

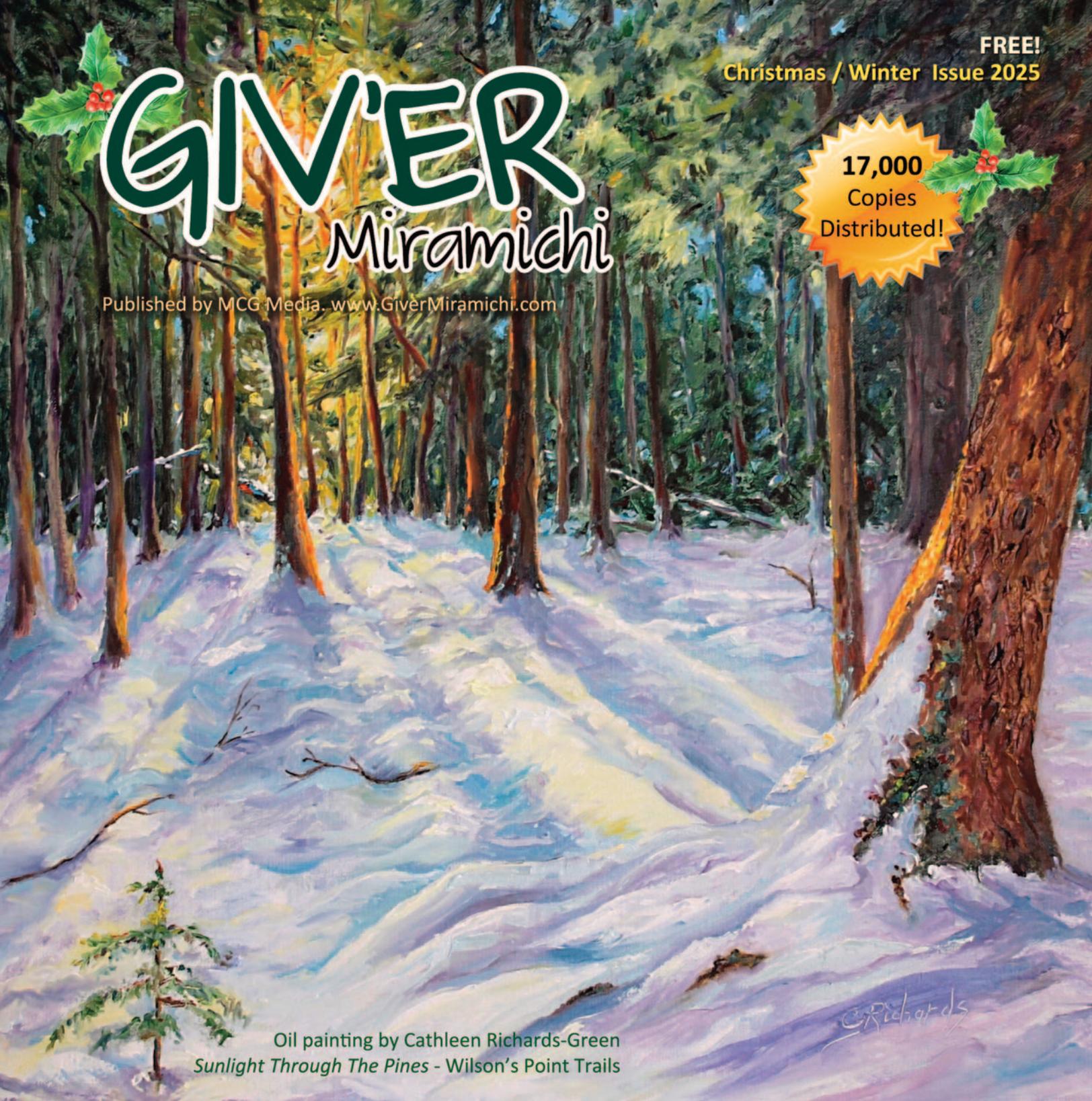
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Christmas / Winter Issue 2025

# GIVER Miramichi

Published by MCG Media. [www.GiverMiramichi.com](http://www.GiverMiramichi.com)

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Oil painting by Cathleen Richards-Green  
*Sunlight Through The Pines - Wilson's Point Trails*

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Jamie

# *A Christmas to Remember - Dec.7*

## Honouring Gerry Cormier's Legacy of Giving

by Susan Butler

Twenty-six years ago this December, the **late Mayor Gerry Cormier** held his very first Christmas to Remember concert at St. Mary's Church. His vision was simple but heartfelt: to bring the community together in the spirit of the season while raising support for three of his favourite local charities — Youth House (now renamed **Miramichi Housing Solutions**), the **Women's Transition House**, and **Miramichi Christmas Joy** (hampers).

From the beginning, the afternoon was filled with beautiful music from a variety of choirs and performers, with the children's choirs always drawing special affection from the audience. The church was consistently filled to capacity, and the generous donations collected at each concert were shared among the three charities Gerry cared so deeply about.

When Gerry became ill with cancer, I made him a promise: that his beloved Christmas to Remember would continue. None of us imagined we would lose him so soon, and his passing was a tremendous loss to the City of



The late Mayor Gerry Cormier, founder of Christmas to Remember.

Miramichi. I have honoured that promise every year since, and on **Sunday, December 7, we will proudly present the 26th Christmas to Remember** at St. Mary's Church, 360 Newcastle Blvd. I will again be co-hosting this year's concert with Ronda Allison.

Over the past three years, we have also introduced the option to make donations in advance, in

memory of a loved one. E-transfers may be sent to [susanbutler867@gmail.com](mailto:susanbutler867@gmail.com), or you may call me at 506-622-1780. All names received will be included in the printed program as a meaningful tribute during the holiday season.

This year's show will feature an **outstanding lineup of local performers**, including:

King Street Choir, Max Aitken Choir, Miramichi Fiddlers, Villagers, Elizabeth Shatford, Melissa & Delilah McEvoy, Donna & Tyrone Hubbard, Dawn Patterson, Brent Munn, David Bunnell, Gerry Roberts, Aubrey Stewart, Friends With Heart, Ronda Allison, and Susan Butler. Admission is by Free Will Offering.

The **concert begins at 2:00 pm**, and is proudly supported by Newcastle Printing and the Miramichi Folksong Festival Inc. All proceeds will once again go to the causes Gerry faithfully championed year after year.

We look forward to welcoming everyone for an afternoon of music, remembrance, and community spirit as we honour Gerry's legacy.

**Cover Photo:** Oil painting by Cathleen Richards-Green, *Sunlight Through The Pines* - Wilson's Point Trails. View more of her work at [www.cathleenrichards.art](http://www.cathleenrichards.art)

**Giv'er** is about giving it your all and finding joy in every day.

Share your inspiring stories, uplifting moments, informative articles, photos, poems, essays, artwork, community events and more — and help us celebrate what's up, what's new, and what's happening around the Miramichi Region.

**Editor/Layout Design:** Stacy Underhill

**Ad Design:** Cindy MacLean

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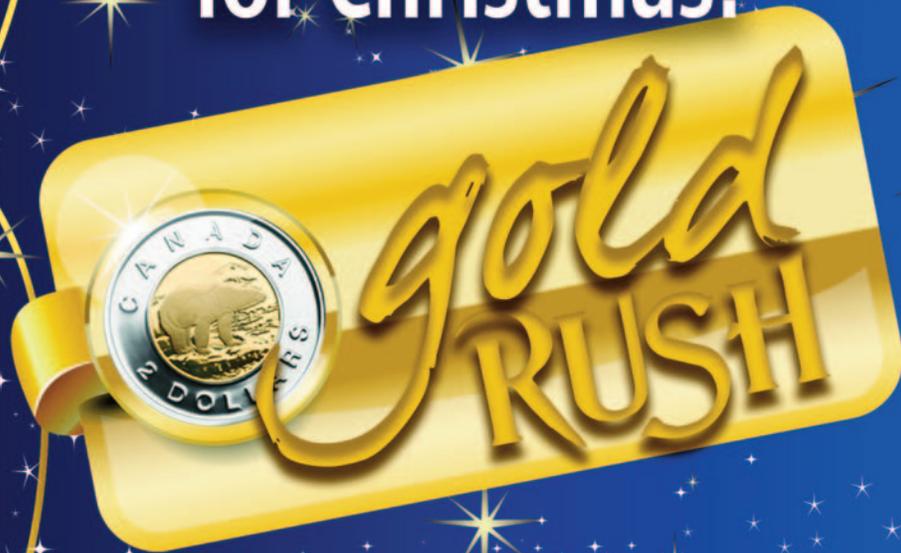
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# Christmas Bird Counts

By Pam Watters, Nature Miramichi

Christmas Bird Counts (CBCs) will take place all over North America from **December 14, 2025 to January 5, 2026.**

The goal of the bird counts is to find and identify as many birds as possible in 24 hours within a 24 km diameter circle. Some participants choose to watch birds at their backyard feeders from the comfort of their homes, while others brave the elements to cover as much ground as possible within the circle. It's fun and a great way to learn about the hardy birds that are able to spend the winter in New Brunswick. The results of these counts are entered into a North American database of Christmas Bird Counts through Birds Canada/National Audubon Society.

**Nature Miramichi** is organizing three Christmas Bird Counts on the dates listed below (weather permitting).

Miramichi - December 14

Red Bank/Sunny Corner - December 21

Burnt Church/New Jersey - December 28

If you're interested in participating by monitoring your backyard bird feeders for part of the day, please contact Pam Watters at [watterspj3@gmail.com](mailto:watterspj3@gmail.com) / 773-7304 or Peter Gadd at [gadd1313@nb.sympatico.ca](mailto:gadd1313@nb.sympatico.ca) / 625-2509).

For more information visit:

[www.birdscanada.org/bird-science/christmas-bird-count](http://www.birdscanada.org/bird-science/christmas-bird-count)



**Above:** Nuthatch **Below:** Pine Siskin  
Photos by Phil Riebel



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# Santa's Workshop

*Join the Fun!*

**Dates:**

December 1 - 20

**Time:**

Evenings 6 pm - 8 pm

Saturdays 1 pm - 4 pm

**Grades:** K - 5

**Club 115 Christmas Party**

(Grades 6 - 8 only)

Friday, December 19

6 pm - 8 pm

Register online:  
[BGCMiramichi.com](http://BGCMiramichi.com)



## "Holiday" Play Days



Also...  
Elf Races & Games

*Join the Fun at our Holiday Play Days-*

**DATES:** Monday, Dec. 29 & Tuesday, Dec. 30

Friday, Jan. 2 & Saturday, Jan. 3

**TIME:** 10 am - 3 pm **GRADES:** K-5



**BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB**  
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# EVENTS

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

**Nov. 29 & Dec. 6: Newcastle Farmers Market - Christmas Markets** - Join us for two special Saturday Markets on November 29 and December 6 - Perfect for holiday shopping from local vendors and crafters & artisans. Our regular Friday markets continue through December 19. The times are 10am-2pm. Located at 21 Cove Road, Miramichi.

**Nov. 30: Holiday Market at Parkland** - Parkland on the River is hosting a Holiday Market from 1 pm to 4 pm at 2386 King George Highway, Miramichi. The event will feature over 15 local vendors, offering a festive opportunity to shop local and celebrate the season in a beautiful riverside setting. For more information, call 506-778-7275.



**Dec. 5: The 38th Annual Parade of Lights in Miramichi** - Starting at 6:30 pm in the Historic Chatham Business District. An Indigenous Christmas Market will also be taking place the same evening at The Rodd Miramichi from 6pm-9pm.

**December 5-7: Affordable Art Show** - The Miramichi Art Core will wrap up the year with the annual Affordable Art Show, taking place at the Newcastle Kin Centre. The show

and sale will feature works by local artists, all priced at \$75 and under—a great opportunity to see the year's creations and find a unique Christmas gift.

**Dec. 6: Blackville Santa Claus Parade of Lights and Breakfast**  
 7:30am to 11am: have **breakfast with Santa** at Father AA McKinnon Memorial Hall, 105 Main Street, Blackville. \$10 adults, \$6 children. Bacon, eggs, hashbrowns, toast, juice, tea and coffee. Santa will be there around 10am!

**5pm:** The Blackville Fire Department will host their **annual Santa Claus Parade of Lights** that evening. The parade leaves former Hooked 'n Cooked at 5pm and proceeds along Main Street to the fire hall, where Santa Claus will hand out treats.

**Dec. 6: Breakfast With Santa & Christmas Market** - Presented by Millerton Home & School at 4711 Route 108, Derby. From 8am-11am, enjoy breakfast, photos with santa, and a Christmas market. A hearty breakfast of pancakes, sausage or bacon, coffee, tea, juice will be served. Visit with Santa! Photos available by donation. The Christmas Market includes local vendors with crafts, baked goods, scentsy, handmade candles and more! To book a table or for more information contact Kelsey at (506)624-7614 or [kelsey.manderville@gmail.com](mailto:kelsey.manderville@gmail.com). \$25 per table (6ft space). \$5 discount if bringing own table.

**Dec. 7: 26th Annual Christmas to Remember** in memory of Gerry Cormier, 2pm at St Mary's Church. Featuring Choirs, duets, soloist. Admission: free will offering.



Donations can be made in advance in memory of a loved one. Money raised will be divided between Gerry's favorite charities. See page 4 for details.

**Dec. 13: Country Christmas Craft & Bake Sale** - This annual cozy sale is from 10am to 2pm and features handmade crafts, Christmas ornaments & décor, knit socks, hats & mitts, gift ideas and lots of baking: raisin brown bread, fruit cake, white bread, shortbread cookies, sweet trays, baked beans & biscuits, chili, lasagna, meat pies (chicken & pork), and more! For large baking orders, call Darlene in advance at 843-7878. At Darlene's Country Cottage (formerly the Teahouse) 186 Barnettville Rd, Blackville.

**Dec. 30: New Year's Eve Eve**  
 Join us at Tuadook Village Community Centre, 8pm-12am for a Chinese/Canadian style buffet, with live music by RipTide. Tickets are \$25 and can be purchased by calling Peggy Blackmore (623-8191) or Lois Tozer (627-6852 or 836-7647). Dine-in only. Located at 2282 Hwy 420, Sillikers.



# Hidden Gems Await at the Bargain Boutique



The **Bargain Boutique** is a thrift store located at 214 Pleasant Street in Newcastle, downstairs in St. Andrew's Church Hall. It is open Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 12 noon to 4:00 pm. Lots of winter items are now on display.

The store operates on donations only, but some items cannot be accepted (such as large items or books) due to limited space. There is a volunteer staff of six, with two volunteers working each day. They are cheerful and always helpful, making shopping a real pleasure. The Boutique is a great place to visit, meet friends, or simply browse. Drop by

and search for a bargain while catching up on the latest news. Visit often—new items arrive almost every day. We accept cash only. Layaways are not available because of limited space. All proceeds go to **St. Andrew's Anglican Church**.

Rose Steeves, Founder/Manager  
outside the Bargain Boutique



**Miramichi River Valley Thrift Store**  
**Christmas Sale till Dec.12**

Gently used clothing, shoes, household items, bedding, books, and more!  
• cash only • not-for-profit

29 Schofield Street, Renous (old firehall) Open: Wed, Thurs, Fri: 10am-3pm  
[www.facebook.com/MRVthriftstore](http://www.facebook.com/MRVthriftstore) and last Saturday of the month

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Wednesday 10AM-5PM      Saturday 10AM-5PM  
Thursday 1PM-8PM

Check out our Facebook page for programs, events and more!

**Une soirée féérique à ne pas manquer! A magical evening not to be missed!**  
**Parc Municipal Richelieu Park • November 29 novembre**

**17:00 / 5:00 Parade de Noël de Neguac / Neguac Christmas Parade**  
Départ / Start: Aréna Sportplex    Fin / Finish: CSC La Fontaine  
Les rues fermeront à 16h30 / Street will be blocked off at 4:30

À la fin de la parade, on demande aux participants d'utiliser le stationnement du CSC La Fontaine. La remise des prix se fera au Parc Municipal Richelieu où il y aura de la musique et un feu de joie. La cantine sera ouverte.  
At the end of the parade, participants are asked to use the CSC La Fontaine parking lot. The awards ceremony will take place at Municipal Richelieu Park, where there will be music and a bonfire. The canteen will be open.

**18:30 / 6:30 37e Illumination de l'arbre de Noël / 37th Lighting of the Christmas Tree**

- Visite du Père Noël / Visit from Santa
- Chocolat chaud gratuit / Free hot chocolate
- Musique / Music
- Biscuits / Cookies

**20:00 / 8:00 Feux d'artifice / Fireworks**

Pour information et s'inscrire pour la parade:  
For information or to register for the parade:  
776-3950 ou [loisirs@neguac.com](mailto:loisirs@neguac.com)

# Ski Away the Winter Blues!



By Deana Gadd, MCCSC

The **Miramichi Cross Country Ski Club (MCCSC)** makes it easy to enjoy time outdoors this winter. The benefits of getting outdoors and being active in winter have been well researched. Being out in nature is even better, breathing in the scents of the evergreen forest for instance, has a positive effect on a person's well-being!

Many children can't wait for the first snowfall, many adults can only see the inconvenience of snow. Whether you are a winter enthusiast, are new to experiencing winter, or want to rediscover the fun of it, we invite you to spend some time this season at the Miramichi Cross Country Ski Club.

The MCCSC has had a presence in the city for 51 years. We have a modern clubhouse at 131 Nelson Street (Rte 126), Nelson, Miramichi. The older "cozy" clubhouse with the large letters SKI, is still used on some occasions.

There are **ski trails for all ages** and abilities, from the 0.3km Pink Trail to the 12 km Silver Trail. Some of the trails are just for the classic technique, others are wide enough for both classic and skate skiing. There are also **4 km of separate snowshoe trails** that are in looped one-kilometer segments. Like the ski trails, the snowshoe trails are wooded and well protected from wind. Although you may worry about being cold you are more likely to get too warm while skiing or snowshoeing! Dress in layers!

The clubhouse is well stocked with cross country ski and snowshoe rental equipment for children and adults. You can



February Family Day at MCCSC

buy a season pass that allows unlimited skiing and snowshoeing, a season pass for snowshoe only or a daily trail pass for the ski trail or the snowshoe trail. We hope to be able to have night skiing several nights a week on the **4 km Lighted Trail** (and the shorter 2.5 km Red Trail).

The MCCSC offers an eight-week children's learn to ski program, known as the **Jackrabbit Program**, for ages 3-9 on Sunday afternoons. There is also a biathlon club, **Biathlon Miramichi**. Biathlon is an Olympic sport that combines cross country skate skiing with target shooting. The two clubs hold several ski and biathlon competitions each year that attract skiers from across the province and beyond.

The club's social committee plans several activities during the season. Moonlight skis are always popular, either skiing on the lighted trail or snowshoeing with a headlamp, s followed by snacks and social time in the clubhouse.

For up-to-date information visit [www.skimiramichi.blog](http://www.skimiramichi.blog) and our Facebook page. You can also send an email to the club at [skimiramichi1975@gmail.com](mailto:skimiramichi1975@gmail.com).

Contact [gadd1313@nb.sympatico.ca](mailto:gadd1313@nb.sympatico.ca) to be placed on the trail report email list. **Hope to see you on the trails!**



Well Marked Snowshoe Trail at MCCSC



Jackrabbit Program at MCCSC



Biathletes Competing at MCCSC



# CITY HALL UPDATES

**MAYOR ADAM LORDON, CITY COUNCIL AND  
CITY STAFF EXTEND SEASON'S GREETINGS**

**WE ARE WISHING YOU A SAFE, HEALTHY AND  
HAPPY HOLIDAY AND A PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR**



## **NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN** **COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Each year, City Council honours, recognizes and acknowledges longstanding voluntary community service through the bestowal of a Community Service Award for Volunteers.

Do you know anyone who is deserving of this award?

Nomination forms can be obtained at City Hall or at [Miramichi.org](http://Miramichi.org) under Community Service Award. Deadline is December 15th.

The awards will be presented at the Mayor's New Year's Levee on Thursday, January 1st from 1 to 3 p.m. at the Knight's of Columbus Hall, 67 King Street, Miramichi.



# A Legacy Built to Last

## Celebrating 40 Years of Allison’s Manufacturing on the Miramichi

Giv’er Staff Feature

In April 1985, after a 25-year career at Heath Steele Mines, **Weldon Allison** took a leap of faith and founded **Allison’s Manufacturing Ltd.** in Trout Brook, NB. Working from a converted two-car garage with his wife Phyllis, sister Betty Anne Forsythe, and brother-in-law Delbert Connors, Weldon began building custom wood garage doors—laying the groundwork for a family business rooted in dedication and craftsmanship.

Soon joined by **his sons Clayton and Scott**, the business expanded steadily through the 1990s with a new shop, showroom, and growing team. Even a devastating fire in 2002 couldn’t slow them down. The family rebuilt, modernized, and later diversified into custom kitchen cabinetry—shaping the company’s direction for years to come.

In 2010, Scott and Clayton officially became owners and continued to invest in automation, technology, and customer service. By 2019, Allison’s expanded again—opening a Dalton Avenue location for its door and window division, while dedicating the Trout Brook facility entirely to cabinetry production.

Today, Allison’s Manufacturing operates as two thriving divisions:

- **Allison’s Doors** – specializing in doors, windows, and entry systems.



Weldon Allison



Clayton and Scott Allison

- **AML Signature Cabinets** – crafting custom cabinetry, countertops, and millwork for homes and businesses across the region.

Reflecting on the company’s 40th anniversary, Scott and Clayton shared a joint message:

“This year marks an incredible milestone—40 years in business. We want to express our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has been part of our journey. To our loyal customers, dedicated employees, and supportive community—thank you. Your trust and encouragement have made these years possible.

What began as a vision four decades

ago has grown through hard work, innovation, and shared commitment. While much has changed, our core values remain the same: quality, integrity, and service. We’re proud of the past four decades and excited for what’s ahead as we continue to grow, adapt, and serve our customers. Here’s to the next chapter and to everyone who made these 40 years so rewarding.”

From a two-car garage to a multi-division company, Allison’s continues to build on a proud legacy of craftsmanship, community, and family.

For more information visit them online at [www.allisonsdoors.com](http://www.allisonsdoors.com) and [www.amlcabinets.ca](http://www.amlcabinets.ca).





# Soccer in the Winter? It's True!

By Power Soccer Miramichi

Soccer in the winter—yes! But not to worry, it's indoors! **Power Soccer Miramichi** is a growing local program that has been keeping kids active, learning, and having fun year-round. Power Soccer Miramichi first launched in the summer of 2024 and has already seen success. Over its first year, the school has provided local children with valuable soccer skills, opportunities to make new friends, and a fun, supportive environment to learn in.

The organization offers seasonal soccer programs throughout the year to keep kids engaged and moving. The fall season is wrapping up, and the **winter session begins January 5 and runs through February 23** on Monday nights.

After the winter program, Power Soccer rolls right into its spring school and then the outdoor summer sessions. Each session runs for seven weeks, giving parents flexibility to choose one season or continue throughout the year. Offering year-round training is especially beneficial during the winter months when there are typically fewer sports and activities available for children. Many young players return for multiple seasons, showing steady improvement in both skills and confidence.



Power Soccer Miramichi offers programs throughout the year with registration now open for the winter sessions starting January 5, 2026.

The positive, inclusive environment helps kids develop not just as athletes, but as teammates and individuals as well. Power Soccer's coaching staff currently includes two experienced instructors who combine strong soccer knowledge with a natural ability to connect with children. Their enthusiasm and supportive teaching style help create a fun and encouraging atmosphere for players of all levels.

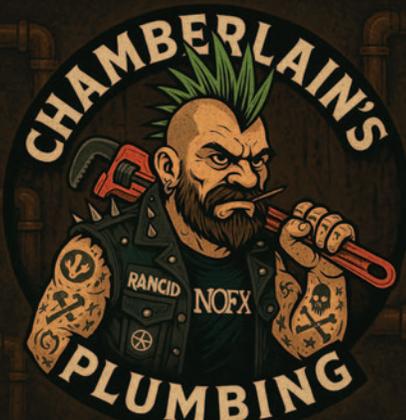
Programs are **open to boys and girls aged 6 to 11**, with special summer classes also available for children aged 4 to 5. All skill levels

are welcome.

**Registration is now open**, but space is limited. Register online at [www.powersoccer.ca](http://www.powersoccer.ca). Parents can select the New Brunswick locations—such as Nelson Rural School—and register their child directly through the website.

Power Soccer Miramichi continues to grow, providing an enjoyable and active outlet for kids in the community, no matter the season.

Follow [@powersoccermiramichi](https://www.facebook.com/powersoccermiramichi) on Facebook for local updates and registration information,



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# The Best Christmas Present

by Johannes Bosma

Why is it that all the great Christmases always happened in the “Good Old Days?” It isn’t as if we couldn’t have the Best-Christmas-Ever today. With all the faster means of travel and communication, the ultimate in modern inventions and convenience, and the hassle-free way we can now experience the Christmas spirit, you’d think we would stop looking back to a time when we were so handcuffed by tradition and custom that we hardly had the time to relax and really enjoy Christmas.

For one thing, in the good old days, we didn’t have the Image Tree 2045 perched majestically over the gift box. Thirty-nine triangular screens, in the shape of an evergreen, continually projecting your choice of images of Christmases past. Eventually one of the screens required a replacement, it’s true, but at least when one went out they didn’t all go out, as was the case with earlier models before the invention of the Gift Box 2040.

Come to think of it, we didn’t have a gift box back in those good old days either. It’s so much more convenient today to order gifts on our iPhone XL or iPad XLV to any warehouse of our choice. Within minutes we get a code card for each gift which comes with an embedded receipt and warranty.

Then, instead of wasting time wrapping gifts or hiding them from the kids, we pass out the code card on Christmas morning and each recipient has but to scan it into the gift box as their gifts are instantaneously laser-beamed from each of the individual warehouses to our home.

Nevertheless, despite all the extra free time people now have, I don’t



An imaginative glimpse of the "Image Tree 2045" described in the story. Illustration generated by AI

think they truly enjoy Christmas present. Nor do they really appreciate the fact that the best part of any Christmas is being at home and never having to leave its comforts for anything. Although I champion the conveniences of technology today, my mind keeps drifting back to 1992.

I was only fourteen then, a typical teenager with an elongated bean-pole body, a sharp wit, and a ferocious appetite. When I wasn’t eating, watching TV on that outdated box or playing sports games on my antiquated PlayStation, I was constantly in search of the easy life. Anything that did not include work.

It was “work” that always seemed, in those days at least, to dampen my Christmas spirit. I didn’t mind making up the “Loot List” in long hand, driving my skidoo through the woods to sample my grandmother’s pastry, or even wrapping the few gifts I could afford.

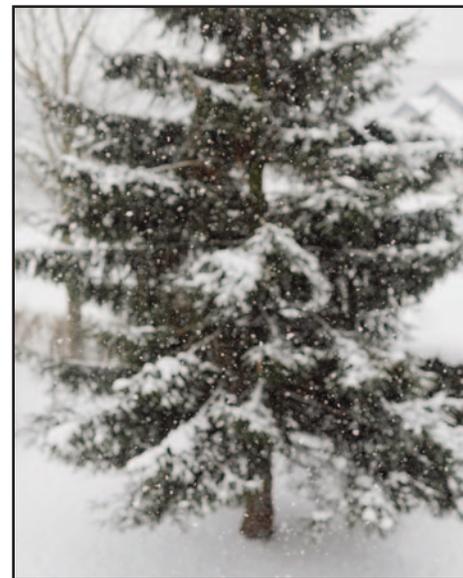
What really bothered me was that

just when I would be getting into the Yuletide spirit — and a few not-so-well-hidden Christmas goodies — my Dad would arrive, trying his utmost to snow on my Christmas parade with the words that resembled fingernails slowly etching their way down a chalkboard:

“Come on son, we have work to do.” What he really meant was: “It’s time to get our annual Christmas tree.” Well, actually, what he really meant was that it’s time to tramp around in the woods for hours, say un-Christmas-like things the colder we got, leave empty-handed, forcing us to pick up one of those few, scrawny trees left on some deserted lot on our way home.

Arriving home, however, was just the beginning. There was still more “work” to be done. We had to cut, fit, re-cut, re-fit and then purchase another tree stand because we re-did everything too much.

And, as if that weren’t enough, we had to decorate the thing. That particular year I begged, as I had pleaded since “work” became offensive to me, to be exempted from



trimming the tree. My Dad wouldn't hear of it.

As he did every year, he insisted that decorating the tree was a big part of keeping the Christmas spirit alive. Feeling much older and far too brazen at fourteen than I had in previous years, I didn't hesitate to tell him that all this work and inconvenience was actually killing the little spirit I had left. It didn't deter his belief in continuing the Christmas traditions, but I did detect some hurt in his eyes.

Then, to add insult to injury, he would pile us all into the family vehicle, which we kids called "The Boat," and off to the mall we would go, Fa-la-la-la-la, LA-LA-LA-LA!

Amid the jolly jostlers, the gruesome growlers, the belly bumpers, the endearing elbowers, and worst of all, the stop-and-talkers, we would weave ourselves from store to store, tramping and testing until we found the right gift for each other. Mom would help us find Dad's gift and Dad, if we could steer him clear of the stop-and-talkers, would help us find a gift for Mom. After our tour of duty was over, we would hurry home to wrap our treasures.

Did I just say treasures? Yes, in many ways that's what they were on Christmas morning as we sat around that realistic image we had dragged home, re-sized and decorated, thanks to Dad. We would tingle inside as much as the bright colours twinkled outside that beautiful, green-scented fir tree. The many decorative items that gave it such life were the individual pieces of our family history, each one telling a story and projecting an image no screen of today could ever relate.

Below it, in an array of colours and styles, were stacked the presents which reminded us how much we meant to each other. Then, as nervous anticipation gave way to the excitement of realization, my sister and I became totally absorbed in each gift of love. Knee-deep in torn-up wrapping paper, which my Dad would always stuff into a garbage bag after the squeals of pleasure had subsided, we would suddenly stop and pick out the treasured gifts for our parents. They always acted like these were the only presents that really mattered. It took



me until now to realize that it wasn't an act.

I also realize now that all those preparations for Christmas that my Dad insisted on repeating each year had absolutely nothing to do with "work". My patient, and loving father was actually adding fuel to the fire of my Christmas spirit, not extinguishing it. How sad it was that I didn't appreciate that Christmas in 1992 until so much later.

For it was much later that I realized that we should never take what we have today for granted. I understand now that the best Christmas present later becomes the best Christmas past in some Christmas future. It took me until now, 2050 A.D., to make sense of it. Had I realized that, back in 1992, appreciating the Christmas "present" would have been the best "Christmas" present I could have ever given my Dad who's wise, and once disappointed eyes, still look down on me to this day.



# Bringing Driftwood to Life: The Art of Kenneth Allain

Kenneth Allain of Neguac has discovered his creative passion in turning forgotten pieces of driftwood into art that feels alive.

He first began collecting driftwood around 2007 and started carving a few years later, in 2010. "I start by playing around with the pieces," Allain explains. "I'll work on one for a while, set it aside, and move on to the next."

One of his most remarkable creations is a detailed shark sculpture — his first fully completed piece — which he began in 2020 and finished in 2023 after dedicating about 650 hours to it. "Making the jaw was the hardest part," he says. "Then I had to figure out what kind of base to use. Since the wood came from the sea, I decided to include rocks and shells from the ocean — it just made sense."

Allain's attention to detail is evident in every carving. He often points out how a simple piece of wood can reveal multiple shapes

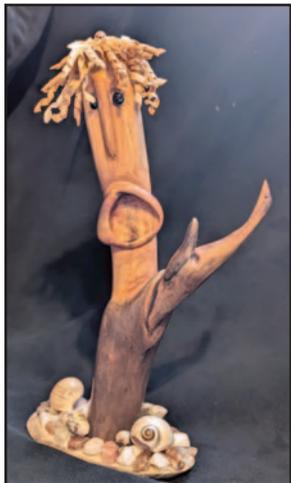
and forms. "Sometimes one piece shows three different animals," he says.

It can be a slow creative process because the driftwood is brittle when dried. Most of his shaping is done carefully by hand, using sandpaper and small tools. Each piece might take weeks or even months to complete. "I'm supposed to put an eye right in that little spot," Kenneth says, holding a piece of driftwood, "but I don't want to thin it too much — it's very brittle." Each carving requires patience, precision, and care.

His passion shines through in every sculpture, as the natural grains and textures of the wood seem to breathe life into his creations.



You can view more of Kenneth Allain's driftwood carvings at [www.driftwoodcarvings.com](http://www.driftwoodcarvings.com).



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# Eastern Tile & Carpet:

## A Family Business with 60 Years of Heart and Hard Work

Giv'er Staff Feature

This year marks a remarkable milestone for **Eastern Tile & Carpet**—six decades of service to northern New Brunswick and the Miramichi region.

The company was founded by **Dante and Rita Rossit** in Bathurst, New Brunswick, where the early focus was on terrazzo cement finishing and ceramic tile installation. In 1969, the business grew to a second location in Chatham Head—formerly the Atlantic Rentals building—introducing carpet and cushion flooring to its expanding product line.

In 1975, Eastern Tile & Carpet moved to its current location, a space that has since grown through five expansions to become a 12,000-square-foot showroom and warehouse. Today, the company remains **family owned and operated by Gino Rossit**, who started sweeping floors at age 12 and joined full time after graduating in 1987.

“Dad gave me a car and \$40 for graduation and said, ‘See you at work Monday morning,’” recalls Gino. “Every project brings its own challenges and rewards, and we take pride in doing things right.”

Over the decades, Eastern Tile & Carpet has earned a reputation for reliability and precision, completing installations throughout Atlantic Canada—and even as far as Fort McMurray. Contractors and homeowners alike continue to trust the team’s experience and attention to detail.

While the name reflects its origins, Eastern Tile & Carpet now offers far more than tile and carpet. The showroom features an extensive selection of hardwood, engineered hardwood, laminate, ceramic, vinyl, and cushion flooring.

The company also proudly carries its own exclusive line of 14mm waterproof laminate—designed specifically for local conditions and available only at Eastern Tile & Carpet.

At Eastern Tile & Carpet, honesty and workmanship go



Gino Rossit in his office today (left), and his father, Dante Rossit, standing on the very land where that office would one day be built.

hand in hand. “We don’t believe in over-selling a product,” says Gino. “Our team knows their materials, stands by their recommendations, and guarantees every installation.”

For sixty years, community has remained central to the company’s values. The Rossit family and staff regularly support local sports teams, pageants, and non-profit organizations—giving back to the region that has supported them for generations.

Gino and his family extend heartfelt thanks to their loyal customers and dedicated team for their trust and support over the past six decades.

With strong roots and a steadfast commitment to quality, Eastern Tile & Carpet looks forward to continuing its legacy of excellence across the Miramichi and beyond.

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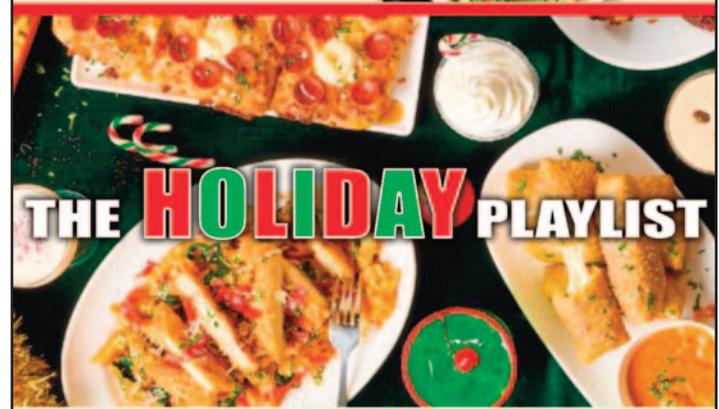
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# Miramichi River Valley Thrift Store

## Celebrating One Year and \$17,000+ in Donations by Les McLaughlin

The Miramichi River Valley Community Thrift Store recently celebrated their one year anniversary with a Grand Opening at their shop in Renous. The day included a free BBQ with hamburgers and hot dogs, face painting, and a draw for a BBQ Pack with a cooler and hamburger fixins.

The Thrift Store is a non-profit organization run by volunteers and is a proud and dedicated supporter of the community. The store has made several generous donations totaling more than \$17,000, a testament to the generosity of both its volunteers and loyal shoppers.

### 2024 Donations

- total of \$3070 donated to: Miramichi SPCA , Girl Guides, Dining with Dignity, Millerton, Blackville and Sunny Corner Schools, My3Sons Cat Rescue, the Legion, Out of the Cold Shelter, and Dining with Dignity.
- Several bags of clothing donated to Housing Solutions
- Turkey draw for three customers
- Turkeys for three food bank recipients
- Supported one family from each school in Blackville, Millerton and Sunny Corner with gifts for family members
- Christmas cards for Bridgeview Nursing Home clients

### 2025 Donations

- Minor Hockey – \$500 • Blackville Rec Council – \$500
- Miramichi Ground Search and Rescue – \$1500
- Three Easter hams drawn at the store
- Bursaries of \$400 for Blackville and Sunny Corner graduates, \$400 each to MVHS and Millerton Elementary
- \$200 to each school for Back to School Supplies
- Transition House - \$500 • Dining with Dignity – \$100



**Front:** (L to R) Penny Siddall, Lorraine Underhill and Lois Vickers hold a cheque representing the store’s donations to the community. **Back:** (L to R) Sharon Vickers, Mike Dawson and Kevin Russell

- Blackville Food Bank - \$1000
- \$500 each to Blackville and MVHS for student trips
- Millerton School Thanksgiving Dinner - \$200
- Renous Quarryville Fire Department - \$500
- Vondy House - \$1000 • Percy’s Place - \$2000
- Christmas Joy - \$500 • Turkey draw for three customers.
- Sponsoring three families for Christmas

To learn more about the Miramichi River Valley Community Thrift Store, visit their Facebook page or drop into the shop at 29 Schofield Street in Renous. The store is open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10am until 3pm and on the last Saturday of each month.



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*Wishing you a joyful holiday season and a happy new year!*



# Orange Cranberry Bread by Darlene Jardine

A bright, festive loaf bursting with orange and cranberry flavour — moist, sweet, and gently tart, perfect for winter mornings or an afternoon treat with a cup of tea or coffee. It is lovely when served warm with a pat of butter.

## Ingredients:

- 1½ cups flour
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt

*(Mix these dry ingredients in a bowl and set aside.)*

- ½ cup butter
- ¼ cup oil
- ¾ cup sugar
- 3 tsp orange zest
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup milk
- ⅓ cup orange juice
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1¼ cups fresh or frozen cranberries

## Instructions:

1. Cream butter, oil, and sugar together in a large bowl.
2. Add the wet ingredients (eggs, milk, juice, vanilla) and orange zest and combine well. Now add the flour mixture.



3. Fold in the cranberries by hand.
4. Pour batter into an 8" x 4" loaf pan lined with parchment paper.
5. Bake at 350°F for 60–65 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.

Optional Glaze: Mix 1 cup icing sugar and 1 1/2 Tblsp orange juice together to make a glaze.



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# In a Kid's Eye View

## The Seasonal Gifts of Awe and Wonder

by Suzanne Major PhD

In the still of the night when the snow glimmers and sparkles like diamonds in the moon light, time is halted, and space seems altered. It's an experience that stops us in our tracks, freezes the moment and sprinkles all around us the dust of magic. The special season of winter and Christmas is filled with gifts of awe and wonder. Heavy snowflakes waltzing slowly to the ground. Crisp ice sheets breaking like glass under our steps. Frost lacing up the cold windows of old houses. Chickadee's shaking off fresh snow from their feathers chirping with pleasure. Red rose buds covered with bonnets of white snow.

It takes a little imagination to experience awe and wonder, but would we choose to live without it? Can young children grow up without it? Awe, and wonder are feelings. They are reactions generated by perceptions. You look at something. You have a reaction. A feeling occurs. In turn, feelings create emotions that promote action. You have an emotion, and your mind, heart and soul react together to produce an action. It's a process that allows us to integrate information, apply knowledge and solve problems.

Of course, red rose buds covered with snow are just that. Rose buds covered with snow. But with imagination they are covered with snow bonnets and then we feel the awe and wonder that analogies can offer. Analogies can occur between things that are somewhat alike. They make us compare and imagine. Imagination allows us to create



Oil painting by SuzMajor. Photography by Christian Cailliau

and thus, new ideas and theories can emerge. Imagination is part of an intellectual and affective process initiated by firsthand experiences that can be taught to children by sharing a way of looking at the world. Looking at screens is not looking at the world but looking at what other people choose to look at. It develops an identification process based on likes and dislikes and second and third hand experiences. Analogies, imagination and creation are set aside... and magic disappears. Imagine a life without awe and wonder...

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# Goin' to Town By Doug Dolan

In November 1964, I was eleven, and my brother Bill was twelve. I admired and saw him as my protector. Within our home and our small village, the strongest ruled. Our family expected the boys to do a man's job. To set the tone, Dad often cited a biblical quote he attributed to St. Paul, the apostle: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat." (It's Thessalonians (3.10)). His children understood his intent, regardless of the accuracy of the source.

Mom made sure we ate nutritious homemade food. We grew strong and healthy with boundless energy. This often led to major roughhousing. One episode resulted in my landing against a bedroom door and cracking it in two. On the destructive scale, this was serious. Mother threatened an apocalypse when Dad came home from work. When she presented the evidence, Dad's only response that day was,

"Let's leave them alone. Maybe they will eat each other!"

We were a challenge, but despite her five-foot-five-inch frame, she always received the respect of her oversized boys. I preferred the peace of a good book, even though it was fun lighting Bill's fuse by claiming one of the other brothers was 'bad-mouthing' him. I would sit back as the fur flew.

Our family didn't own a car. Our parents saw it as an extravagance. It was driven by Dad's idea that it wasn't worth having if you had to go a distance to get it. Visits to town were infrequent, always by taxi and under Mom's watchful eye. That changed on one clear, wintry day in November.

Bill entered our shared bedroom with a twinkle in his eyes while shutting the door, an agreed-upon sign that something was up. I slid my latest book under the bottom bunk. Within minutes, Bill laid out an elaborate plan. We were to be intrepid surveyors of that still unexplored town called Newcastle. Under the slightly maligned but well-intended objective, we would use our allowances to buy Mom a 'fancy present,' we would go to the 'great place' on our own — walking, of course. Bill's brown eyes were on fire with the possibilities.



The Dolan homestead at Christmas

I wasn't enthusiastic about the plan. I weighed it against finishing my latest Hardy Boys book and became less interested. He figured a round trip to town would take nearly two hours. It would be a cold hike, especially crossing the aging Morrissey Bridge spanning the river. My most significant concern, which I didn't share with Bill, was encountering the Verdun gang. Chatham Head (Verdun) was a smaller hamlet beside our tiny village of Nelson. The residents were called Verduners. Time obscures the name's origin, commemorating those community members who served in World War II.

I found meeting them unsettling. They had a reputation for being tough. Now I was torn between sticking with my older brother and facing a brawl. Loyalty won the day. We had a tough negotiation with Mom. In the end, her experience with me as the most dependable child outweighed the concern she had with Bill and his mischievous antics. With a final warning about being back for supper, we were bound for adventure. In high spirits, we did our best to look confidently at the folks we met along the way. They of course, took little notice.

*Happy Holidays!*

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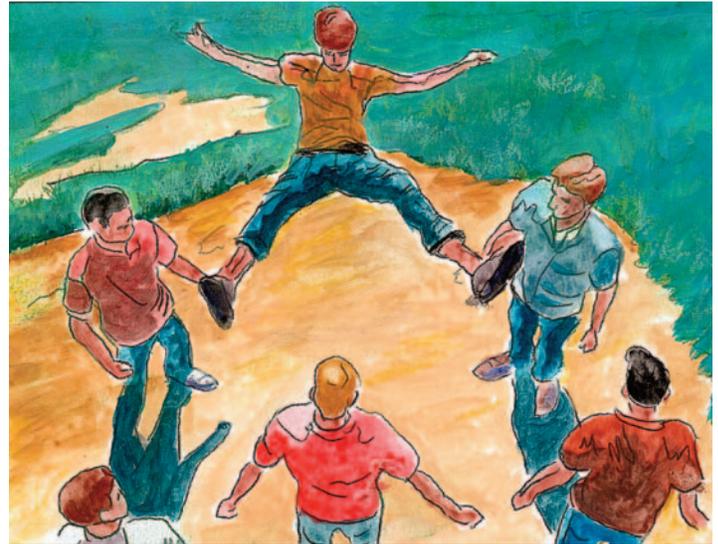
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We encountered no opposition and soon were strolling along the cement sidewalks. (We didn't have those luxuries.) The constant stream of cars was a stark contrast to home, where a passing vehicle sparked critical commentary. We stopped to stare at the neon signs overhanging expansive, clean windows. They washed the windows of our local CO-OP store once a year, whether or not they needed it. We were veterans after investigating the downtown twice. Time flew. It was time for lunch. We chose a spot that held a special memory. It was a nondescript stand near the centre of town. We had been here with Mom one night the previous summer. She had treated us to the most delicious golden fries and a Coke. We watched mesmerized, the neon signs with many flashing colours you could almost taste. The smell of vehicle exhaust mixed with greasy food created a magical scene seared into our memories.

Today we carried our fries and burgers across the street to the park. We were royals set for a feast. For me, nothing could match the time we had with Mom, while Bill imagined a life of idle self-sufficiency. He sized things up, including a gaggle of teenage girls strolling past giggling. Bill determined we would need to revisit.

He casually glanced at his Eaton's catalogue five-dollar watch. It was about 2 p.m. He promised Mom we would be back for supper. He took some responsibilities seriously, and taking care of his younger brother was one. We walked across the busy street to a jewelry store. As we came in, a hushed bell announced our arrival. A sales lady smiled and welcomed us like we were grown-ups. There were others in the store, but it was so quiet, like a church. The store had shiny, clean glass counters. Each held many jewellery things. Bill spotted a pendant. He said he liked it because it was the colour of Mom's eyes.

I thought it strange that he noticed nothing on her few nights out. Now, he was a jewelry expert. He examined the pendant. It radiated a brilliant emerald glow. We agreed it



Bill and Doug encounter trouble on their outing into town.  
Illustrated by Terry Matthews.

was Mom's favourite colour, so we huddled in a corner to review our financial state. Pockets emptied; we determined our capital to be \$6.75. The pendant price matched our budget at \$6.50. We concluded the sale. The lady, sensing the gift's importance, put it in a small box with gold-coloured wrapping paper and a green bow. Pleased, we thanked her and headed out the door toward home. I was excited and proud as we retraced our path across the bridge.

The apprehension I felt walking toward town was gone, but a life lesson awaited me. They came into view, taunting and threatening us. Bill didn't take the bait. He told me to keep walking and say nothing to the gang, who quickly closed the gap. The Verduners surrounded us. We sized each other up. Bill and I were large for our ages. They were on the thin side. Their 'leader' was short, scrawny, and mouthy. He wanted to show us how tough he was. Tension built as he accused us of moving into their territory. He claimed a price had to be paid.

Continued on page 27.



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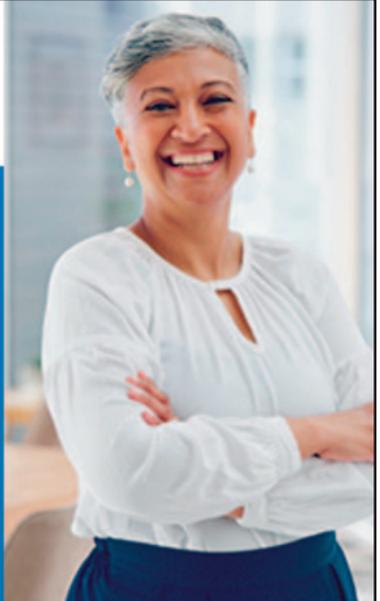
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# Miramichi Ground Search and Rescue

## What to Do If You Get Lost or Disoriented Outdoors

by Paulette Arsenault

Getting lost in the woods or on a trail can happen to anyone—from seasoned hikers to first-time explorers. Whether it's a wrong turn, unexpected weather, or a moment of distraction, disorientation outdoors is a serious situation. But with the right mindset and preparation, you can stay safe and increase your chances of being found quickly. Here's what to do if you find yourself unsure of your surroundings.

**Stop, Stay Calm, and Assess** - The first and most important step is to **stop moving**. Panic can lead to poor decisions and make it harder for rescuers to find you. Take deep breaths, calm your mind, and assess your situation. Ask yourself: When did I last know my location? Can I retrace my steps safely? If not, it's time to stay put.

### Use the S.T.O.P. Method

- **Stop:** Don't wander further.
- **Think:** Recall landmarks, trail markers, or recent turns.
- **Observe:** Check your surroundings. Look for signs of human activity, water, or shelter.
- **Plan:** Decide your next steps based on your gear, weather, and daylight.

**Try to Communicate** - If you have cell service, call emergency services and provide as much detail as possible. Use GPS apps to pinpoint your location. If your phone battery is low, close apps and dim your screen to conserve power.

**Make Yourself Visible** - Rescuers search for signs of life. Make yourself easy to spot:

- Stay in open areas if possible.
- Use bright clothing or gear to signal your location.



- Create large symbols (like an X) on the ground using rocks or branches.
- Blow a whistle in three short bursts—the universal distress signal.

**Stay Warm and Dry** - Exposure is a major risk. If you're stuck overnight:

- Use a space blanket, tarp, or even leaves for insulation.
- Avoid lying directly on the ground—create a barrier with branches or clothing.
- If safe, build a small fire for warmth and signaling.

### Ration Water and Food

Dehydration sets in faster than hunger. Sip water slowly and avoid overexertion. If you have snacks, ration them. Don't eat unfamiliar plants or berries.

**Trust Your Preparation** - Before any outdoor adventure, always tell someone your route and expected return time. Carry a map, compass, and basic survival kit. These small steps can make a big difference.

Getting lost doesn't mean you've failed—it means relying on your preparation, instincts, and calm thinking. Teaching these steps to children and volunteers can turn a scary situation into a manageable one. Outdoor safety is about empowerment, not fear.

### 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: administration, 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](mailto:join@mgsar.ca).

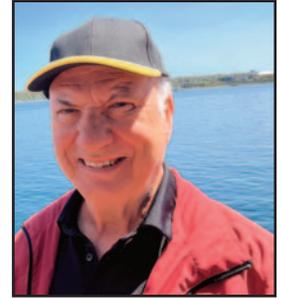
Continued from page 25.

I decided to talk our way out of the standoff. This was the time I eliminated diplomacy as a career choice. The taller boy lunged and pushed me into the soggy grass. Like a coiled cobra unleashed, Bill hit the offender square on, knocking the wind out of him. He yelled for me to run as he set his sights on another opponent. I want to say this is where I stood beside my brother to face the enemy; nope; I shot out of the swamp and toward safety as fast as my young legs would carry me. Fifteen minutes later, and exhausted, I was outside of home. My shirt dried thanks to the draft from running. I licked my hand and wiped my hair in place.

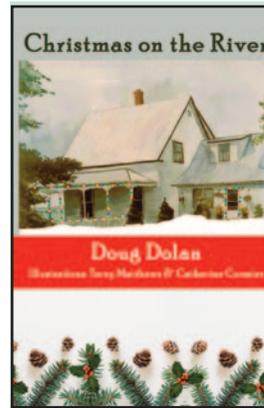
Mom was hanging clothes on the line when I came into the porch. She asked where Bill was. Anticipating the question, I claimed he had met a friend, and they had gone to his house. Satisfied, she asked if we had enjoyed ourselves. I used my mature voice to assure her it was great, then beat a hasty retreat to the safety of our bedroom, waiting in shame for Bill's return. I watched the street from the window, time dragging, waiting for my brother. In about fifteen minutes, he appeared, sauntering along the sidewalk in front of our house. A few moments later, he was in the bedroom. I was relieved and confused, expecting to see his face bloodied and clothes torn. Bill casually mentioned a truce followed the first opponent's fall. He and the Verduners discovered they went to the same school as us. The gang smartly sized up Bill and decided he would be more beneficial as an ally than an enemy. Everybody parted on good terms.

Bill pulled the present from his jacket, none the worse for wear. He slipped it into his drawer of our bureau and headed to the bathroom for a leak.

I flopped onto my bed, amazed at the turn of events. After reflecting on our day, I was proud of my big brother. It was the pride I would rediscover years later when he returned from a dark period in his life.



Doug Dolan was born and raised in Miramichi. He has published three books, *Stories From the River*, *The Mill*, and *Christmas on the River*, which was just released in November.



*Christmas on the River* is a nostalgic compilation of holiday memories from a simpler time, and you may recognize people and places in Miramichi. Two talented artists, Terry Matthews and Catherine Cormier, provided illustrations.

*Christmas on the River* is available to purchase in Miramichi at Mill Cove Coffee (Newcastle), All Decked Out(Chatham) and Papa Joe's(Nelson) and on Amazon.ca, for \$20.

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- ◆ Light in your spirit
- ◆ Connection with those you love

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**Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays**

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# A Creative Year for the Miramichi Art Core

by Terry Power

The **Miramichi Art Core** had a very active spring and summer, starting with several events at École Carrefour Beausoleil. From March 11–14, the school sponsored a Residency and Show with **Spanish artist Tawfiq Chichani**, who provided workshops and artistic instruction to students and the community. Seven Art Core members attended the weeklong workshop, and a final showing of the pieces created during the sessions was featured at the **Galerie Artcadienne**. Later in March, the gallery hosted the group again for their annual show, filling the space with works in various media inspired by Miramichi locations and themes.

May and June saw many members creating pieces for a book about the **Great Miramichi Fire of 1825**. *From The Ashes*, by local authors Bernie Colepaugh and Herb Curtis, was launched at the Newcastle Library on July 5, followed by a signing at Mill Cove Coffee the next day. Original artwork from the book was displayed at both events, with nine Art Core members contributing to the publication.

The group also took part in **Nature New Brunswick's Festival of Nature**, held in Miramichi June 6–8, with members' works on display at the Chatham Head Recreation and Community Centre. On June 21, the group held an outdoor painting day in Hardwicke, where ideal weather



Affordable Art Show at the Newcastle Kin Centre December 5–7

made for an enjoyable plein air session.

In August, members attended the **Plein Air Festival** in Bathurst August 9–10, joining more than fifteen artists from across the province. A similar plein air event will be held in Miramichi next summer. In October, members participated in the Great Miramichi Haggis Hunt and Fall Fair at Wilson's Point.

The Art Core will wrap up the year with the annual **Affordable Art Show, taking place at the Newcastle Kin Centre December 5–7**. The show and sale will feature works by local artists, all priced at \$75 and under—a great opportunity to see the year's creations and find a unique Christmas gift.

Early in the new year, a **Wildlife Workshop in Pastels** will be offered at the Baybreeze Art Gallery in Bathurst. The workshop will be led by Terry Matthews of the Miramichi Art Core, and an online art sale will be presented jointly by the Miramichi Art Core and the Bathurst Art Society, continuing the organizations' ongoing collaboration.

**The Art Core is always open to new members.** To join, visit [www.miramichiartcore.ca](http://www.miramichiartcore.ca) or call Terry Power at 506-625-2464.



From the Ashes Book Launch at Mill Cove

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# Christmas in the Heart

by Brenda Bryan



Christmas in the heart  
is singing out to me,  
Calling the spirit  
that sets a spirit free.  
In gifts of giving  
that touch every heart,  
In a joy kindled,  
of which we are a part.

It's counting the days  
and laughing out with glee,  
Hanging each trimming  
around a Christmas tree.  
And there'll be a star  
that's shining up on top  
Here to light the way,  
even for a pin drop.

Not a mouse is stirring  
when the darkness falls,  
Awaiting Santa  
to make his nightly calls.

Sliding down chimneys  
with a jolly "Ho Ho,"  
Then up and away  
with his reindeer he'll go.

There'll be ribboned bows  
and coloured paper there  
On all the presents  
wrapped for others to share.  
In all the trimmings  
left piled on the floor,  
In a heart laid bare,  
there'll be treasures galore.

Christmas in the heart  
calls but once a year,  
With gifts of giving  
in all you'll find there.  
In a twinkling eye,  
a smile or two —  
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# Rotary Club Presents Paul Harris Fellow Awards

The Rotary Club of Miramichi presented its 2025 Paul Harris Fellow Awards to Rotarian Mike Walsh and community member Mark Hambrook on Sept. 18 at the Miramichi Golf and Country Club.

Established in 1957, the Paul Harris Fellow is one of Rotary's highest honours, given when \$1,000 is donated in a recipient's name to the Rotary Foundation or to individuals who embody Rotary's motto of "service above self."

### Mike Walsh

Born in 1954 and raised in Doyles Brook, Mike graduated from James M. Hill Memorial High School in 1972. He was active in the Nelson Scout Troop and later joined the North Shore (New Brunswick) Regiment, completing infantry and leadership training before pursuing post-secondary education.

Mike spent 23 years in the Canadian Army Reserve, retiring as a lieutenant-colonel with the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. He commanded both the 33rd Halifax Service Battalion and the Army Reserve



Mark Hambrook, left, and Rotarian Mike Walsh received Paul Harris Fellow Awards from the Rotary Club of Miramichi. Photo by Nathan DeLong

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He earned credentials in industrial electricity and electrical power systems, along with his journeyman and professional engineer designations. In 1989, he became an instructor at Nova Scotia Community College.

Mike spent nearly two decades in the Middle East as a technical college instructor, manager, and eventually dean of engineering and trades at the College of the North Atlantic in Qatar. Since returning to Canada in 2017, he has served as an NSCC academic chair, sat on the NBCC board of governors, and completed training contracts in the oil and gas industry, including work in Texas and Guyana. He also owns a company and maintains his family's land in Doyles Brook.

Mike married Colleen Hayden in 1977. Their daughters, Lana and Karen, spent time in the Middle East and have since completed post-secondary studies.

### Mark Hambrook

Born in 1953 in Renous, Mark now lives in Cassilis and has three adult sons and three grandchildren. He graduated from Blackville High School in 1971 and earned a science degree from UNB in 1975. As a young man, he worked in his parents' general store and held student jobs with the Department of National Defence, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, a London hotel, and the Department of Natural Resources' aerial firefighting crew.

Mark worked with Fisheries and Oceans Canada from 1975 to 1986 as a salmon enhancement technician, then as a hatchery biologist and manager until 1997. After DFO divested the South Esk hatchery, he joined the Miramichi Salmon Association, serving as biologist, hatchery manager, and later president until his retirement in 2020. He continued part-time work for four more years.

His honours include the DFO Gulf Region Merit Award, the Deputy Minister's Commendation, the Atlantic Salmon Federation's T.B. "Happy" Fraser Award, and the Lieutenant-Governor's Award for Salmon Conservation.

Mark has served in many community roles, including Home and School Association president, minor hockey registrar, volunteer firefighter, tourism association director, and director of the Atlantic Salmon Museum. He was a Liberal candidate in the 2024 provincial election and continues to serve as a director of the Miramichi River Environmental Assessment Committee, president of the Miramichi Watershed Management Committee, and president emeritus of the salmon association.



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# A Heartfelt Experience

## with the St. Mary's Catholic Church Prayer Shawl Group

by Karen Clark, Certified Life Coach & Professional Early Childhood Educator



I had the honour of being welcomed as a guest at the St. Mary's Catholic Church Prayer Shawl Group, a gathering of kind-hearted, spiritually rooted women who combine faith, craft, and community in a truly beautiful way.

This Ministry began on March 31, 2011, with a small group of women who loved knitting and wanted to help others. Though some members have passed, many new faces have since joined.

The St. Mary's Prayer Shawl Group is a ministry rooted in compassion and care. Located at St. Mary's Parish Church in Miramichi, their mission is simple but powerful: to knit or crochet shawls that are blessed, then given to those in need of comfort, healing, and support. Stitched with love, every shawl is a tangible expression of prayer and community. They also create baptismal shawls for the newly baptized on their special day.

I want to express my sincere appreciation to the group for their openness and generosity in welcoming me into their circle. Each woman sat comfortably with yarn in hand, knitting with a purpose that went far beyond the thread. As we chatted and shared stories, I could feel a deep connection between the members—a quiet yet strong bond of faith and friendship.



St. Mary's Prayer Shawl Group with their handmade shawls of comfort and prayer.

Being invited to join their prayers and sharing was deeply moving—a sacred moment of reflection and unity that reminded me how healing it is to gather in love and service.

Watching the shawl-making process from start to finish allowed me to witness the immense care and prayer woven into each piece. These shawls are more than fabric; they are spiritual gifts holding stories, hopes, and blessings that reach far beyond Miramichi.

What touched me most was the warmth and welcome I felt throughout my experience. These women embody grace and generosity, and I left the meeting with a full heart and a

deepened appreciation for the quiet, powerful work they do. Over 3,000 shawls have been donated to people across Canada, the United States, and Europe.

If you feel called to be part of this meaningful ministry—whether you knit, crochet, or simply want to offer your prayers—St. Mary's Prayer Shawl Group would love to welcome you into their circle.

The Ministry is supported through donations, and all funds received are used to purchase yarn, gift bags, cards, and enclosed prayer cards. For more information, please contact: Jacinthe Gardiner (506-971-5290) or Rachel Butler (506-623-9521)

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Don't forget to read the helpful tips below to ensure your letter makes it all the way to the North Pole! Santa will respond to your letter in the same language.

### Guidelines to mail your letter

- Ensure your letter is addressed to Santa (address below).
- No stamps are required to mail a letter to Santa within Canada.
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### Help your students write to Santa

Encourage your students to write a letter to Santa this holiday season. Our postal elves will ensure Santa's personalized class poster is sent to your classroom.

### Letters from around the world

Santa loves receiving mail worldwide! If you're outside of Canada and wish to write to Santa, there are



helpful guidelines on the website to make sure Santa receives your letter and you receive a reply in the same language!

Find letter templates, tips for teachers and guidelines for sending international letters on the Canada Post website. Visit [www.canadapost.ca/santa](http://www.canadapost.ca/santa) to get started.

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# Miramichi Historical Society

## Commemorating the Miramichi Fire of 1825



by Charlotte Loggie, President

Commemorating the 200th anniversary of the Miramichi Fire was a year-long project for the Miramichi Historical Society. Planning began in October 2024, with several community groups attending two public meetings where various project ideas were conceived.

The Historical Society, with funding from the City of Miramichi, invited Dr. Alan MacEachern, the author of *The Miramichi Fire: A History*, to speak in Miramichi on August 22 and to sign copies of his book on August 23.

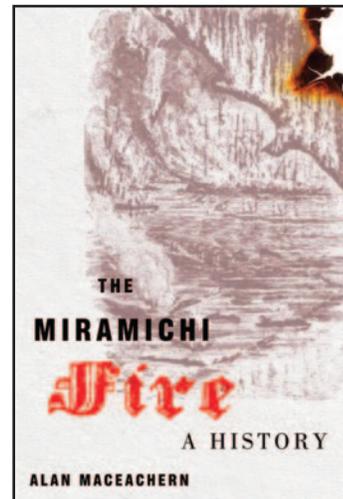
We commissioned three designs for commemorative buttons from graphic designer and artist Mark Loggie of Fredericton. The buttons were a popular item and have since sold out.

In conjunction with St. Paul's Anglican Church, we hosted Dr. MacEachern's talk and installed three commemorative plaques at the church—two outside and one inside. One of our members, Frances Connell, led a walk to the site where it is believed there is a mass grave of victims of the Fire, located off McKinnon Road. A short ceremony of remembrance was held there on October 7, the anniversary of the Fire.

Our AGM, held on October 20, featured several projects completed by members during the year: Bernie Colepaugh and Herb Curtis' book *From the Ashes*, a compilation of stories and legends about the Fire; a commemorative quilt by Gill Wallace called *The River Still Flows*; and a recording of Mike Bravener singing John



Dr. Alan MacEachern, author of *The Miramichi Fire: A History*, speaking about his book.



Jardine's folksong "The Miramichi Fire," which he performed on October 7 at John Jackson and family's grave in St. Paul's Anglican churchyard, recorded by Richard Walsh.



Dr. MacEachern has notified the Society that the Government of Canada has designated the Miramichi Fire as a **significant historical event**, which will receive official recognition in the form of a commemorative plaque to be erected in the city.

The Miramichi Historical Society meets several times a year, hosting events and presentations that promote a deeper understanding of our rich local history. On **March 8, 2026**, we will be presenting our annual **International Women's Day** event, with time and location to be announced.

**Happy Holidays!**

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# A Guide to Nurturing Your Inner Peace



Taking Control of Your Emotional Wellness by Stacy Underhill

In the whirlwind of daily life, and especially during the holidays, it's easy to overlook how we're really feeling. Stress and frustration can start to seem normal, or like things we simply have to put up with. But our emotional wellness deserves just as much care as our physical health, and the encouraging thing is that we have more influence over our emotional state than we realize.

There was a time when stress felt like my default setting. I'd wake up in a rush, already bracing for the day, believing my moods were out of my control. Everything shifted when I learned that how we feel is shaped by our thoughts, the meaning we give situations, and how we choose to respond.

I've always read spiritual and self-help books, but the biggest change came when I discovered **Abraham Hicks**, learned about the **Law of Attraction**, and began **meditating**. Another major transformation came when I learned **Theta Healing** and became a certified practitioner. It's a guided meditation method that helps explore and transform limiting thought patterns, and it's been life changing for me and for many of my clients.

There are many **simple, accessible ways to support emotional balance**—tools anyone can learn. The first step is becoming aware of how you feel and asking whether this is how you want to keep feeling. Then be open to explore: read, watch videos, find teachers, speakers, and authors who resonate with you, and open the door to inspiration.

These are some of my **favourite tools and resources** that can help you pause, breathe, and gently guide yourself back to a calmer place. They offer free content, videos,



information and optional paid courses if you want to go further.

**EFT Tapping** – Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) Tapping involves tapping on specific meridian points on your body while acknowledging your feelings, allowing the nervous system to settle. It's simple, free, and something anyone can learn. [www.thetappingsolution.com](http://www.thetappingsolution.com)

**Donna Eden's Energy Exercises** – Donna Eden's energy-medicine exercises are quick, grounding movements that help balance the body's energy. Donna is a pioneer in this field and her joyful energy is contagious! [www.edenmethod.com](http://www.edenmethod.com)

**Motivational Content** – Sometimes a single sentence or short story is enough to turn your whole day around. Hay House Publishing is a great place to start. Their YouTube page features inspiring and uplifting content from their authors. [www.youtube.com/@HayHousePresents](http://www.youtube.com/@HayHousePresents)

**Grounding Exercise:** Feeling "out of whack" at work? Stressed in traffic? Step out of the room, or pull over safely, and do this quick grounding exercise. Sit or stand with your feet on the floor/ground and feel the steadiness beneath you. Place your hand on your heart and take three long, slow, deliberate breaths. That's it! We sometimes forget how easily our breath can bring us back into alignment.

**Emotional wellness** isn't about pretending everything is fine. It's about noticing how you're feeling and remembering that you have tools to help you shift. Explore what resonates, keep what works, and let the rest go. With a few simple practices, peace and clarity can become something you can return to—anytime you need it.

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# Announcing the Northumberland Free Press

By Nathan DeLong



I am excited to announce that I am now covering local news in the Miramichi region full-time for the Northumberland Free Press, an online, independent, hyperlocal publication dedicated to sharing stories from across Northumberland County.

Many *Giv'er* magazine readers may remember me as a byline in the Miramichi Leader and other Brunswick News publications. I moved to Miramichi in 2018 to accept a job at the Leader as a reporter, and I've held various roles in digital and print media throughout my career. When the Brunswick News door closed in August, it only made sense to transition to a full-time role at the Free Press to help strengthen local news coverage at a time when traditional newspapers have faced challenges.

The Free Press shares stories on various topics, including breaking news, municipal affairs, sports, politics, and human-interest pieces. The publication's guiding principles are that communities are best served when residents are informed, and that a press free of government or corporate influence, serving as a watchdog for those in power, is paramount to a healthy democracy.

We live in an age with the world at our fingertips. It's more convenient than ever to access information anytime, on any topic, from our smartphones, tablets, and computers. That makes it easy to get caught up in what's happening nationally and globally while losing sight of what's going on locally.

Decisions made locally often have the biggest impacts on our daily lives, yet they can easily be overlooked amid the noise of national and global headlines. Local stories about local people, and things taking place in our own backyard, often resonate more with readers than headlines of doom and gloom and alerts about current events a country or world away.

The Free Press has provided in-depth coverage of municipal affairs across the region. In the past year alone, it has covered a provincial election, a federal election, and provincial and municipal by-elections, while also documenting athletes' and sports teams' achievements, including, but not limited to, high school teams' successes and the Miramichi Kia Timberwolves and the Miramichi Mike's Bar and Grill Northmen championship wins. Find more at [www.northumberlandfreepress.ca](http://www.northumberlandfreepress.ca).

If you have a story idea or news tip, send it to [news@northumberlandfreepress.ca](mailto:news@northumberlandfreepress.ca).

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Looking down Pleasant Street, photo by Bonnie Coughlan



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# Community Tidbits

## Miramichi's Sam Johnston to Join the New Brunswick Sports Hall of Fame

Congratulations to Sam Johnston of Miramichi, who will be inducted into the New Brunswick Sports Hall of Fame in May 2026. Johnston is an eighth-degree black belt in taekwondo and a former New Brunswick, Maritime, and Eastern Canadian heavyweight champion, as well as a world champion in 2017.

The New Brunswick Sports Hall of Fame honours athletes and sport builders who have made a lasting impact on sport in the province.



## Drawing a New Chapter - Artist Hugh Servant

Hugh Servant is a graphite artist from Miramichi, New Brunswick. Now 67, he is a former construction worker who began drawing at age 65 after retiring.

Like many of us as we get older, he found himself with more time on his hands as family and friends moved or passed on — and it wasn't always easy. But when Hugh started drawing, everything changed. Art brought him purpose, comfort, and countless unexpected benefits.

Now, he is sharing his work with the world, hoping others will enjoy it as much as he does. Hugh also hopes his journey inspires others, at any age, to pick up a pencil, make some art, and fill their hearts.



Artwork by Hugh Servant: A haunting shoreline view where a wrecked ship contrasts with a distant sunset-bound sail.

### Jokes

Why is the Grinch such an excellent gardener? *He has a green thumb.*  
What did one snowman say to the other snowman? *Do you smell carrots?*  
What kind of photos do elves take? *Elfies!*

Ha Ha Ha!



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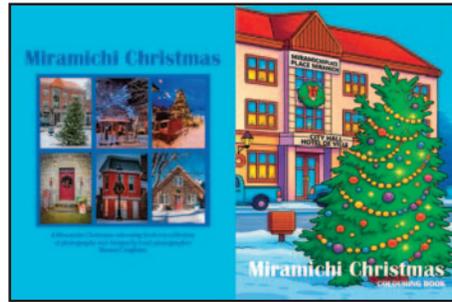


# Capturing Miramichi's Beauty in Every Season

## Local Photographer Releases Miramichi Calendar and Colouring book

Local photographer Bonnie Coughlan has released two delightful new creative projects that celebrate the beauty, character, and spirit of the river region. Her **2026 Miramichi Calendar** showcases a curated collection of stunning local scenes—from peaceful river views and vibrant parks to familiar streetscapes captured in every season. Each image highlights the charm of Miramichi and the places residents know and love.

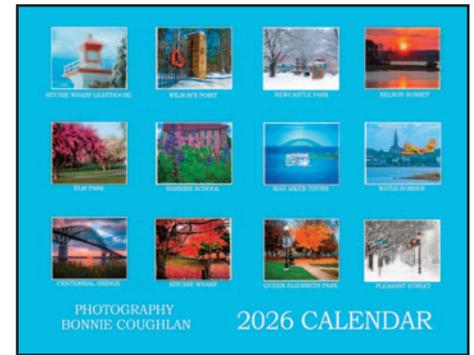
For those who enjoy a hands-on, artistic way to embrace the holidays, Bonnie has also created a **Miramichi Christmas Colouring Book**, filled with festive illustrations inspired by the city's seasonal magic. It's a perfect activity for families, a cozy winter pastime, or a thoughtful gift for



anyone who appreciates Miramichi's unique charm.

Both items are **available locally** at Dickinson's PharmaSave in Newcastle and All Decked Out in Chatham. Calendars are \$22 and colouring books are \$18, with \$6 shipping within Canada. For out-of-town Canadian orders, email [bonniecac@gmail.com](mailto:bonniecac@gmail.com).

You can see more of Bonnie's work on Instagram at [@bonniecac](https://www.instagram.com/@bonniecac).



  
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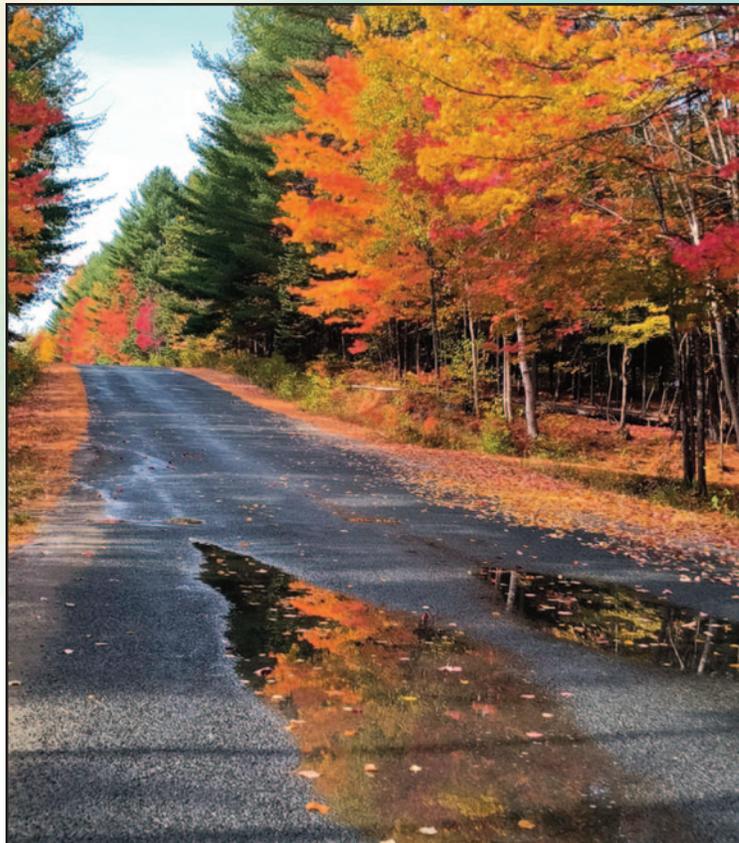
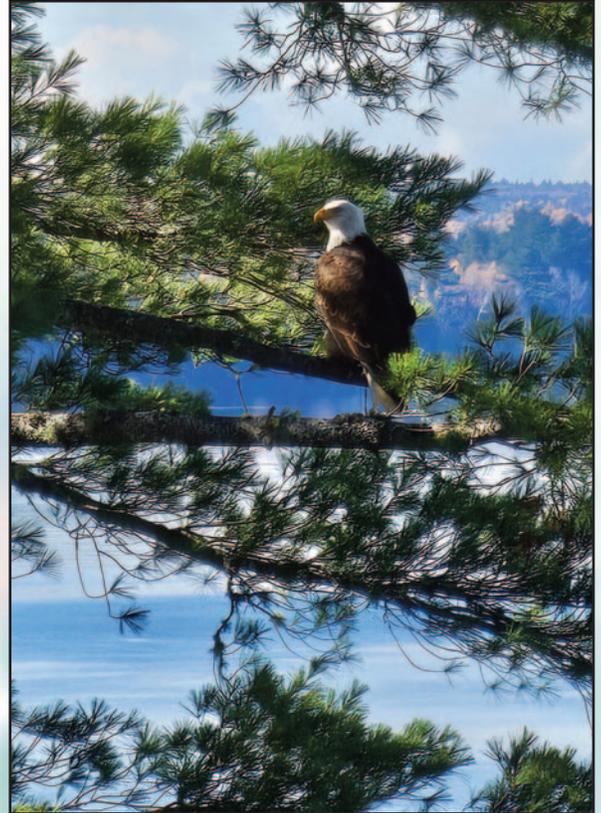
# Community Photo Submissions

If you have photos, stories, tips or tidbits to share we'd love to hear from you. Send submissions to [submit@mcgmedia.net](mailto:submit@mcgmedia.net). For photos, send high resolution jpg's (not resized for email) and remember to include your name for credit and the location or short description of the subject. Submit by Feb. 13, 2026 for the spring issue.



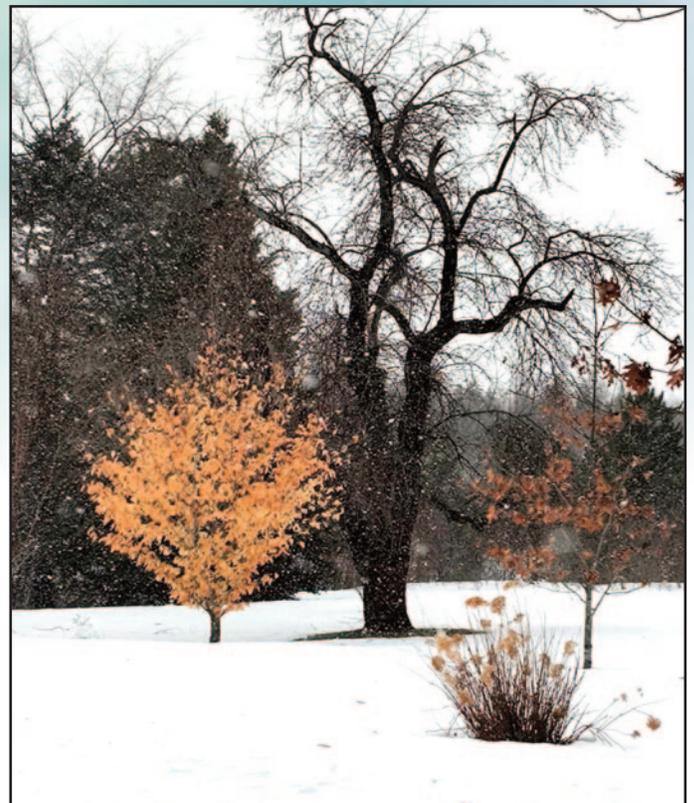
**Above:** Autumn scene on the Mill Stream

**Right:** An eagle taking in the view on the Mill Stream  
Photos by Jacques La Fontaine



**Above:** A colourful drive on the South Renous road

**Right:** Autumn meets winter  
Photos by Laura Lea Harrison





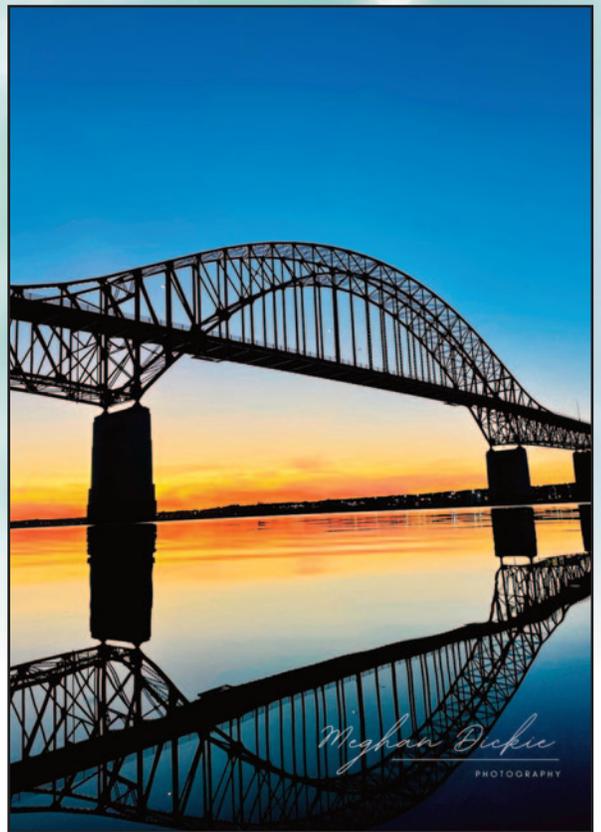
Looking out from Sunrise Campground with Sheldrake Island in the distance  
Photo by Edna Trevors



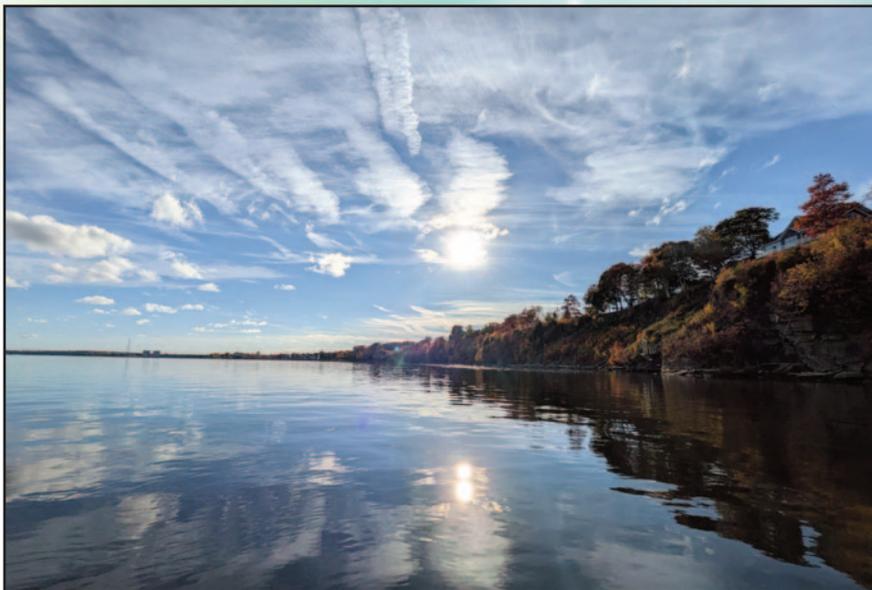
A fairy castle discovered in the snow  
Photo by Stacy Underhill



Town Square berries and a Christmas tree  
Photo by Bonnie Coughlan



Sunset at Centennial Bridge, photo by Meghan Dickie



Last sail of the year, photo by Terry Matchett



**Above:** Two families of otters together and a close-up of a Lynx (right). Trail cam photos captured by Brian Donovan.



Bruce the Moose lit up for Christmas in Doaktown.  
Photo by Les McLaughlin



Who says cats don't like water? Romeo enjoys lounging by the Miramichi (left) and Bartibog (right) Rivers. Photos by Paulette Vienneau



Looking up the Miramichi River in Boiestown  
Photo by Pauline Merrill

## Winter Safety Tips for Your Vehicle

Keep a **candle and matches** in your car. One candle can raise the inside temperature several degrees.

Store a bag of **kitty litter** in your trunk. It provides instant traction under stuck tires on ice.

## Fun Facts

Brrrr! The **coldest recorded temperature** in New Brunswick is  $-47.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ , measured at Sisson Dam on February 1, 1955.

**Red squirrels** sometimes forget where they've buried food, and those forgotten caches can help new trees grow.

**Chickadees can lower their body temperature at night**

To conserve energy in winter, black-capped chickadees enter a controlled hypothermia called torpor, dropping their temperature by up to  $10^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

**A moose can run up to 56 km/h** - Surprisingly fast for such a large animal.

## Snowflake Surprise

Most snowflakes are unique, but in 1988, atmospheric scientist Nancy Knight was the first to discover two snow crystals from a Wisconsin storm that appeared identical under a microscope.

However, scientists note that while tiny, simple crystals may occasionally match, it is highly unlikely to find two large, complex, natural snowflakes that are a perfect match.

At the molecular level, even the "identical" pair still had differences — but visually, they remain the closest match ever found.

Nov 28

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# Christmas Word Search



|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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SNOWFLAKES  
SNOW  
BELLS  
HOLLY

CHRISTMAS  
PRESENTS  
TREE

LIGHTS  
SANTA  
WREATH  
DEER

GINGERBREAD  
SNOWMAN  
WINTER  
SLEIGH



## Word Scramble

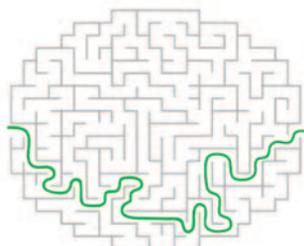
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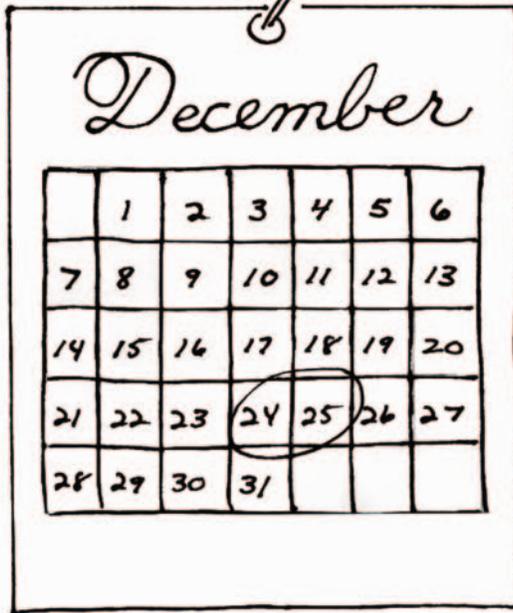
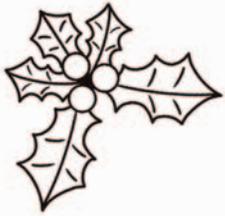


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stars  
wreath  
tree  
snow  
lights  
bells  
jolly  
sled  
santa  
elves

# Merry Christmas



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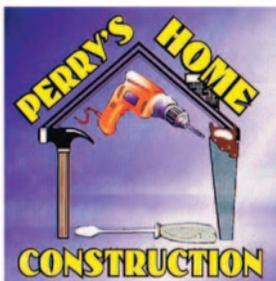
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# Season's Greetings from the Greater Miramichi Service Commission - EcoDiversiion

An eco-friendly Christmas can be beautiful, meaningful, and gentle on the planet. Here are some ideas to celebrate sustainably:

## Eco-Friendly Decor

Use pinecones, dried oranges, cinnamon sticks, and greenery to make wreaths and table settings. These are compostable and give a cozy, natural look.



## Sustainable Gift Wrapping

Use scarves, tea towels, or fabric scraps (like Furoshiki wrapping) to wrap gifts. These are reusable and look elegant.

## Eco-Friendly Gifts

Give experiences rather than items—like tickets to a show, a cooking class, or a membership to a local garden.



Consider homemade candles, jams, or baked goods in glass jars, or handmade crafts that carry personal meaning.

## Charitable Acts and Community Support

Donate unwanted or unused items to those in need, or organize a toy or food drive.

Instead of receiving gifts daily, make each day about giving back or doing a kind deed for someone else.



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