Harrison



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Miramichi PALS Camp Helps Children Thrive in Reading and Physical Fitness

Submitted by Miramichi Regional Multicultural Association

This summer, children in Grades 1 to 4 headed back to school as more confident readers and more physically active, thanks to the highly successful PALS Camp hosted by the Miramichi Regional Multicultural Association (MRMA) in partnership with the Miramichi Rotary Club, Cradle to Career, United for Literacy (Frontier College), the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, NB Public Libraries, NB SEED, and Canada Summer Jobs.

Now in its fifth year, **PALS Camp**—short for Physical Activity Literacy and Sport—is an evidence-based summer program that uses the excitement of sports and active play to inspire a love of reading. Designed for children who may not yet meet reading expectations but have a strong interest in physical activity, the camp taps into the natural energy and enthusiasm of play to motivate learning.

Over the summer there were two, four week camps, where participants not only strengthened reading comprehension, confidence, and enjoyment of reading, but also developed physical literacy skills that will benefit them for life. By blending reading and sport, PALS Camp prevents summer learning loss and encourages healthy living.

Thanks to support from the Department of Tourism, Heritage and Culture, camp leaders received training in the fundamentals of sport, ensuring that literacy growth went hand-in-hand with physical skill development.

“Through regular physical activity, children develop social skills, imagination, and self-esteem. Unfortunately, not enough Canadian children are meeting daily physical activity guidelines. PALS Camp helps change that,” said Craig Silliker, camp spokesperson.

The 2010 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card notes that only 12% of Canadian children achieve the recommended 60 minutes of daily physical activity. PALS Camp ensures participants not only stay active during the summer but develop habits that last a lifetime.

Mike Mersereau of the Miramichi Rotary Club emphasized the club’s ongoing commitment to literacy:

“Investing in literacy is an investment in our community’s future. The ability to read and comprehend is essential for success, and supporting programs like PALS Camp gives our children the tools they need to thrive.”

The program’s success is a testament to the power of collaboration, with thanks to Saint Mary’s United Church, Chatham for providing facilities and to local businesses—including Beaubear Credit Union, Denim Wearhouse, and Right Choice Auto Parts—for their

generous financial contributions.

With the continued support of local organizations, government partners, and community donors, PALS Camp will keep helping Miramichi’s children grow stronger—both in mind and body.



Mike Mersereau of Miramichi Rotary Club being read to by a child in the camp.



Yuliia Kondratska President of the MRMA; Sam Johnston, MLA; and Catherine Flett President of the Miramichi Rotary Club, reading to the kids.

Cover Photo: A beautiful autumn day on the Barnaby river, photo by Laura Harrison.

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.

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Ad Design: Cindy MacLean

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Events

Find more local events at
www.mightymiramichi.com

Oct 18: An Autumn Haunting Like No Other

The cast and crew from Character Matters Miramichi are back at Wilson's Point for another haunting season. This year's tour offers sights and scenes much different and maybe even a little more bone chilling than before. Be sure to bring your flashlight and a friend. As always there's no guarantee you'll return the sane way as you arrived. No jump scares. Family Friendly. Tours will leave every 1/2 hour beginning at 7pm with the last tour at 9pm. Tickets can be purchased in the little church as you arrive. \$15 person cash, debit and credit available. Kids under 6 free, use your best judgement as it is still spooky. 8 Enclosure Rd.



Grisly events, Ghostly happenings, and many a foul deed. Sit back, relax, and once more enjoy this truly Scottish Halloween experience. We Dare You! At Wilson's Point Historic Site, 8 Enclosure Rd, 7-9pm. Tickets are \$15/person by reservation only and include light refreshments. Etransfer wilsonspointhistoricsite@gmail.com or drop by in person 9:30am-4:30pm to pay by cash debit or credit before noon Oct 18.

Oct. 26: Fall Gospel Music Festival

Tuadook Village Community Centre hosts this music festival featuring performances by local talent. Join us Sunday, from 6:30-8:30 pm. Light refreshments will be served. Admission is by donation at the door. 2282 Rt. 420, Sillikers.

Oct. 25: The Josie Foundation presents Jason Cyrus LIVE: Beyond Limits

An Evening of Wonder and Awakening. Get ready for an unforgettable evening of mind-blowing entertainment with Jason Cyrus! Join us for a show that will push the boundaries of your imagination. Witness incredible feats of mentalism and hypnosis that will leave you questioning what is truly possible. Don't miss out on this one-of-a-kind experience in support of The Josie Foundation! At the Miramichi Agricultural Exhibition Association, 24 Church Street, Miramichi, from 7:00 to 8:30pm. Tickets are \$40 and can be purchased by calling Lois Tozer at 506-836-7647 or 506-627-6852 or online at <https://tinyurl.com/josiefoundation>.

Oct 24: 7-9pm - Scottish Bedtime Stories not for the faint of heart

Back by Popular demand, Scottish Storyteller Calum Lykan once more invites you to hear the Tales of his Scotland. A country of Gruesome and



Nov. 2: The annual Remembrance Dinner Theatre & Song, on Nov. 2, at the Kin Centre, beginning at 5pm, will pay tribute this year to the Canadian Merchant Navy. The price for both dinner and performance is \$40 per person. Contact Susan Butler (506-622-1780) or online via susanbutler867@gmail.com. Please state any dietary concerns.

Nov. 11: Hot Turkey Dinner

Enjoy a hot turkey dinner and dessert for \$20 per person at the Tuadook Village Community Centre, 2282 Hwy 420, Sillikers. To reserve call Lois at (506)836-7647 or Peggy at (506) 623-8191. See Facebook page for details.

Nov 15: A Hidden Gem Christmas Tea and Concert Enjoy a traditional Scottish High Tea inside the little church at Wilson's Point with a private concert by a talented Celtic musician Jim Lahey and

a special appearances by Scottish storyteller Calum Lykan who will recite Christmas tales. A three tiered meal will be served with savoury and sweet options and a proper Scottish tea. \$65/person. Seating is limited to 24 guests. Morning is sold out. Afternoon seating 3:30pm- 5:30pm. Paid Reservation ONLY. Contact Tammy at 506-623-8066 during business hours or at wilsonspointhistoricsite@gmail.com to reserve your seat and get instructions for etransfers.

Dec. 30: New Years Eve Celebration

Mark your calendars and get your tickets early for New Years Eve with music by Riptide at Tuadook Village Community Centre, 2282 Rt 420, Silliker. Call Lois at (506) 836-7647 or Peggy at (506) 623-8191. See Facebook page for details.

Seamen's Hospital Activities

The Friends of Seamen's Hospital have resumed **weekly get-togethers for crafters**. Be it knitting, sewing, quilting or other crafts, we love it all. Come visit, learn something new or, teach something new. We meet on Wednesdays, 9:30am until about 3pm. Bring a project, your lunch and \$3.00 for the day. We are looking for new members to join us. All are welcome. Located at Seamen's Hospital, 12 Vye Street in Douglastown.

The popular **Auction 45 card games** are back at Seamen's Hospital. Join us on Tuesdays at 1pm. All are welcome.



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Horror at the Cove – October 25

by Character Matters Miramichi

This October, French Fort Cove once again becomes the ultimate stage for terror, with a cast of monsters assembled by Character Matters Miramichi. On Saturday, October 25th, the chilling spectre of the Headless Nun casts its shadow over the trails during Horror at the Cove—an immersive journey into 250 years of war, famine, disease, and unspeakable cruelty.

Before you enter, meet the keepers of the Cove's haunted history, as your guide begins to weave tales of centuries past: wars, whispers, and the eerie legend of Sister Marie herself. Once you enter her woods, keep close to the trail, because the shadows are surely alive.

This isn't just a walk in the woods—it's a plunge into one of history's darkest corners. Expect more scares, more



The Headless Nun awaits... do you dare enter the Cove at night?

characters, and more carnage than ever before. You'll be thrust face-to-face with the restless spirits who haunt the Cove: soldiers fallen in forgotten battles, victims of plague and starvation, and the desperate treasure seekers who were consumed by their own greed.

One thing is certain—this experience is not for the faint of heart.

Tours depart from the Over the Cove Zipline building at: 7:00, 7:30, 8:00, 8:30, 9:00, and 9:30 pm, with tickets priced at \$25 "a head." Follow Character Matters Miramichi on social media for advanced purchase details.

Part of Miramichi's Haunted Happenings, Horror at the Cove is more than an event—it's a reckoning!

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A Lifetime of Service:

John McKay Awarded Coronation Medal

Former mayor and Speaker of the New Brunswick Legislature, John McKay has been awarded the Coronation Medal by King Charles III. Nominated by New Brunswick's Premier as well as the Lieutenant Governor, the citation reads in part:

"Your dedication to your local community and to New Brunswick as a whole, has been exemplary. Your contributions have left an indelible mark, deserving of our utmost praise and admiration."

First elected to Newcastle Council in 1971 at the age of twenty two, John McKay has spent over half a century in service to his community, including twenty years as a Member of the Legislative Assembly, and fifteen years as councillor and mayor of both Newcastle and the City of Miramichi.

Elected as MLA in five elections, he has served longer in the Legislature than any of the thirty-seven Miramichi MLAs elected in the past seventy years.

McKay said that over the years many highlights have been achieved, including the construction the new bridge between Newcastle and Chatham Head, as a promise he made in the 1987 election.

In 1988 a proud achievement was reached with the announcement of the construction of Ritchie Wharf Historic Park. Other achievements during



Former Mayor and MLA, John McKay with his wife Sandra.

McKay's tenure include the reconstruction of Nelson Rural School, and North and South Esk Regional High School.

As MLA he strongly advocated for construction of Miramichi Regional Hospital and for City status for Miramichi.

McKay was elected mayor of Newcastle in 1986 with the largest majority since the town was incorporated in 1899.

Accomplishments include the

establishment of French Fort Cove Commission and Park, construction of the Miramichi Civic Centre, as well as the reduction of Newcastle's tax rate from the highest to the lowest of any town in the province.

Elected Mayor of the City of Miramichi in 2004, McKay and the city council worked together to improve the city, including holding the tax rate, and committing to the Open River Museum as well as the \$ 5,000,000 reconstruction of Water Street, Duke Street, and Waterford Green.

McKay said his proudest moment came in August 2005 when the city awarded Freedom of the City to over two hundred Miramichi War Veterans. McKay went on to be elected to the Board of Directors of Horizon Health Network. He continues to remain active in community affairs.

John McKay has been recognized many times for his dedication to community service. His awards include the 2024 Coronation Medal (The Crown), 2016 Davidson Medal (Highland Society), 2011 Paul Harris Medal (Rotary Club), 2009 Volunteer Medal (City of Miramichi), 2002 Queen Elizabeth Medal (The Crown), 1992 Confederation Medal (Government of Canada), and the 1977 Jubilee Medal (The Crown).

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



CITY HALL UPDATES

ARBEC WELLNESS CENTRE UPDATE

THE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT IS CONTINUING ON TIME WITH SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS BEING SEEN WEEKLY.

Here are a few of those items:

- Tile is progressing in the washrooms and showers.
- The last of the interior masonry is underway and will be completed by mid-September.
- Air handling units have been installed to support the arena and lobby areas. Mechanical services are progressing on schedule with roof top units installed.
- Exterior wall insulation is in place and siding has begun.
- The ice pad concrete was poured on August 28th.
- The arena ice plant has been delivered and is currently being installed.
- Mezzanine access stairs have been installed.

The Arbec Wellness Centre is scheduled to open in September 2026. It will offer an 1860-seat arena, walking track, double gymnasium, 25m/6 lane competition pool, leisure pool as well as enhanced community spaces - all of which incorporate sustainable and accessible design features.

The \$7 million fundraising campaign continues as well. If anyone is interested in donating, please contact Sandra Gauger by email at sandra.gauger@miramichi.org or at 506-623-2200.





Boom Road by Shawn Lawlor

Book Review by James M. Fisher

Taking place in the early 80s, *Boom Road* is a story composed primarily of a group of friends who grew up together and now work at Sutherland's mill. Jackie O'Connor is the main protagonist, a recently widowed man who is well-respected both at the mill and in the community. His best friend is Donny McGivney, who is married to Jackie's first cousin Claire. Jackie loves his dog Ruby, the Montreal Expos, beer and either skating or paddling on the Northwest Miramichi river, depending on the season. While he can drive, he prefers not to, using the Miramichi River as his personal road to work and neighbours.

Jackie also has a side-gig delivering bootleg alcohol for "Mean" Mike Emery by means of the river. Jackie never accepts cash but is paid in kind. Mean Mike also has a meaner sidekick, Kenny Somers who is his muscle for collecting debts.

The first 60 pages of the book are instrumental in introducing the reader to all the main characters, who, aside from Mike and Kenny, are very likeable, as most folks on the Miramichi are. They work hard, like to relax and are community minded. The story soon takes a turn when Donny becomes very sick after a night on the river poaching salmon. He calls in sick to work and when Jackie goes to visit him, he confesses that Claire has left him and that he has won the lottery, to the tune of \$500,000. Claire, as she has just left him, doesn't know about the winnings. Donny is unsure what to do.

"You lads didn't tell anyone I won the money, did ya?"



"Course not. What do you take us for?"

"Just with me and Claire splittin', I want to get that sorted before I collect the money."

Half a million dollars in 1982 is a lot of money, worth over 1.4 million in today's dollars. Can Jackie keep a secret from his cousin? Will Claire come back (Donny wants her to)? Will the money change their lives and prove to be more of a curse than a blessing?

Dark days are ahead for Jackie, Donny and the happy group of co-workers at the mill. Of course, "Mean" Mike and Kenny get wind of the windfall and are looking to get their hands on it.

The remainder of *Boom Road* is tension-filled and even palpably evil at times. My heart raced as I approached the climax of the story and while the ending

was a little too deus ex machina, *Boom Road* is a great debut from this Miramichi-born writer. With digs at Richard Hatfield and his ill-fated Bricklin car, the NDP and the local radio station and its stop-what-you-are-doing and listen noon-hour readings of the obituaries, Mr. Lawlor has made his novel a smile-inducing read as well, but you don't have to be from New Brunswick to enjoy *Boom Road*.

Shawn Lawlor is originally from Miramichi, New Brunswick, and currently lives in Halifax, Nova Scotia with his wonderful family.

James M. Fisher is editor-in-chief of The Seaboard Review of Books. He lives in Miramichi with his wife, Diane and their two fur babies, Eddie and Buster.



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Remembrance Dinner Theatre & Song - Nov. 2 Plays Tribute to the Canadian Merchant Navy

by Johannes Bosma

They talk of the Army, Navy and Air Force
Yet brave merchant sailors were on that
same course.

A thousand six hundred, their lives also
gave...

Here's to the sailors, crossing the waves;
Peace to the Fallen in deep water graves.

The Merchant Navy is this year's theme for the Remembrance Dinner Theatre & Song at the Kin Centre on Sunday, November 2, beginning at 5pm.

"The Battle of the Atlantic was not won by any navy or air force; it was won by the courage, fortitude and determination of the Canadian and Allied Merchant Navy." - Canadian Rear Admiral, Leonard Murray.

MVHS drama students and director Chris Matheson will present three short performances about the Canadian Merchant Navy, including the stories of five local lads - Thomas Reid, Bervel Vye, Captain David Philpott, Mug Malmberg and Jimmie Cassidy. The last two are remembered on the Harkins Academy Senior High School plaque, now displayed in Harkins Hall at Miramichi Valley High School.

In waters deep, the waves flow o'er
Merchant seamen on the ocean floor.
Their stamp upon each living mate
Who knew that this might be their fate.



Capt. David Philpott of the Canadian Merchant Navy, a local lad who will have his story told by the MVHS drama students.



Jimmie Cassidy of the Canadian Merchant Navy, also from the area, will be featured in the MVHS drama presentation.

Music performers will include The Villagers, Gerry Roberts with Aubrey Stewart, Gary Silliker and Susan Butler. Two original songs will be presented for the first time.

At great risk, Canadian Merchant vessels made 25,345 voyages from North America to Great Britain, carrying nearly 165 million tonnes of military and civilian supplies. German U-Boats attacked coastal shipping from the Caribbean to Halifax and all across the Atlantic.

The casualty rate was one in seven,

a higher percentage of total casualties than those suffered by any other branch of Canada's fighting services. Fifty-nine Canadian-registered merchant ships were sunk by the enemy and approximately 1600 Canadian Merchant Navy seamen, including eight women, lost their lives.

Historians have often highlighted the essential and dangerous role played by the officers and sailors of Canada's Merchant Navy during the Battle of the Atlantic. These men sailed across the ocean on defenceless, sometimes slow



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ships, stalked by enemy submarines. When a freighter or a tanker found itself cut off from the convoy, it became an easy prey. The men aboard ships that carried dangerous cargoes, such as gas or explosives, knew that, if attacked, their chances of survival were slim.

After the war, Canadian Merchant veterans were unrecognized for their crucial role in the war. In fact, they were denied veterans benefits and official recognition for decades. Merchant Remembrance Day on September 3 has been named as a day to recognize the contributions and sacrifice of Canadian Merchant Mariners.

On November 2nd at the Kin Centre, beginning at 5pm, we pay tribute to these brave sailors. By reservation only, Susan Butler will prepare another one of her delicious dinners of baked chicken, mashed potatoes, vegetables, tea or coffee and chocolate or white cake with boiled frosting. To indicate any dietary concerns, contact Susan by phone 622-1780 or email susanbutler867@gmail.com. The price remains at \$40 each.



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Why We're Needed More Than Ever

With Alzheimer's, dementia, and autism on the rise, searches are increasing. That's why we launched Project Lifesaver, equipping at-risk individuals with bracelets that help locate them quickly if they wander.

Teaching Kids to Stay Safe

Through AdventureSmart's Hug-a-Tree program, we give children outdoor safety skills that could save their lives.

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- 11 search operations
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- 136 community events

Volunteers Wanted

From field searches to fundraising and admin support—every skill counts. If you're interested, contact us at join@mgsar.ca

Thank you to our sponsors and donors for making this work possible.





Our *Treasured Wetland*

by Peter Gadd, Nature Miramichi

Miramichi Marsh in Chatham, has been designated a **“Treasured Wetland”** by Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC), whose primary function as an organization is wetland conservation.

This is one of six such sites in the province selected for “its diversity and abundance”.

The entire wetland, with Hwy 11 to its north and Retirement Miramichi to the south, encompasses about 20 hectares, although DUC’s involvement just includes the two main ponds which cover about 4 - 5 hectares. Berms were created in 2006 to make these ponds and since then vegetation and wildlife have taken over. The wider general area encompasses a variety of habitats which results in a great diversity of living things in a relatively small area.

The Miramichi Naturalists’ Club (Nature Miramichi) has taken a great interest in the marsh area, monitoring the natural development, creating lists of the vascular plants, insects, mammals and birds. Although considered a birding hotspot, as a wetland it is certainly more than that.

In early summer much of the shallower water in the ponds becomes overgrown with a waterlily-like plant called watershield (*Brasenia schreberi*). This natural cover contributes to the ecosystem by providing shade and nutrients for living things above and below the waters’ surface.

In all of the wetland there is a considerable amount of open water, though much of the area has been taken over by cattails (*Typha latifolia*) which also create important habitat. In the spring of 2025 an extensive beaver dam threatening Hwy 11 on the east end was broken down and a large mudflat created. Succession has taken place and the short-lived bare and muddy ground, by mid summer, turned green. Unfortunately an invasive plant, purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), seems to be the dominating plant. The beavers though have cooperated and re-built their dam far from the highway.

The beaver has a large influence on the marsh’s ecosystem. Small culverts through the banks of the ponds allow the water level to remain constant. The beavers of course like deep water so they plug these culverts on a regular basis, and the water level rises, potentially damaging the retaining berms that surround the ponds. DUC installed an extended perforated culvert pipe, surrounded by a wire mesh screen on the east end of the main pond. The beavers cannot plug it, it works!

The Miramichi Marsh, although presently very shallow with mudflats exposed, continues to be a very pleasant and accessible place to enjoy nature. To date 171 bird species have been recorded at the marsh, most passing through, but



Hooded Merganser (female or juvenile)



Red-winged Blackbird (female)



Pied-billed Grebe

about 50 of these species breed in the Miramichi Marsh area each spring and summer. There are birds to find in the fall and wildflowers continue contributing their colours to the visually rewarding landscape.

To find the entrance to the Miramichi Marsh trail system, park opposite the former Hostopia call centre on PLC Lane, just off Ironman Rd., Chatham, and walk down hill a short distance. Enjoy.

Go to www.ducks.ca/treasured-wetlands and under the video playlist you'll find a short video recorded at Miramichi Marsh featuring local naturalists.

All photos by Peter Gadd unless indicated otherwise.



Ducks Unlimited Canada photo post at Miramichi Marsh



Baird's Sandpiper (L) and Greater Yellowlegs (R) stand amongst water shield. Photo by Shelley Watters.



Yellow Warbler



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Law of Attraction

by Conrad Toner

Before we dive into the Law of Attraction, let me ask you something:

Does the way you think—what you focus on, talk about, and imagine—have anything to do with the way you live your life?

Take a moment to reflect on that.

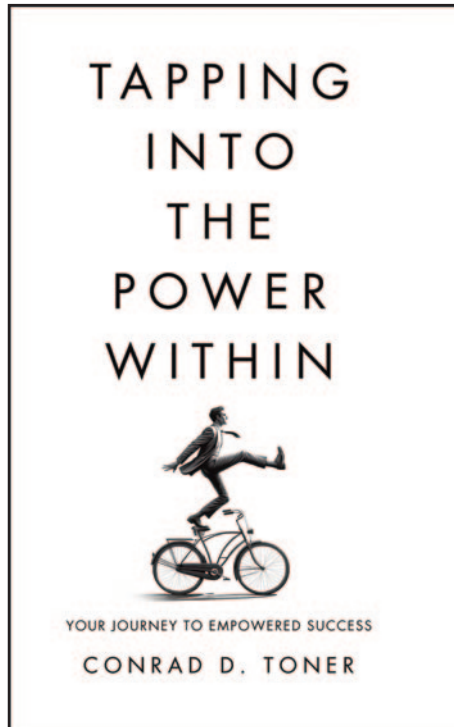
The first time I heard that question, it stopped me in my tracks. I realized that what I was constantly thinking about, I was also bringing about. My thoughts were either working for me or against me. In other words, the way I thought and felt was shaping the way I lived. That's when I knew I had to change my inner world.

It's all about perception.

Think about it: when you're frustrated or weighed down by negativity, things rarely go smoothly. Isn't that true? Now, compare that to when you feel good—when your energy is high, and you're in a state of joy or gratitude. How different are your results in those moments?

If I were to ask most people what they truly want in life, the answers would likely be the same: peace, harmony, joy, love, meaningful work, and purpose. Almost everyone longs for these things. So why aren't more people experiencing them?

Here's why: it's not the majority shaping the world—it's the small percentage of people who are truly aligned with what they want. Researcher Bruce Lipton suggests that only about 5% of people consistently express what they truly desire, while the other 90% do not. Why? Because you can only express it when you're in a state of high vibration—



when you're in love, gratitude, or joy.

At every moment of your life, you are creating an energetic field around you. That energy can either be positive or negative—and it influences not only your own life but also the lives of those around you. This is where the Law of Attraction comes in.

Remember this: life doesn't happen to you; it happens through you. Once you fully embrace that truth, everything begins to change.

Your vibration—your emotional state—matters more than you think. It doesn't just affect you; it affects everyone you interact with. For example, when someone walks into a home or a meeting in a good mood, that positive energy can instantly lift the entire room. Studies even suggest that the first 20 seconds after arriving home can set the emotional tone for the rest of the evening.

So, pay attention to your thoughts right now. Are they working for you—or against you? Whatever you focus on grows. This is why it's worth making the effort to shift your inner dialogue. How you speak to yourself, how you envision your life, and how you choose to feel—all of this shapes your reality.

Change your thoughts, raise your vibration, and you will change your life.

If this message resonates with you, I invite you to go deeper with my book "Tapping into the Power Within." You can get your copy today at www.conradtonerauthor.com.

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The Miramichi Emergency Centre for Women has officially changed its name to Miramichi Safe Harbour Services. This new name better reflects the range of supports we provide to individuals and families in our community.

Our services now include:

- Transition House – providing safe shelter and support for women and children fleeing violence.
- Freida's House – our new second-stage housing program, offering longer-term stability as families rebuild their lives. We are now starting a child program for all children living in domestic violence.
- Sexual Violence Counselling – confidential and compassionate support for survivors of sexual violence.

We continue to operate our Chibucks 50/50 draw, and your ongoing participation helps us sustain these vital services. Every ticket purchased makes a difference.

Miramichi Safe Harbour Services is committed to being a safe place of support, healing, and hope. We appreciate the continued generosity and encouragement of our community as we expand our services to meet growing needs. www.safeharbourservices.com

The Canadian Council of the Blind (CCB) is a national network of individuals living with vision loss, founded in 1944 by blind war veterans and schools for the blind. CCB prioritizes **Ability over Disability**.

The Miramichi chapter, active since 1993, provides social connection and support for those navigating vision loss from conditions such as glaucoma, retinitis pigmentosa, diabetic retinopathy, and macular degeneration.

With the support of the Lions Club and Kinsmen, members meet monthly at the Lions Den to share experiences, build friendships, and encourage one another.

The group also connects to the wider Atlantic network, which hosts an annual Sports Weekend rotating between the provinces. Miramichi hosted in 2023, Moncton in 2025, and Newfoundland will host in 2026.

The Miramichi chapter is now looking for new members to help keep this supportive community strong.

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at the Lions Club.

For more information, contact: Linda Sobey – 506-622-4997 or Patricia Hogan-Radostits – 780-621-9656

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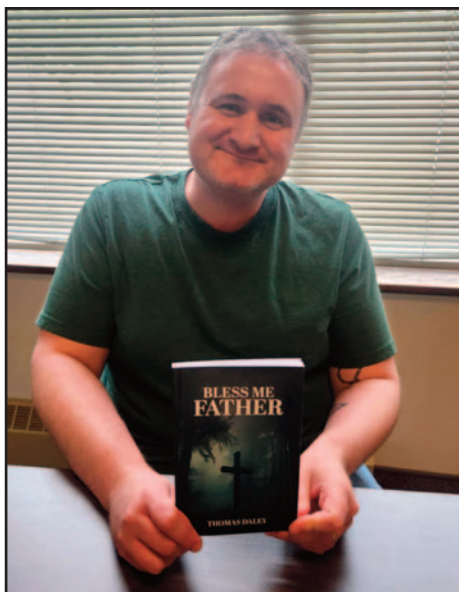
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"Bless Me Father" A New Look at the Dungarvon Whooper

by Thomas Daley

'...Till beside the grave did stand, God's good man with lifted hand...'

I was always captivated by those particular haunting words of Michael Whelan, from his famous poem The Dungarvon Whooper.

They allude to a priest performing some sort of religious ritual at the grave of the lumber camp cook who died mysteriously one winter, and whose spirit is believed to be the cause of the frightening sounds in the wilderness around the South West Miramichi.

One of my favourite films has always been the original 1973

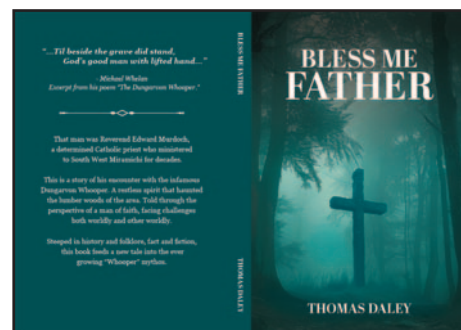
production of "The Exorcist." The epic battle between good and evil over a young girl's soul. The questioning, the self doubt, the climbing tension, the brutal struggle, and the ultimate sacrifice by Father Damien create a cinematic masterpiece.

With this in mind, I wanted to create a story from the point of view of the priest briefly mentioned in the Dungarvon Whooper. He was a real man named Father Edward Murdoch. A real man with a lot of heavy responsibility on his shoulders. This story follows him as he investigates a troubling case in the area and must decide what actions to take that will bring peace for everyone.

Those with an interest in local history and lore will enjoy the subtle nods to the area, but, at the end of the day, the book is a thrilling piece

of folk horror. A fast moving tale for everyone, whether you are a fan of Michael Whelan or a fan of R.L. Stine. Whether you are thirteen or one hundred thirteen, pick up a copy now to celebrate spooky season.

Bless Me Father is available at Mill Cove Coffee, Miramichi and the Irving in Blackville. If you can't find a copy, or would like it personalized, please reach out directly at (506)-251-2843 or email. charactermattersmiramichi@gmail.com





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Artists Find Inspiration in Miramichi Landscapes

Plein Air Workshop with Artist Marc Grandbois

A three-day plein air painting workshop led by Quebec artist Marc Grandbois recently gathered artists together in Miramichi. From August 22 to 24, thirteen artists from across New Brunswick—and one from Ontario—could be found with easels set up at Middle Island, Hay Island, and along the banks of the Barnaby River.

Grandbois, a contemporary landscape painter working in the expressive tradition of the Group of Seven, is known for his ability to transform the ordinary into something extraordinary. Each day, participants observed him capturing his emotional response to the local scenery before turning to their own canvases. He shared plein air tips and techniques, while also offering one-on-one guidance to each artist.

Reflecting on his time in Miramichi, Grandbois said, “As a painter, I love the vibe of the Maritimes and the beauty of inland and shoreline landscapes, the light is exceptional and very different than elsewhere in Canada. It was my second visit to New Brunswick and I will surely repeat the experience. Beyond the environment, it is the spirit, the livelihood and the humour of the people that makes this place so special for me.”

For those interested in exploring his work, visit www.marcgrandbois.com. To stay updated on future workshops, follow him on social media at Marc Grand Bois.



L to R: Marc Grandbois, Monique Dupuis, Ann Beers, Eleanor McLaughlin, Laura Lee Harrison, Kelly Hay Hambrook, Lynn Pashleigh, Joan Dimock, Bernadette LeBlanc, Lise Ringette, Heather Silliker, Gerard Godin. Absent from photo: Daniel Robichaud, Lynn Pritchard



Marc Grandbois painting on Hay Island



Daniel Robichaud by the Barnaby River



These two bottom paintings were completed by artists in the workshop at Middle Island. **Left:** Laura Harrison. **Above:** Lynn Pashleigh

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MIRAMICHI GROUND SEARCH AND RESCUE Joins Wildfire Evacuation Efforts in NB

By Paulette Arsenault



As the sun rose over the smoke-hazed forests of northern New Brunswick, the Miramichi Ground Search and Rescue (MGSAR) team mobilized for a mission unlike any they had faced before. Known for their expertise in locating missing people and conducting wilderness rescues, the team was now thrust into the heart of a rapidly escalating wildfire crisis.

The Oldfield Road fire, burning for over ten days, had already scorched more than 1,400 hectares of forest northwest of Miramichi. Fueled by dry conditions, the blaze had grown into the largest wildfire in the province's recent history. With flames encroaching on rural communities and evacuation advisories issued for areas like Laviette and Pointe Sapin, the provincial government called on every available resource—including Miramichi GSAR.

MGSAR volunteers are trained to navigate difficult terrain and respond quickly in emergencies. But this is a different kind of danger. In these situations, the fire moves fast, and the smoke makes visibility a challenge. Their priority is getting people out safely.

The team's role was critical. While firefighters battled the blaze from the ground and air, MGSAR volunteers went door-to-door in Pointe Sapin, helping residents understand their evacuation options. They were not asking people to leave, but were making sure they had a way out, knew where to go, and weren't leaving anyone—or anything—behind.

The operation ran like clockwork, thanks to real-time updates from the New Brunswick Emergency Measures Organization and the City of Miramichi's fire dashboard. Water bombers refueling at Miramichi Airport roared



MGSAR volunteers in Pointe Sapin during the evacuation advisory.

overhead, and the skies alternated between ash-gray and hopeful bursts of rain.

By week's end, some evacuation advisories were lifted, and containment efforts showed progress. But the MGSAR team knew their work wasn't over. People were scared, but grateful for all the help they could receive.

In the face of nature's fury, Miramichi Ground Search and Rescue proved that bravery isn't just about fighting fire—it's about standing with your community when it matters most.

Volunteers Needed — Every Skill Counts.

MGSAR is powered by everyday heroes—women and men of all ages. We need help not only in the field, but behind the scenes: admin & accounting, fundraising, equipment upkeep, and Project LifeSaver bracelet maintenance. Whether you're an outdoorsperson or a spreadsheet wizard, there's a place for you here. MGSAR is always looking for new recruits, if you are interested, please contact us at: join@mgsar.ca



Speak Up, Stand Out: Why Toastmasters Is Your Secret Weapon

by The Very Best Miramichi Toastmasters



Do interviews, small talk, or presentations make you nervous? Are you looking to keep your brain active in retirement or just looking to have fun with a great group of people?

If you answered Yes to any of these, then you need to come see what The Very Best Toastmasters Miramichi has to offer.

Why Join? If you've ever felt nervous speaking in front of a group, struggled to express your ideas clearly, or wished you could lead with more confidence—the Very Best Toastmasters might be exactly what you need.

Toastmasters is a global organization that helps people become better communicators and leaders. Whether you're a student, professional, entrepreneur, or retiree, Toastmasters offers a supportive environment where you can grow at your own pace.

Build Confidence in Public Speaking - Toastmasters helps you overcome the fear of public speaking through practice and supportive feedback. You'll start with short speeches and gradually take on more challenging roles, all while being cheered on and coached by fellow members.

Sharpen Leadership Skills - Members also develop leadership skills by mentoring others, running meetings, and taking on club roles.



Connect with a Supportive Community - Toastmasters clubs are filled with people who are also working to improve themselves. This is especially true in Miramichi! It's a judgment-free zone where everyone encourages each other. You'll meet people from different backgrounds, share stories, and form lasting friendships.

Personal and Professional Growth

Whether you want to ace a job interview, deliver a wedding toast, or lead a team meeting, Toastmasters gives you the tools to succeed. The skills you gain are practical, transferable, and often life changing.

We are extremely affordable and if some weeks you need to join us virtually, we offer that as well.

Our members range from 19 to 60+...with members from Miramichi, Fredericton and even Ottawa. The group meets every second Monday at 7pm, at 125 Maher St, Miramichi. All are welcome to join us.

For more information, contact us by email ToastmastersMiramichi@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ToastmastersMiramichi

This fall, invest in yourself! Watch for details on our upcoming Open House

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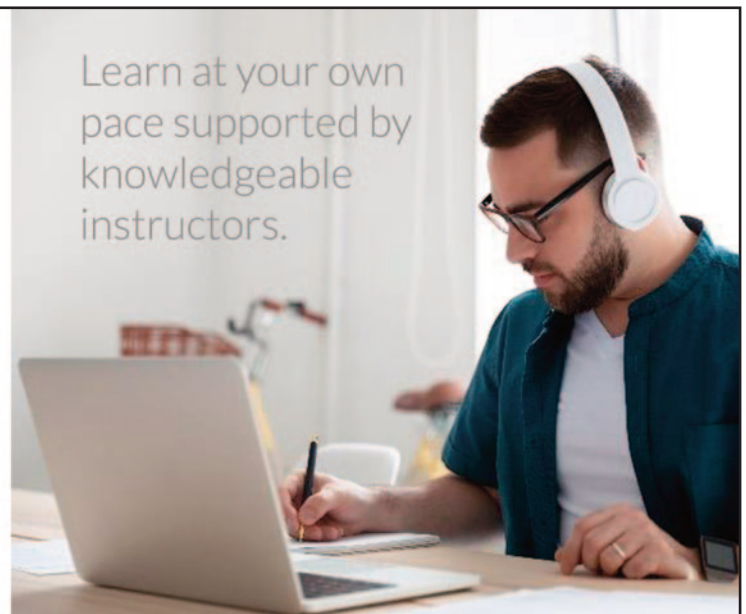
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In a Kid's Eye View

Memories of Autumn That Shape the Soul

by Suzanne Major PhD



Autumn! Funny how it creates feelings of cuddling up, making rich soup, checking preserves and knitting warm things.

In her poem "October," (1999: 31) Lucy Maud Montgomery writes:

"Despite the breath of chilly morn and nip of frosty night. The air is ripe and pungent, and the sky is free from stain; the fallen leaves are whispering in many a woodland lane. O to see the homelight from the farmhouse window glow. Athwart the purple-falling dusk as in the long ago."

Autumn calls on the senses of proprioception and thermoception or, in other words, on what our bodies feel from the outside world. They combine the information they get with what our visual and olfactory senses gather. Our bodies, visual perception, and faculty of smell come together to send information to our brains who in turn compose images in our minds. Information and images create feelings. Information, images and feelings are then stored in our memory and imbedded in our souls.

Children have yet to compose



Oil painting by SuzMajor. Photography by Christian Cailliau.

those memories by experiencing being outside many times over from a very young age. Seeing the vibrant reds, oranges and yellows way up in the trees. Smelling the cool dusk and sometimes the promise of snow in the air. Hearing the sounds of the season, like leaves rustling, Canadian geese honking and wood splitting in back yards. Feeling the warmth of real wool wrapped around their bodies and covering their heads. Tasting the flavours of the moment like baked apple pie, blueberry jam and sweet buttery

corn.

Young children need time and experiences to gather information and create images and feelings. They need time and experiences to write the history of their memory and to compose the nature of their soul.

With the help of others holding their hands and not their fingers touching computer screens, will they develop a humanity that we can recognize.



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New Fall Arrivals



Deeds of the Dungarvon - October 17

A Whooper Halloween Special by Character Matters Miramichi

This summer, hundreds of people came to the Southwest Miramichi to hear for themselves the strange cries of the **Dungarvon Whooper**. On October 17, at the Blackville Municipal Park, the call sounds once again, just in time for All Hallows' Eve. Find out once and for all what's hiding in woods; a ghost? A man? A wild animal? Worse yet, could it be all of them?

Join your guide at the **Miramichi River Valley Visitor Centre** (168 Main St, Blackville) for tours at 7:00pm and 9:00pm. Tickets (\$20) available in advance through Eventbrite; check Character Matters' social media for more details.

You'll see all of your frightening favourites on this night of chilling suspense and local folklore. Thrill at the wit and wisdom of Fiona Finnegan (played by Dorinda Glover), heed the warnings of veteran woodsman Tom Hunter (played by Thomas Daley), and trade barbs with the trapper George Brown (played by Wade Hallihan).



Of course, you never know who else you'll meet on the 17th. Is the so-called 'Lost Man' still hiding in the woods, re-fighting long ago battles? Could the martyred cook, Peter Ryan, be about? What about the boss suspected in the young man's death? Is it possible you might find some sign of the panther that Collingwood Fraser sighted near a group of lumbermen a century ago? All will be revealed as you cross the bridge and enter the park...just make sure you get back over once the night draws to a close!

This event is staged by Character Matters Miramichi, in partnership with Miramichi River Valley, and is part of the 2025 Haunted Happenings. The organizers wish to thank those who made this new experience such a success throughout the summer, and whose support has allowed us to continue to "Dare the Dark" to show everyone that, when it comes to the Whooper, "Hearing is Believing."



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Stitching Together Memories: Farewell to Judy Vautour

The Friends of Seamen's Hospital Craft Group, along with the Miramichi Heritage Board, recently held a surprise farewell gathering for long-time member Judy Vautour of Miramichi, who is relocating to Saint John to be closer to family.

Judy has been a dedicated presence at Seamen's Hospital since founding the Miramichi Quilt Guild in 1999. Over the years she has contributed in countless ways—creating old-fashioned “nurse” costumes, sewing draperies for the hall, taking courses in kitchen management, baking apple pies for sales, teaching quilting and tatting, sewing quilts for the newborn nursery at Miramichi Hospital, and serving as secretary. If there was an activity going on, Judy was usually part of it.

The farewell brought together current and former members of the Friends group and Board. Stories were shared, gifts were given, and Judy admits she “knew something was up” when president Christel Pond told her to put her coat on at lunchtime. Among the thoughtful gifts were photo albums of the group in action, a commemorative plaque, fancy china thimbles, and a rolling sewing machine carrier that will be well used.

Though moving away, Judy plans to remain active in the crafting world and stay connected with Friends in Miramichi. She hopes the Group will continue to thrive,



A few of the quilters at Seamen's Hospital are pictured here admiring a quilt. Back row: Christel Pond, Sandra Gulliver, Judy Vautour, Paula Johnston and Blanche Roach. Front row: Marlyn Krygsveld, Sheila Olsen, Frances Novinscak, Lima Hallihan and Mary Lou Clark.

providing both a welcoming place to create and a benefit to the community. While she's sad to be leaving, Judy says she is deeply grateful for the friendships she's made and the memories she'll carry with her.

Her dedication and friendly spirit have left a lasting mark on the group, and her absence will certainly be felt at future gatherings.



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The Piano on the Bartibog

A Local Legend that Brings a Smile to Your Face

For more than 40 years, a piano has stood on a pillar in the Bartibog River. Some say it was dropped from a helicopter; others whisper it was placed there by spirits. Now a third piano has appeared — a curious tradition that continues to puzzle and delight locals, and stop passersby in their tracks to snap a photo from the bridge.

“I love to see the tradition continue,” says George MacDonald, who placed the original piano. “I could have shown these young lads a few tricks that would have made the job easier.”

Back then, George and his crew kept it a mystery where the piano came from and how it got there, but eventually the secret slipped out. When asked why he did it, George’s answer was simple: *to make people talk*. He just liked doing things like that.

What began as a mystery has grown into a local legend — the piano on the Bartibog, standing tall on its pillar, a lasting symbol of whimsy, tradition, and community spirit.



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Miramichi Rotary Community Band Seeks New Members

Love making music? The Miramichi Rotary Community Band is welcoming new players for the coming year. All brass and reed instruments are encouraged—flute, clarinet, saxophone, trumpet, horn, baritone, trombone, tuba—and we also have spots for bass guitar and drums. Players should be able to read music at least at a beginner level.

Formed in 1995 as a continuation of the former CFB Chatham Base Band, the ensemble has performed at venues across the region, including Losier Hall for the past two Christmas seasons and again this June.

Rehearsals are held Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. in the MVHS band room. Whether you're returning to your instrument or looking for a friendly community group to keep your skills sharp, you'll find a warm welcome.

For more information or to join, contact Dr. Greg MacDiarmid at 506-624-7777 (after hours or weekends).



The Miramichi Rotary Community Band performing at Losier Hall.



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*While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
 As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
 "Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
 Only this and nothing more."*

— Edgar Allan Poe, *The Raven*



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Photo Submissions

If you have photos, stories, tips, or tidbits to share, we'd love to hear from you! Please email them to submit@mcgmedia.net. For photos, send high-resolution JPGs (not resized for email), and remember to include your name for credit along with the location or a short description of the subject. The deadline for the Christmas issue is **October 24**.



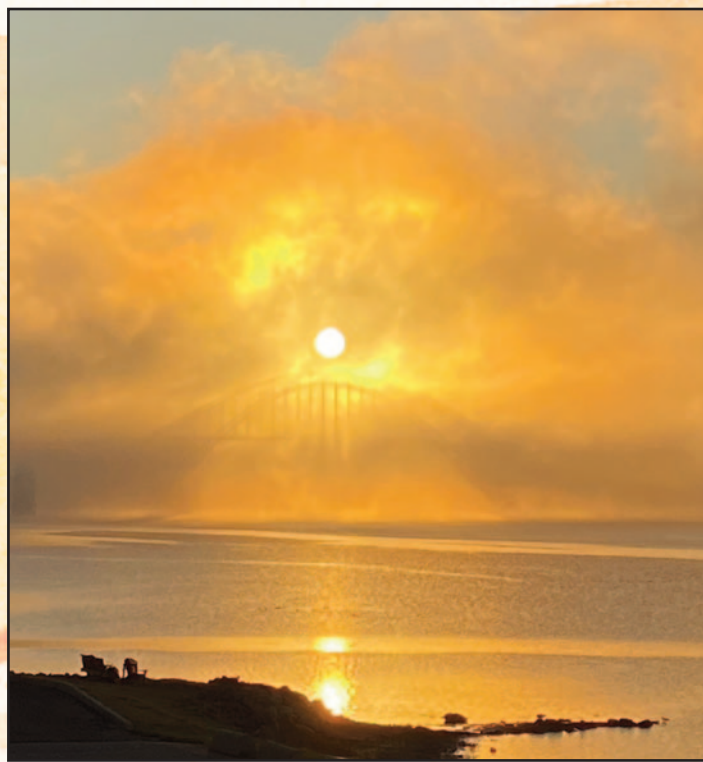
Northern Cardinal taking a bath, photo by Peter Gadd



Bald Eagles, photo by Bonnie Coughlan



The glory of sunflowers, photos by Grace Gilliss



The bridge peeking through the fog, photo by Edna Trevors



Old Pine on Middle Island, painting by Laura Harrison



Crow in Napan, painting by Erin O'Shea



Hidden Gem, painting by Cathleen Richards-Green (www.cathleenrichards.art)

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