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THE Matriarch OF THE Island

By VICKI HOGARTH
Reporter, The Courier

On Grand Manan, time does not so much pass as it settles.

You feel it the moment the ferry pulls away from the mainland, when the shoreline softens and the horizon opens, and the world you've left behind—its noise, its urgency, its fluorescent insistence—begins to feel faintly theoretical. Here, there are no chain stores, no neon signs competing for your attention. There are wharves and weathered homes, lobster traps stacked in colourful rows, and majestic sea cliffs with nothing but ocean beyond.

And then there is Vera Green.

At 103, she is, by all accounts, the oldest living islander—a fact she confirms only when asked, and even then with a kind of polite disinterest.

"I don't think much about it," she says, seated in her daughter Sheila's living room, where the window stretches wide across the Bay of Fundy like a painting that refuses to stay still. In the distance, Swallowtail Lighthouse stands quietly against the sky.

Vera glances toward it, as if checking in with an old friend. She has looked out at this view countless times. She has never tired of it.

The house is full when I visit. Six generations gather in the same room: Vera; her daughter Sheila, who is 80; Sheila's daughters Vicky and Sonya; Sonya's daughter Haze; Haze's daughter Ocean; and Ocean's son,



Ocean holding Pheonix (left), Haze, Sonya, Sheila, and Vera - a six generation family. PHOTO: VICKI HOGARTH / THE COURIER

Phoenix—a baby and the first boy to arrive after what feels, in family lore, like a dynasty of girls.

It is, as someone points out, a straight line of daughters until him.

Vera laughs when asked what it feels like to preside over such a family.

"I've got so many," she says, the sentence dissolving into laughter. "And I love them all."

There is no performance for her. No grand speech about legacy. Just a matter-of-fact tenderness that seems to have shaped everything around her.

If Vera is the island's matriarch, she is also its memory.

She has lived a life that stretches across eras most of us encounter only in textbooks—through war, through cultural shifts, through the quiet transformations of everyday life. But she recalls it all not as history, exactly, but as experience.

Her childhood would read, today, like fiction.

"We lived in a tar paper shack for three winters," Vera says, describing the early years when her father worked on a logging project.

"We didn't have an easy life, but we had a good one."

There is no self-pity in the telling. No embellishment.

Vera's mother died when she was a young girl. Her father worked hard, cutting wood. They walked long distances to school. For a time, they lived with a dirt floor beneath them.

"I'm not ashamed," she says simply.

What she remembers most is not hardship, but love.

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One mile at a time: Community raises \$2K for mental health



Coun. Annette Harland (left), Victoria McGuire, Coun. Steve Neil discuss the importance of reducing the stigma around mental health. PHOTO: NATHALIE STURGEON / THE COURIER

By NATHALIE STURGEON
Editor in Chief, LJL

Warning: This story contains a discussion about suicide

Four miles (6.4 kilometers), every four hours, for 48 hours.

That is the challenge Kurt Gumushel and Victoria McGuire set for themselves as part of an effort to raise money for suicide prevention and the Town of Saint Andrews' Wellness Committee.

It is known as the Goggins Challenge — and created by David Goggins, a former Navy SEAL who wanted to

not only test his physical limits, but his mental as well.

The endurance run also traces back to Alex Quinn, who also ran the Goggins challenge in Saint John and is the subject of a short film titled *Running in Circles*.

"This was the first year I wanted to challenge myself to do the full run," McGuire said in an interview with *The Courier*.

Gumushel, also a Saint Andrews municipal councillor, has been doing the challenge for the last four years.

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\$1.7M announced for Saint Andrews clinic



The Town of Saint Andrews, Horizon Health Network and the Government of New Brunswick have all played a role in transition the wellness centre into a full collaborative care clinic. PHOTO: NATHALIE STURGEON / THE COURIER

By **NATHALIE STURGEON**
Editor in Chief, LJL

When Dr. Julie Levesque-Taylor is at her child's swim practices, she is often on her laptop, checking patient bloodwork, reviewing scans or dealing with paperwork.

Levesque-Taylor said today's announcement by the provincial government to invest \$1.7 million into a collaborative care clinic in Saint Andrews will bring relief.

"It feels nothing short of amazing, honestly," she said, speaking with reporters.

"The faith that this government has put in this model — not just adding more dollars to the budget so the doctors can get paid more for what they do so that they're at parity with the neighboring provinces and the rest of Canada — but the infrastructure investments."

For Levesque-Taylor, the weight of running a practice and not having the supportive resources can be difficult.

"There are so many costs — hidden costs — that when people look at what family physicians make for a living, they don't realize how much overhead we actually pay at the end of the day," she said.

She said the administrative burden is heavy — what has become known as "paperweight."

"That is the reality of family physicians is all that administrative burden," she said. "It's spreading the burden, [it] is having a [registered nurse] who can go through the labs and just take care of all the stuff that's normal," she said.

Levesque-Taylor, alongside Dr. Brian Peer and his wife and practice manager Annette Harland, have been working to facilitate its opening — bringing Charlotte County its third collaborative care clinic.

It will also be able to take on all patients within the clinic's geographical area over the next six to 12 months.

"We expect more than 600 patients will likely [be] added to this clinic, and we'll have the ability to make sure that the 1,700 patients from Dr. Peer [will] transition really smoothly," said Premier Susan Holt, speaking with reporters.

Three new physicians are expected to arrive in September, according to Horizon Health Network (HHN) president and CEO Margaret Melanson.

Dr. Madison Borsella, Dr. Grayson Gould and Dr. Madison Stevens will arrive in the fall. Melanson said they couldn't be at the announcement because they were writing their practice exams.

"We have people coming on board. We're not looking — people have committed to coming here," said Health Minister Dr. John Dornan. "We have space committed. So those are the two ingredients. But it doesn't happen overnight. So we'll wait for those physicians to finish their exams or come here late summer. We'll finish the space here. And the rest is history."

The province recently signed a physician services agreement totalling \$270 million over four years. It also intends to invest \$710 million in health care; \$30 million has been allocated for 12 more collaborative care clinics.

This is the third announcement this year. In February, Holt said the Fundy Health Centre would also become a collaborative care clinic, which would onboard roughly 1,100 patients in that region.

Annette Harland, who is also a municipal councillor for the Town of Saint Andrews, spoke of the wellness centre's long history in the community.

"It was formerly known as the Health Centre and originated through a generous funding donation established by Lady Beaverbrook," Harland said, addressing the crowd gathered. "As many of you know, Lady Beaverbrook was a summer resident in Saint Andrews and was a very generous patron [of] this community. Through the Sir James Dunn Foundation, she funded this arena, our high school, the fire station, as well as the original health centre, which was located on Sophia Street."

That version of the clinic opened in 1974, and, through the years, has served many patients. In 2008, ownership of the clinic was transferred to the Town of Saint Andrews.

"About eight years ago, the council of the day, under the leadership of former mayor Doug Naish, decided that the health centre needed a new facility, and work began to renovate this former bowling alley," she said.

Under new leadership, Harland and former mayor Brad Henderson worked to recruit another primary care physician, connecting with Levesque-Taylor.

"Fortunately for us, she had always wanted to return to the province — specifically to this region — and in May 2021, the Saint Andrews Wellness Centre officially opened," Harland said.

Harland explained the clinic — in addition to two primary care physicians — provides mental health services, social development services, public safety support, a consulting physiotherapist and hospice.

It will see the addition of a registered

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THE MATRIARCH OF THE ISLAND

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Sheila, sitting beside her, fills in the spaces her mother leaves untouched. When Vera speaks of a 67-year marriage, Sheila reminds me it was lived in a house Vera's husband Jewett built himself—a home that still stands, now occupied by another generation.

They share a rhythm—part teasing, part reverence.

When I ask who the “boss” of the family is, Sheila answers first.

“I think I am now,” she says, laughing. “She doesn't like it. But when she was the boss, I didn't like it.”

Vera smiles.

The baton, it seems, has been passed—though perhaps not entirely surrendered.

On an island of just a few thousand people, everyone knows everyone. But Vera is something else.

“She's the glue,” Haze tells me later. “She's always been the glue.”

For decades, Vera served as the pianist at Community Life Church,

a steady presence at the centre of island life. People refer to her, without irony, as the matriarch—not just of her family, but of Grand Manan itself.

It is the kind of title that can't be claimed. Only earned.

Time, here, is both abundant and fleeting.

Sheila describes raising her children as if it happened yesterday, though those same children are now grandparents themselves. Holidays require strategy—eighty people cannot fit into one house, so gatherings are staggered and spread out across weekends. Gifts have been replaced with charitable donations, a lesson passed down alongside recipes and traditions.

In the summer, they gather in the backyard—dozens of them—for barbecues that stretch into evening. At some point, inevitably, someone produces marshmallows.

And then, as if on cue, a fight breaks out.

It is less a tradition than a release—a moment when generations collapse into one another, when great-great-grandmothers and toddlers alike

become participants in something joyful and slightly absurd. “I'm thankful for them all.”

“If you've never been hit by a marshmallow,” Vicky tells me, “you're missing out.”

Later, I speak with Ocean, who at 21 is already part of this long chain of mothers and daughters, now raising her own child in the same place her family has lived for generations.

“I have friends who don't even have one grandparent,” she says. “And we have so many.”

She pauses.

“To sit down and talk with your elders—that's some of the most important stuff you can do.”

There is, in her voice, an awareness that feels both inherited and newly claimed—that what surrounds her is not ordinary, even if it feels that way.

Before I leave, I ask Vera what she loves most about her life here.

She looks out the window again, toward the water, toward the lighthouse.

“Well,” she says, “my life on the island... I love it here.”

And then, after a moment:

She does not need to specify who she means.

It is tempting, in a place like Grand Manan, to talk about preservation—to frame it as a world untouched, unchanged. But that isn't quite right. The island evolves, just as families do. Babies are born. Traditions shift. New ideas arrive alongside old ones.

And still, something holds.

Six generations in one room. A house passed from one set of hands to another. Recipes carried across decades. A woman who once lived in a tar paper shack now watching her great-great-great-grandchild play at her feet.

The past does not disappear here. It accumulates.

And if there is a lesson to be taken from Vera Green—something that stretches beyond the island, beyond even the remarkable fact of 103 years—it is this:

That the measure of a life is not how long it is, but how deeply it is shared.

That the greatest blessing we are given is each other.

And that the greatest gift we can offer in return is time.

COMMUNITY RAISES \$2K FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Continued from page 1

“I'd say we have lost too many good people lately so the Goggins is a good metaphor for perseverance in tough conditions,” he said in a statement. “We can do hard things, go through tough times and come out the other side. Mind over matter.”

Both McGuire and Gumushel were able to raise a little over \$2,000 for the Saint Andrews Wellness Committee to help them put on another round of Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) likely in the fall.

“It is designed for mental toughness and physical endurance,” said McGuire, who also owns a local chocolatier business on Water Street. “I couldn't have done it without my community support, like my husband and my mother-in-law working in the store and taking care of the kids.”

She stopped as well to care for one of her children before hitting the pavement again.

“But then just prioritizing sleep,” she said. “Just getting as much sleep as I could, because when I thought about doing it in the past that was the part that I thought would be the hardest.”

McGuire said the community showed up for her and Gumushel, especially those who share a passion for running.

“That made such a huge difference,” she said. “We had one person complete half of the laps with us. We had someone else complete [about] 20 miles total and then at the finale there were people from Grand Manan and Harvey. I could have cried.”

Coun. Annette Harland said the

Saint Andrews Wellness Committee applied to the Fundy Community Foundation to put on the ASIST training — an internationally recognized program by LivingWorks.

It was able to train 23 people from a variety of different backgrounds, but came at a cost of \$200 per person.

“It was really well attended,” Harland said in an interview with The Courier.

“The whole purpose is to create a welcoming, supportive and inclusive community. We know that suicide rates have increased significantly, particularly post-pandemic.”

She said that is where the opportunity to train community members becomes so valuable. Harland said the more people are encouraged to have these difficult conversations, the easier it becomes to remove the stigma, and that starts with showing others the support that exists right at home.

Coun. Steve Neil, who is also a member of the wellness committee, said it is continuing to work on developing an active list of resources available to residents in the area.

“That is one of the, I would say, major roadblocks — people don't know where to go for help,” he said.

Neil said normalizing it, talking about it, is part of the destigmatization process.



Coun. Kurt Gumushel has done the Goggins Challenge for the last four years, this year, he was joined by several community members. PHOTO: SUBMITTED

And while McGuire said she originally committed to the Goggins Challenge nonchalantly, she took every mile thinking about her mom — who lost her ability to walk due to illness, her friends who showed up along the way, and all the people who may need help taking it one mile at a time.

If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 911. Help is available 24/7.

HERE ARE SOME RESOURCES:

9-8-8: Suicide Crisis Helpline: Call or text 9-8-8. Support is available 24/7.

Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868

Hope for Wellness Helpline for Indigenous peoples: 1-855-242-3310

Trans Lifeline: 1-877-330-6366

Eastern Charlotte rejects child care tender amid funding cap

By NATHALIE STURGEON
Editor in Chief, LJI

Councillors in Eastern Charlotte have voted to reject a tender for a childcare facility following a cap on funding from the provincial government.

The facility has long been a priority for the council. It was planned as a 6,200-square-foot single storey wood framed building located on J.O. Spinney Road, adjacent to Magaguadavic Place.

Chief Administrative Officer Jason Gaudet told council the original agreement called for 40 per cent from the provincial government, another 40 per cent from the federal government, and 20 per cent from the municipality.

“Following the receipt of the tender results, and prior to awarding the contract to Avant Garde, the [Regional Development Corporation] with the province advised their contribution would be capped at \$500,000,” he said.

The total cost of the project was \$2,698,730, which meant the provincial portion had been reduced to 18.5 per cent. Council was told its portion would be about \$1.36

million, or about 50 per cent.

Eastern Charlotte Mayor John Craig said the reduction from the province does put the project out of reach for the municipality.

“At this point, the council does not want to go that far into debt,” Craig said in an interview with *The Courier*.

Child care is not the mandate of the local governments in New Brunswick, but like it and other things, municipalities have tried to step up on homelessness, housing and health care.

Craig acknowledged the province’s desire to cut down on spending— noting the deficit of \$1.33 billion looming over the government. He said the council has set a focus on the water quality in Blacks Harbour.

“It’s not that we don’t think that childcare is important, but we don’t want to handcuff future projects,” he said, noting the recent funding announced for the collaborative care clinic at the Fundy Health Centre.

Craig also said this doesn’t mean the project is dead; it means [the municipality] have taken a step back to reassess how it moves forward.

“We’ve got the land, we have everything started as far as the drawings ... it’s not that we’ve given up.”

During the meeting, Coun. Alexa Detorakis asked council to table the motion to reject the tender until after an update was provided by the local government’s economic development officer.

The motion did not receive a seconder — another council member supporting the motion to bring it forward for a vote — and was defeated.

Detorakis said there has been a lot of work involved in the project beyond what has been discussed at council.

Coun. Terry Lee said he thinks the municipality could consider a smaller facility.

“We have options. I’m not against child care, I want to see a childcare building,” he said during the regular meeting on March 10. “If something changes, we can revisit it.”

Lee said a small building could be considered, but added he was

unwilling to put the burden of \$1.3 million on taxpayers.

At the federal level, Employment and Social Development Canada said in a statement to *The Courier* it has extended the funding agreement with New Brunswick until 2031.

“Any requirements a province or territory may put in place regarding the provision of Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) funding to operators [are] at their discretion, provided these requirements meet the terms and conditions outlined in the Canada-wide ELCC agreements,” the statement said.

New Brunswick’s Regional Development Corporation (RDC) confirmed the 40-40-20 allocation remains in place, but is capped at \$500,000.

“Having said that, RDC would entertain maintaining a 40 per cent contribution above the \$500,000 toward the total eligible cost of the project, provided there is a sustainable business plan for the childcare and the community identifies how they will raise the balance of the funds,” the department said in a statement to *The Courier*.

Feds, province agree to \$300M for affordable housing

By NATHALIE STURGEON
Editor in Chief, LJI

The federal and provincial governments are partnering up to build up to 1,200 new homes through the Build Canada Homes program.

“This agreement marks the single largest investment in affordable housing in New Brunswick’s history,” David Hickey said in a media release, who is the minister responsible for the New Brunswick Housing Corporation. “Our government is committed to transforming housing in this province, and today that means ensuring an unprecedented number of New Brunswickers will have access to safe and affordable housing.”

The program was launched, according to the release, to increase the country’s affordable housing supply for lower-and-middle income Canadians. It also aims to help with homelessness by supporting transitional and supportive housing, done in cooperation with territorial, municipal governments, as well as Indigenous communities.

The federal and provincial government have reached a cost-



The federal and provincial government have committed to increasing the number of affordable housing units in the province. PHOTO: GOVERNMENT OF CANADA / GOVERNMENT OF NEW BRUNSWICK

matching agreement that will provide about \$300 million in total funding, according to the Government of New Brunswick (GNB). Priority has been given to “shovel ready” projects that can begin within 12 months.

“Everyone deserves a safe, affordable place to call home,” Premier Susan Holt said.

The Holt government submitted a proposal to the Build Canada Homes program, which included several housing projects across New Brunswick.

“This partnership between the Government of Canada and the Province of New Brunswick demonstrates what we can achieve when we work together to tackle the housing crisis head-on,” federal Housing and Infrastructure Minister Gregor Robertson said in the release.

According to the federal government, 160 homes will go toward transitional and supportive housing, with almost half the total supporting low-income Canadians. Up to another 450 will be in smaller and rural areas. The federal release

said it will work with municipalities across New Brunswick to remove barriers to construction.

“This includes measures such as reduced or waived development fees, expedited permitting processes and temporary property tax relief, where available,” the release said.

It is expected to utilize modular home construction, prefabrication and other off site building techniques to expedite the process, according to the release.

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Town claims provincial pressure on wharf project

New documents obtained by the Courier through a Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act application reveal the town received this deadline extension several months before asserting there was no flexibility.

By **NATHALIE STURGEON**
Editor in Chief, LJ1

Staff from the Town of Saint Andrews claim they were pressured by the Regional Development Corporation (RDC) to progress with the Market Wharf and Market Square refurbishment project despite the department approving a deadline extension application from the town well into 2027.

New documents obtained by *The Courier* through a Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act application reveal the town received this deadline extension several months before asserting there was no flexibility.

“However, as requested, we can extend the end date to March 31, 2027, to provide the municipality with sufficient time to address these costs,” said an email from Kingsley Daniels to Chris Spear.

The Courier identified a discrepancy between two dates: the publicly-shared March 2026 deadline by the town, and the extended March 2027 deadline approved in November 2024. That extended deadline was later confirmed by Infrastructure Canada and the New Brunswick Regional Development Corporation. The latter deadline was not made public until this newspaper reported it, despite the request for an extension occurring seven months before town officials publicly asserted the earlier deadline.

“A staff member of RDC was pressuring us to identify the years of spending, as they needed to identify with Infrastructure Canada [which] fiscal years funding would be made available to the province,” Chief Administrative Officer Chris Spear said in response to questions from *The Courier* about the deadline extension application. “The province gets a pool of funding for multiple projects on an annual basis. From what I understand, those funds did not roll over. Our earlier applications had been spent in certain years prior to even 2025.”

Spear alleged RDC had indicated to him that the department wanted to allot funding to other projects.

“It was my understanding [that] the 2027 deadline was the last year of the national program, not just our project, as originally indicated in our correspondence with them from Feb. 27, 2021,” Spear said in response to questions from *The Courier*. “Letters from 2024 that officially allowed the scope change showed our funding still within that window.”

“Nor was it (the extended federal deadline) informally mentioned to me in various meetings with the funding partner,” he said. “So I continued to interpret that we needed to stay within the timeline of 2027 to maintain our funding.”

Spear wrote to RDC on Nov. 12, suggesting the town could move to an option that would reduce the amount of infill because of the environmental impacts. The work required remediation by the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans. He said in the letter that reducing the infill would increase the cost, prompting him to request additional funding.

“An alternative solution is to remove most of the infill out of the scope of the project, and that would be deemed staying within our own footprint, and we can proceed. However, there is a significant extra cost related to that option as the fill was meant to reduce the expense of adding piles and [reinforced] concrete decking,” he said in the letter to RDC.

Spear said a second scope change after the public feedback could take months because it would need to be reviewed by Infrastructure Canada.

“In my eyes, the window was shutting down to complete the project, even if we were allowed to extend it a few months to the end of 2027,” he said.

Spear said he’d warned council that, given the increase in construction costs since the COVID-19 pandemic, the project would likely come in over budget.

“The longer the council and the community took to make a decision, the higher the costs were going to go,” he said. “I expect all councils — this and future — will need to address the wharf upkeep in phases, reduce the scope, and hope there is more funding from other levels of government for this in the next five to 10 years. Otherwise, there’s a risk the taxpayers and users will have to assume all of the costs related to issues not addressed under this program. This is a major consideration.”

The town was balancing two competing pressures, he explained: the province’s expectations around funding allocation and the need to reduce the impact on the tourism season.

Seasonal businesses, including whale watching operators, which make the majority of their revenue during tourism season, were also concerned about the timeline.

“The fiscal year for [the Government of New Brunswick] is March 31. They did approve until that date,” Spear said. “In order for the project to meet that deadline and not interfere with the 2026 [tourism] season, we needed to start the project over the winter of 2025/2026. The original plan was to remove a large section of the wharf that made it inaccessible for several months. If we waited until spring 2026 to start (or later), it would have extended well into summer and likely fall.”

RDC did not directly respond to the town’s claims, nor did it indicate whether other projects may have been identified that could use the money already allocated to the town.

“The Regional Development Corporation routinely asks funding recipients, including the Town of Saint Andrews, for cash-flow updates as part of the financial management of our funding programs,” the department said in an emailed statement.

Extension timeline

On Nov. 12, 2024, Spear wrote a letter to RDC requesting an extension for funding for the town wharf. The letter, obtained by *The Courier*, asked to extend the wharf funding deadline to March 2027 and requested an additional \$1 million for the project.

“Consequently, the additional investment could be \$1.5 million to \$2.0 million. We have requests for your consideration. Can we extend the funding deadline to March 2027? We would like to be considered for an additional \$1.0 million in funding towards the project,” he wrote in the letter.

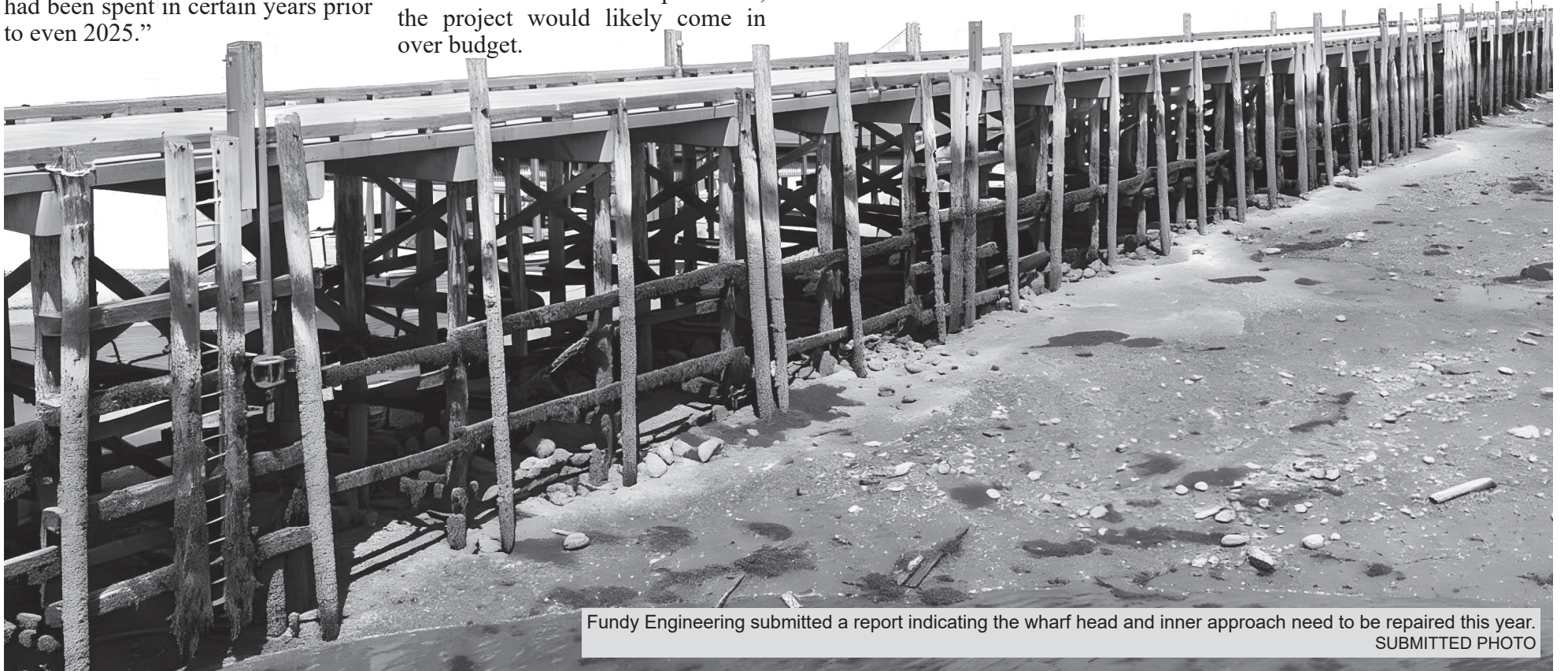
Six days later, the department emailed Spear to say the additional funding could not be provided because “the funding for the program had been fully dispersed.”

That meant RDC could not provide more funding, but an extension was granted.

In June 2025 council was informed by former clerk Paul Nopper that the grant money needed to be spent and the project underway by March 2026. With that information, several councillors publicly said they felt they needed to push ahead with the project despite strong community feedback.

“We can continue doing the project if it is in place and moving forward past the March 2026 deadline, because we’re showing we’re finishing the project,” Paul Nopper said at the time. “But basically, we’ve been told, March 2026; if you haven’t done anything, you lose the funding.”

Nopper told *The Courier* that staff had “noted to council previously all deadlines [associated] with the funding and that we would be seeking an extension based on the need for additional review, consultation, project oversight, and timelines.”



Fundy Engineering submitted a report indicating the wharf head and inner approach need to be repaired this year. SUBMITTED PHOTO

Eastern Charlotte council sends reprimand over conduct breaches

By NATHALIE STURGEON
Editor in Chief, LJI

Eastern Charlotte Mayor John Craig will receive a letter of reprimand from the council following two breaches of the code of conduct bylaw.

A complaint was lodged by Coun. Lisa McKay after it was reported by CBC New Brunswick that Craig signed a letter in support of J.D. Irving, Limited (JDI), which was requesting permission to log thousands of hectares of protected areas in exchange for conserving lands near those communities.

“Further, in a council meeting held on Feb. 10, 2026, when I raised this matter in my role as an elected representative seeking clarity and accountability, the mayor responded in a manner that I believe was inappropriate for public forum and inconsistent with the respectful and professional conduct expected within council,” she said during a previous meeting.

She told council Craig made comments like “holier than thou” and that he “was not perfect like you” during a Feb. 10 Committee of the Whole meeting. Craig would later say it was his reaction to being asked to resign twice in the same meeting, something he said the council has no authority to call for.

“Yes, I probably should have never said that,” he said. “I was attacked in a public meeting and was twice asked to resign, and I lost my composure and I apologize.”

He also took a trip to Ottawa in partnership with the City of Campbell River. McKay said the trip was taken without prior knowledge or approval.

Craig said the purpose of the trip was to ensure that a formal ban on open-net pen salmon farming scheduled to be implemented by the federal government in British Columbia at the end of June 2029 would not extend to the East Coast.

As mayor, Craig is the spokesperson



Eastern Charlotte council sends letter of reprimand to Mayor John Craig. PHOTO: CHCO-TV

for the Municipality of Eastern Charlotte and said he regularly attends events on behalf of council.

McKay requested the full accounting of the trip, including associated costs. Craig told the council the trip was paid for by the City of Campbell River, B.C., which invited him to represent the east coast interest in the aquaculture industry, and everything else was paid for out of his own pocket.

“There was nothing Eastern Charlotte paid for,” he said in response to the letter.

He said a full financial disclosure was filed with Eastern Charlotte’s chief administrative officer, Jason Gaudet, who later confirmed that detail.

“It was not a pleasure trip. As anybody knows, I don’t like flying, [and] it was three days of lobbying MPs (Members of Parliament) along[side] Mayor Kermit Dahl for the City of Campbell River,” he said.

Aquaculture and fisheries are significant industries in Eastern Charlotte, with Cooke — an international seafood company — and Connors Brothers, a fish-packing and processing plant, among other major employers.

Cooke employs roughly 1,500 individuals in New Brunswick and 2,500 throughout Atlantic Canada.

The Courier reached out to McKay, who filed the complaint and was not present at the meeting when the final decision was made, but did not

receive a response by publication time.

It was the first code of conduct meeting to be discussed in open session since the Local Governance Commission issued an advisory stating that councillors and mayors cannot be classified as employees for the purposes of the closed session exemptions in Section 68(1) of the *Local Governance Act*.

It remains unclear which of the three actions were considered a breach of the bylaw, as council went into closed session to discuss the advice of legal counsel under one of the exemptions set out in Section (68) (1) of the *Act*.

Council did not discuss the legal advice in detail but voted unanimously to send a letter of reprimand. They also voted to send it within the next 30 days.

Craig told *The Courier* these actions stemmed from his passion for Eastern Charlotte and defending local industry and jobs.

“In my zest to do that, [and] in hindsight, I should have informed the council from the beginning and apologized to council,” he said in a statement to *The Courier*. We can put this behind us as a lesson learned.”

Craig said he has always been clear this job requires constant learning.

“If I make a mistake, I own it and move on from it ... that’s what leaders do.”

Continued from page 2

nurse, two licensed practical nurses, a phlebotomist, a licensed counselling therapist, a patient care attendant and two additional administrative staff.

In October, the town signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with HHN to allow renovations within the clinical space.

“In appreciation of the efforts of the council, including investments in the current facility, Horizon Health Network (HHN) has agreed to fund the renovations now needed to allow for extra service providers,” said Coun. Lee Heenan, reading background information on the motion.

Heenan said HHN will provide funding for the renovation in exchange for not charging rent for a five-year period. The cost of the renovations is between \$250,000 and \$300,000.

The council moved to a closed session under section 68(1)(C) of the *Local Governance Act*. Council voted to approve the MOU after returning to an open session.

“I really am grateful to the leadership that’s been shown by the town here, the leadership that’s been shown by the health care team, and their willingness to take on all of their neighbours and provide that support,” Holt said.

Dr. John Dornan, an endocrinologist and health minister, said this ensures that health care is available not only to those who are without primary care, but those wishing to come live and work in the Saint Andrews area.

“These are health care professionals and support staff who are making a big difference in the lives of people every single day,”

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TOWN CLAIMS PROVINCIAL PRESSURE ON WHARF PROJECT

Nopper publicly stated a deadline of March 2026. He confirmed staff were in constant contact with RDC.

“Items discussed included deadlines for funding to be spent, funding extensions, fund submissions to date, project updates, and next steps,” Nopper said in a statement.

The rehabilitation of Market Wharf and Market Square is being funded through the federal Department of Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada (HICC). Federal funding is distributed to the provinces and territories through bilateral agreements. In New Brunswick, the RDC administers those funds.

The bilateral agreement signed by New Brunswick and the federal government indicates a program to end in October 2033.

“For projects funded under the public transit stream, the green infrastructure stream, the community, culture and recreation infrastructure stream, and the rural and northern communities infrastructure stream, New Brunswick will ensure that all Projects are Substantially Completed by October 31st, 2033,” the agreement said.

“The Canada-New Brunswick Integrated Bilateral Agreement for the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) requires that all ICIP projects in the province be substantially completed by Oct. 31, 2033, and that all final expenditure claims be submitted by Dec. 31, 2033,” said a statement from HICC to The Courier back in September 2025.

“We can confirm that Housing, Infrastructure, and Communities Canada has not imposed any deadline on the projects in Saint Andrews, other than the 2033 dates mentioned in the Bilateral Agreement.”

In a June 2025 statement, RDC also told The Courier that the provincial deadline could be extended, provided the town gave the department a timely and justifiable reason and a revised timeline.

The project, a hybrid infill design, faced public pushback in the months leading up to the tendering process.

Engineer renderings showed the design expanding the footprint of Market Square and infilling about 40-50 metres from the shoreline using armour stone. The work was intended largely to mitigate future impacts of climate change, but also to repair the inner approach, which is under a weight restriction.

The new design differed slightly from the original renderings and

ultimately caused a rift between supporters and opponents.

Project on provincial radar

The project has come up in two separate fiscal updates by the provincial Liberal government, which is now projecting a record \$1.33-billion deficit.

Finance and Treasury Board (FTB) Assistant Deputy Minister Nick McCann said in November 2025, there were several delayed projects impacting both sides of the budget.

The Rothesay wastewater project, the Saint Andrews Market Wharf and Market Square project, the Mount Allison University library rehabilitation, and the UNB Law building are all part of the Integrated Bilateral Agreement, which includes about \$88 million in federal funding.

In September 2025, the Market Wharf and Market Square project budget came in about \$2 million over budget. That cost, along with strong community criticism of the design, sent the town back to square one.

“Given the amount of economic uncertainty and cost escalations we’ve seen in recent years, those types of projects have caused some delays ... looking at their scoping, their timing, because of the cost escalations. There’s only a finite amount of money they’ve received for their project and for their funding,” said McCann. “If it comes in higher than that, sometimes the proponent may need to adjust and then go back to the drawing board, adjust their plans, and then come back forward again.”

Once again, just weeks ago, The Courier spoke with FTB regarding the funding for those projects. McCann specifically noted the St. Andrews’ project.

The Special Operating Agency (SOA) continues to impact both the revenue and expense sides of the provincial budget, according to FTB. On the revenue side, the SOA is down \$11.9 million, while on the expense side, it is under budget by \$61 million.

Finance Minister Rene Legay also said the province would not be in a position to help proponents, such as municipalities, cover “federal shortfalls”. The province is set to bring forth its budget on March 17.

The Liberal government has been warning of difficult decisions amid the growing deficit and has turned to the public for feedback on where cuts could be made.

Saint Andrews town council has received a structural report from Fundy Engineering showing major areas of concern that should be addressed within the next year, including the head of the wharf and the inner approach.

The Courts

Trial for 21-year-old accused of assault against minor

By **ANDREW BATES**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

A 21-year-old from Grand Manan is facing a trial in November on charges of sexual assault and sexual interference against a minor.

Drake Alex Daggett, of Hill Road, appeared Tuesday last week in Saint John provincial court and entered not guilty pleas on each of the charges.

He is accused of touching a minor and invitation to touching for a sexual purpose dating from Aug. 1, 2024, to March 1, 2025, and then from March 1, 2025, to June 30, 2025, as well as sexual assault against a person under 16 from June 1 to June 30, 2025, all on Grand Manan. Daggett is also charged with breach of a no-contact order and sexual assault dating between January 1 and 17 this year.

Brunswick News is withholding any information that would identify the complainant subject to a publication ban.

RCMP Sgt. Geoffrey Peters said Monday this week that the investigation began in September 2025 based on a complaint from the public regarding an alleged sexual relationship with a young person. Court files indicate that Daggett made his first appearance Dec. 17, and was released on an undertaking.

Peters said that in January police received reports of additional alleged offences involving the same individual and breach of a no-contact order.

In court last week, Daggett’s lawyer Reid Chedore said they had reviewed disclosure and were ready to choose a trial in provincial court.

Daggett, who was in the gallery along with a number of supporters, entered his pleas of not guilty to each charge and was scheduled for trial Nov. 12 and 13.

He is on house arrest at a family member’s residence, and asked for the release conditions to be varied to allow two other family residences.

3 arrested on Grand Manan after drugs seized



By **NATHALIE STURGEON**

Editor in Chief, LJl

The New Brunswick RCMP say three people have been arrested on Grand Manan.

A 41-year-old man, a 48-year-old man both from Grand Manan, and a 41-year-old woman from Nova Scotia were arrested during a traffic stop on the island, according to police.

“On March 12 at approximately 9 p.m., members of the Grand Manan conducted a traffic stop on a suspicious vehicle travelling on Route 776,” the release said.

“Subsequently, police searched the vehicle and found what is believed to be cocaine, as well as a digital scale, packaging materials and a cell phone.”

RCMP said the three individuals were later released and are expected

to appear in court at a later date.

“The New Brunswick RCMP is committed to reducing the supply of controlled substances in our communities and to deterring persons from engaging in drug trafficking through ongoing enforcement efforts,” police said in the release.

RCMP said anyone with information about, or who suspects, illegal drug activity in their neighbourhood is asked to contact their local police. Information can also be provided anonymously through Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477), by downloading the secure P3 Mobile App, or by Secure Web Tips at www.crimenb.ca.

3 Charlotte County tourism sites among budget cuts

By NATHALIE STURGEON

Editor in Chief, LJI

The province has decided to close six tourism and heritage sites across New Brunswick this year, including Sheriff Andrews House, as part of overall cuts to spending.

It comes amid a ballooning deficit expected to hit \$1.39 billion. Finance Minister Rene Legacy announced \$15.6 billion in new spending, mainly in health care, housing and education.

Oak Bay Provincial Park, near St. Stephen, is also on an overall list of 10, but will remain open this year while transition discussions take place as well on Anchorage Provincial Park and Campground on Grand Manan.

“It’s more specifically any organization that is under 5,000 visitors and is provincially owned,” Legacy said in an interview with *The Courier*. “When we talked to Tourism and Culture, they mentioned the funds they do have are very spread out.”

Officials from the Town of Saint Andrews said it was not given advanced notice of the decision, saying the partnership has existed for years, and came as a surprise. Town staff said the closure will be brought to council for further discussion.

Legacy said the idea would be to show other more successful sites further financial support.

“To be honest, I’ve talked to different heritage groups. They were very open to those discussions,” he said. “They actually had a couple of examples of organizations that formerly were owned by the province and had been converted [or] transferred to municipalities or local groups and they’re actually doing much better, in a healthier manner.”

Legacy said he understands that tourism-based economies like Saint Andrews and Grand Manan rely on their heritage attractions, but the visitation numbers must support the funding allocation.

“They [Tourism, Heritage and Culture] felt the pressure, not only operationally [as] a lot of these organizations need heavy dollars in capital,” he said.

“When you see less than 1,500 people going to an organization ... and we’re being asked to supply \$15 [or] \$19 million sometimes, it’s hard to justify the cost.”

Grand Manan Mayor Bonnie Morse said she was surprised that Anchorage Provincial Park and Campground was on the list. She said the park is now operated by the Boys and Girls Club (BGC).

“The village was very involved in



Sheriff Andrews House is one of six tourism sites that will close this year. PHOTO: NATHALIE STURGEON / THE COURIER

sort of the initial part of that process because we wanted to ensure that the Anchorage stayed open for the community and for visitors to the island,” she said in an interview with *The Courier*.

The park, she explained, plays a significant role in the community both for visitors, but also islanders.

“Certainly when you look in the summer with the tourism industry, accommodation is a huge issue for people coming to the island and the campground is really used a lot in the summer,” she said. “Even some islanders will go there and spend like a week or a few weeks away from their home.”

It is unclear, at the moment, Morse said, about how the Village of Grand Manan and the BGC will move forward. She said they have reached out to the organization, as well as the tourism minister.

“So to lose that accommodation for the tourism industry is a huge blow to them to have potentially, that many fewer visitors, here on the island,” Morse said.

She said nothing is currently on or off the table, but added the village and the BGC have one year to figure out the next steps.

Health, education spending

A large portion of the budget is being spent on health, a significant priority for the Holt government. The province is planning to spend \$710 million.

The government signed a new physician service agreement that accounts for \$170 million. Another \$30 million is allotted for 12 more collaborative care clinics this year.

It expects to spend \$50 million to continue the expansion and enhancement of the digital records systems in health care.

Premier Susan Holt and Legacy have said the investment the government is making now will create transformational change in how New

Brunswickers receive health care.

“We felt it was the right time to, as a generational investor, to adjust and make this case to just solidify our health care so we can start moving forward on other aspects, including our economy,” Legacy said in an interview.

The government said it will also invest \$19.8 million for educational assistants in both the Anglophone and Francophone sector.

Of that money, \$1.4 million is to support recruitment and retention through “onboarding, mentorship and workplace improvements.”

But among the spending reductions is the consideration of school closures for those with fewer than 100 students.

According to a report by CBC New Brunswick, Fundy Shores, Deer Island, Back Bay, and Lawrence Station could see closures.

Legacy told *The Courier* that the district education councils (DECs) have come with some creative solutions amid the proposal for cuts.

“I find it interesting that we’re having these discussions now before there’s a pending closure, because typically these discussions happen at the 11th hour when there’s a little bit of panic that sets in,” he said.

He said they are not in a scenario where the government will automatically start closing schools at a certain level.

The Courier reached out to the District Education Council (DEC) for Anglophone South and is awaiting a response.

“Every school has a story to tell,” “Some we can make a move on, but we’ll do it according to the policy, and we’ll do it with the conversation with our DECs and our municipalities.”

New Brunswick Teachers’ Association (NBTA) President Heidi Ryder said it was encouraged to see

increased investment in education.

She said there is a process for the DECs to follow on how to select schools that may close. Policy 409 outlines when a DEC should perform a sustainability study on an educational facility.

Ryder said the focus must be on how to keep class sizes small, focused and well-resourced, no matter what decisions are ultimately made.

“We’re happy to see education as a priority, absolutely, and now we’ll be looking at the details to see if our priorities are in there within that education budget somewhere,” she said in an interview with *The Courier*.

She said the NBTA is looking to create flexibility in teachers’ time to address the complex needs of classrooms, but also tackle a plan for comprehensive retention and recruitment.

Housing and affordability

The province also is investing in housing, including \$17 million for a new community housing retention and expansion project for low-to-moderate income New Brunswickers.

Other investments include \$10.2 million for wrap around housing supports, \$4.4 million to index social assistance rates to inflation and \$98.1 million to continue the residential electricity rebate.

As for the balanced budget promise, Legacy said given the circumstances available during the campaign, it felt it could do that.

“We did promise that we were going to try to keep a balanced budget. We also promised that we were going to make significant efforts to improve health care, improve our education system, and make things more affordable for New Brunswickers,” he said.

The full details of the budget are available online.

Holt eyes faster timeline as clinic opening set for 2027

By NATHALIE STURGEON
Editor in Chief, LJI

The new collaborative care clinic on King Street in St. Stephen won't be open to the public until January 2027, despite earlier promises from the Holt government.

Saint Croix Progressive Conservative MLA Kathy Bockus said Horizon Health Network (HHN) president and CEO Margaret Melanson confirmed the timeline to her.

"I'm told by Horizon CEO Margaret Melanson that the first patient day for the new clinic, to be opened at the old Sobeys store, is expected to be in mid-January 2027," she said in a post on Facebook. "Melanson graciously shared with me the timeline she received from her team. I thank her for the clarity she provided."

The clinic is currently located on the third floor of the Charlotte County Hospital (CCH) and is limited in space. It began taking patients in February 2024, but has only accepted 310 patients from the list of those without a primary care provider.

It was one of 10 clinics promised to be operating within the first 18 months of the Liberal government's mandate.

According to HHN, as cited in Bockus' post, the offer to lease was signed in December 2025. Architectural work, renderings and floor plans continued in the following weeks.



Premier Susan Holt said despite a timeline shared by Horizon Health Network, she is hoping renovations can move quicker to open the St. Stephen collaborative care clinic. PHOTO: NATHALIE STURGEON / THE COURIER

Finalized floor plans are anticipated to be ready in mid-April. Construction is expected to begin in late June or early July, ending in the fall. The first day for patients would be in January 2027.

In November, Holt said it would have people in the clinic "before the snow melts."

"We're looking for those to be rapid renovations," Holt said during a press conference in November.

Last month during an announcement at the Fundy Health Centre for its collaborative care clinic, she reiterated that her promise was to have people in before the snow melts.

"We're tracking that closely to make sure that they can get into that

space and get new patients added as quickly as possible," Holt said, speaking with reporters in February.

Inside the space at CCH, Dr. Wael Sabre is continuing to onboard patients successfully, Bockus' post said.

"An additional practice-ready assessment candidate has been earmarked for St. Stephen," it said. "Two upcoming physician graduates were hosted on site to meet the care team and members of the town's physician recruitment committee."

Bockus' post said the clinic is operating at capacity and that space constraints remain.

Premier Susan Holt, who was in Saint Andrews Monday to announce Charlotte County's third

collaborative care clinic, said she is still looking for things to be done faster than the timeline presented by HHN.

"I am hoping that we can go more quickly," she said. "I have said a number of times I'm impatient, and New Brunswickers are impatient, waiting to get access to care."

She said there are significant physical changes that need to be made to the building, which was a grocery store.

Health Minister Dr. John Dornan said clinicians are already onboarding more patients, but it means they will be working in cramped quarters for a little while.

"We'll grow much more rapidly in January, but be taking patients long before that," he said.

NOTICE OF HEARING UNDER THE MUNICIPAL CAPITAL BORROWING ACT

Notice is hereby given that on Monday, the 13th day of April, 2026 at Marysville Place, 20 McGloin Street, Fredericton, New Brunswick, the Municipal Capital Borrowing Board will hear the application of the **Municipal District of St. Stephen** at 2:25 pm for the authorization to borrow money for a capital expense as set forth in subsection 4(1) of the Municipal Capital Borrowing Act:

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Objections to this application, if any, may be filed in writing with the Secretary of the Municipal Capital Borrowing Board, DELG, P.O. Box 6000, Fredericton, New Brunswick, E3B 5H1, or may be presented orally to the Board at the time of the hearing.

Dated the 9th day of March, 2026.

Grace Lee Cutler
Grace Lee Cutler, CPA, CGA, Secretary
Municipal Capital Borrowing Board



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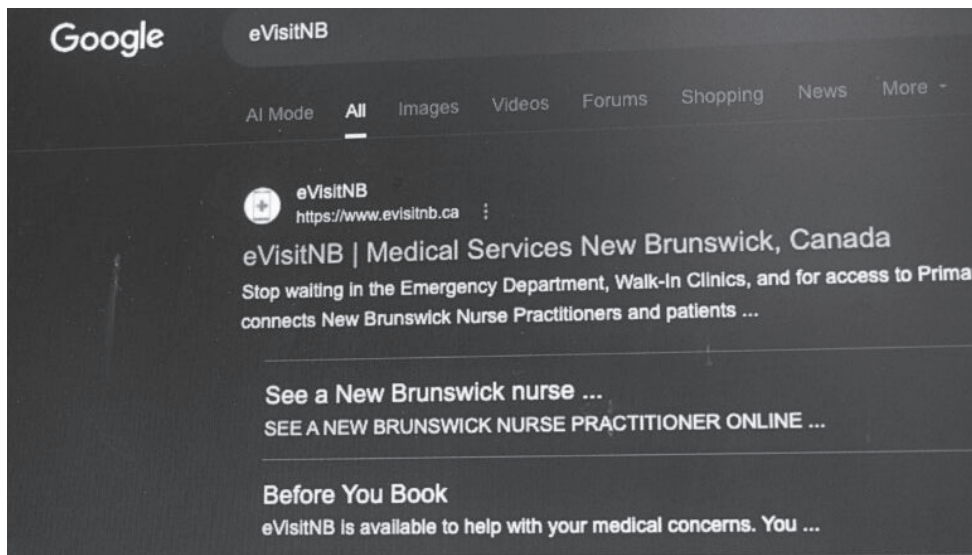
By NATHALIE STURGEON
Editor in Chief, LJI

The Department of Health says eVisitNB's contract will continue for another 90 days amid the transfer to a new provider in June.

"We know the important role virtual care plays, and we're committed to ensuring it's available for New Brunswickers when they need it," Health Minister Dr. John Dornan said in a statement.

In February, eVisitNB emailed users to say "provincial virtual care services will transition to a new provider. As a result, eVisitNB will conclude its current service on March 31, 2026."

During public accounts, Deputy Minister Eric Beaulieu said the department had decided on a request for proposal (RFP). He said, at the time, there needed to be better



eVisitNB is a Woodstock-based company, which did not have its contract renewed. PHOTO: NATHALIE STURGEON / THE COURIER

integrate virtual health care with primary care, to meet the growing needs of patients and ensure a continuum of care.

Beaulieu outlined some of the requirements within the RFP,

including communication among the virtual service, primary care providers, and pharmacies; a triage system to access the right services; care in the individual's language of choice; and the ability to schedule appointments.

"The organization that is currently providing the services was able to submit and be evaluated just like everyone else within that process," he said. "It would have made my life and the life of [the] government much easier had the same proponent that is offering it today been the successful proponent providing the best service going forward."

"They were not selected because the proposal we received from another proponent met the requirements stronger."

Dornan said the goal is a full transition following the extension period.

"I commit to sharing with New Brunswickers more information on the transition and how they can access care from the new vendor prior to the transition date," he said in a statement.

N.B. shifts provincial veterinary service to private sector

By NATHALIE STURGEON
Editor in Chief, LJI

The New Brunswick government says provincial veterinary services will move to the private sector following its decision to cut funding for the program.

St. George Veterinary Clinic Dr. Melanie Eagan said the cuts means there will be no veterinary service for rural livestock or large animals owners unless they have a relationship with someone in private practice — which she said are few and far between.

"And most (if not all) of the large animal vets that are in private practice are not taking on new clients," she said speaking to The Courier. "So if you have large animals and there's an emergency, there is no one to help."

Eagan said instead of getting treatment, a lot of animals may die.

"Difficult births, broken legs, horses with colic, bad infections, bad lacerations, infected, broken teeth, diseases — no veterinary care for any of these things will lead to suffering and death," she said. "We rely on large animal vets to monitor diseases and the health of our herds which leads to our food supply."

Eagan said the provincial laboratory also checks for infectious diseases in animals, including rabies and avian flu.

"A lot of vets do not go into large animal practice because it's a tough job," she said. "Being on call, lots

of driving from farm to farm, cold nights in barns trying to do surgery or help deliver a calf or colt."

She said the government suggesting that private practice can make up for the loss is "delusional."

"Small animal veterinary clinics are not equipped to deal with large animals, and don't have the extra staff to send out on the road. It's also not cost effective," she said. "There's already a shortage of vets in the province — large and small animal vets. This decision by the government is going to cost animals' their lives and farmers' livelihood."

Many others have taken to social media to express disappointment in the province's decision. A petition on Change.org has amassed more than 14,000 signatures.

The Holt government said on Tuesday it would phase out the service over three fiscal years. On Thursday, it released a statement saying it understood that the transition was upsetting for employees and clients who are affected.

"We want to be clear that the transition of these services will occur gradually over the next three fiscal years," the statement from Agriculture, Aquaculture and Fisheries Minister (AAF) Pat Finnigan.

"Currently, New Brunswick is one of only two provinces still operating government-funded veterinary services," Finnigan said.

He said in the statement that 54 per



cent of services are being provided to horses, 19 per cent to hobby farms and companion animals, with only 27 per cent focused on commercial livestock such as dairy, beef, and poultry.

"The costs of delivering these services are significant to the taxpayers of New Brunswick," he said. "By transitioning these functions into the private sector, we can allow the private clinics and veterinarians to provide more responsive and flexible services to our agricultural community, just like every other jurisdiction in Canada apart from Newfoundland and Labrador."

According to the AAF, for the 2025-2026 year, the program cost \$4.06 million.

It said it met with stakeholders on Tuesday to walk them through its decision.

The department is expected to implement the following measures as the transition gets underway:

- Supporting provincial veterinarians with transitioning resources and business development supports to

set up their own practice or join an existing private veterinarian clinic.

- Facilitating and transitioning efforts to empower private sector veterinarians and clinics to establish and expand service availability across New Brunswick.

- Developing a private veterinarian registry program to support and address service gaps in the core livestock sectors in underserved areas.

- Facilitating the transfer of laboratory functions, ensuring continuity of diagnostic services and pharmaceutical access.

- Maintaining the chief veterinary officer position to ensure continued oversight of disease management and animal welfare functions in collaboration with the New Brunswick Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the federal government.

"Our government is not removing support for the agriculture industry. We are aligning with our neighbours and moving to a more sustainable model for veterinary care in the province," Finnigan.

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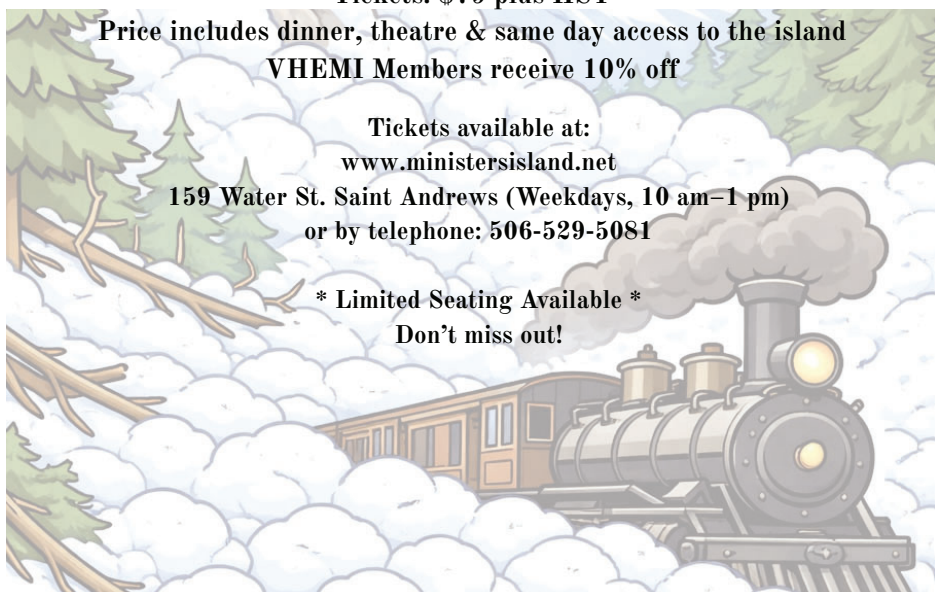
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International Homecoming Festival turns community-led

By **NATHALIE STURGEON**
Editor in Chief, LJI

The International Homecoming Parade in St. Stephen, N.B. and Calais, Maine, is being handed off to a community-governed board.

Last year, the festival was nearly cancelled due to a lack of participation. At the time, Municipal District of St. Stephen (MDSS) Director of Community Services Kev Sumner said if it did not go ahead in 2025, the parade would be unlikely to resume in future years.

“The downside is if this doesn’t happen, it’s unlikely that it will be able to come back. It’s almost been grandfathered in, quite a unique situation,” he said in August.

The parade, first held in 1974, went ahead after the threat of cancellation sparked renewed community interest.

“I’m all for community-led,” said Coun. Wade Greenlaw. “I’d like

to make sure that there is a proper handoff. So I’d like to see the municipal district retain control and oversight until there is a chair in place and a board made up of enough people to make sure that the work gets done.”

MDSS Chief Administrative Officer Jeff Renaud said a transition plan will be part of the process.

“We need this resolution first before we can put out the call for volunteers and build that team,” he said during the meeting. “Once we have that team, it will be much easier to create that transition plan and smoothly move over to the committee as opposed to [being] staff led.”

Mayor Allan MacEachern said this decision doesn’t mean the town is walking away from the parade but looking to put momentum into the community through idea-making.

“I know a few years back when we took it over it lost traction, but let’s see if we can bring that back,” he said. “We [have] to get people involved.”

Coun. Joyce Wright said getting the community involved is essential, noting the work done by volunteers with the Charlotte County Fall Festival and Chocolate Fest.

“The intent is that staff are there; MDSS is still a partner ... but we’re just expanding this to make it better,” she said. “I’m totally in support.”

Coun. Emily Rodas asked whether there was a back-up plan should there not be enough

volunteers to step up.

MacEachern said only time will tell whether the municipal district will need to continue supporting the event internally. He noted that on the U.S. side it is run by volunteers.

Renaud added MDSS “won’t give up on the event.”

Council voted unanimously in support of moving the International Homecoming Parade into the hands of a community-led board. The festival is typically held in early August.



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St. Stephen needs transitional housing: province



Around 150 people gathered at the Garcelon Civic Centre in St. Stephen on March 24. PHOTO: BRIAN OWENS / REPORTER, THE COURIER

By **BRIAN OWENS**
Reporter, The Courier

The Municipal District of St. Stephen (MDSS) and the provincial government say while they are committed to eliminating the need for a homeless shelter in the community, it cannot move forward without a location for transition housing.

Around 150 people gathered at the Garcelon Civic Centre in St. Stephen on March 24 for a panel discussion and question and answer session with MDSS Mayor Allan MacEachern, Social Development Minister Cindy Miles, and Housing Minister David Hickey.

There was also a trade show of local organizations that provide programs and support in the area, including Neighbourhood Works Inc. (NWI), Horizon Health Network's (HHN) addictions and mental health unit, the Department of Social Development, the RCMP, the Sophia Recovery Centre and the Human Development Council (HDC).

Jim Stuart, executive director of NWI, which operates the shelter, told The Courier that the goal of the event was to provide the public with information and facts about homelessness in the community, and a better understanding of the provincial and municipal governments' plans.

"It's clear what our plan has been, the next step is housing. We want to eliminate the need for a shelter," he said. "We've put in the work and are still hopeful [it will happen]."

The organization's most recent proposal for transitional housing units at 199 Union St. was rejected by council in January.

St. Croix Progressive Conservative MLA Kathy Bochus said she hoped the provincial ministers would be able to answer the community's questions about future plans.

"There has been so much unease about where a shelter or bridge housing will go," she said. "I don't have the answer, I'm hoping to hear that tonight."

No new project

There was never any plan to announce a new project at this event, but the panel reiterated that both town and province are committed to finding a solution that works for the whole community.

"We know the shelter is not sustainable, and not the right solution for St. Stephen," said Hickey.

"We need to respond to the concerns in a way that offers both long and short-term solutions for people and the community."

There are projects in the works that can contribute to the solution. The province recently expanded the number of beds available at Ridgewood Addiction Services in Saint John, and a new 50-bed rehab centre on the Kingston Peninsula is set to open this summer.

Hickey also highlighted the \$300 million deal the province recently signed with the federal government to build 1,200 affordable homes over the next two years, including some

bridge and transitional housing units. MacEachern said the new apartment complex being built on the site of the old Border Arena will help to alleviate some of the pressure on the rental market.

"That's a preventative measure," he said.

But Miles said the first step towards a permanent solution is to choose a location for supportive housing.

"We need a space, that's the biggest obstacle to bridge housing," she said.

Sharing success

Staff from NWI shared success stories from those they have helped in recent years, by getting them into stable housing, helping set up bank accounts and government ID, and providing ongoing support as they deal with addiction.

Over the past four years the organization has helped 67 people find and maintain housing, and 25 enter detox and recovery.

"That's what success looks like," said Stuart.

Stuart and the panel also addressed some of the misconceptions surrounding homelessness. Hickey rejected the idea that providing services in St. Stephen would lead people to move here from elsewhere in the province.

"If that were the case, everyone would go to Saint John," which has better services and more options for bridge housing, he said. "It's not going to be a magnet."

Jay Coates, who works with at-risk youth through NWI, noted that 90 per cent of the people who use the shelter in St. Stephen have Charlotte County family names.

The idea that most homelessness is caused by addictions is also false, said Cory Herc from the Human Development Council, a Saint John-based nonprofit that provides data-driven solutions for homelessness.

"It's almost always about housing affordability and availability," he said, both of which have worsened in

recent years. "Most other issues are consequences, not causes."

Just 25 per cent of those who become homeless do so because of addictions, Stuart said. But after a year, around 90 per cent will have developed addictions as a way of dealing with the stress of homelessness.

The housing first strategy being pursued by NWI and the province, in which housing is not conditional on sobriety or abstinence, has seen great success where it is implemented, Stuart said. The largest study on the topic, which was conducted across Canada, found that over 80 per cent of those who received housing first remained housed after the first year, compared with just 31 per cent who received traditional interventions.

A receptive audience

The response from the audience was largely positive, with applause for success stories, and thoughtful questions for the panel. Many said they left with a better understanding of the plans, and hope that solutions will come soon.

"It was good to hear that the government is still committed to bridge housing, to transitional supportive housing in St. Stephen," Walter Thiessen said. "It's been pretty frustrating to have the process of developing that housing take as long as it has. I hope the community can become more unified in supporting this and accepting a place for it."

But many said they also left with important questions unanswered.

"They didn't seem to answer a lot of questions that people have," Rob Watson said. "They talked a lot about what they accomplished so far, but not a lot about the future."

Chris Gorman from OrgCode Consulting, who facilitated the event, was pleased with the level of community engagement.

"Showing up matters," he told the crowd. "Things don't get better if no one shows up."

"This is our issue," said MacEachern. "We need the province to help, but we can't walk away from it."

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We Came for a Visit and Stayed for a Life

What began as a short trip to Charlotte County became something much harder to leave behind.



Aerial view of downtown St. Andrews by-the-Sea and Navy Island. PHOTO: CINDY KOHLER

By Brittany Locking
Community Contributor

We came to call Charlotte County home the same way many people do, as visitors.

My husband had travelled to the Saint John area for work and convinced me to join him, promising that if I did, we would go whale watching. Neither of us had spent time in New Brunswick as adults, and from the moment we arrived, we were struck by a kind of beauty that felt both expansive and grounding all at once.

Having grown up on the outskirts of the Greater Toronto Area in the 1990s, our childhoods were shaped by a certain kind of freedom, long days spent outside, riding bikes with friends until the streetlights came on, and a sense of safety that allowed for simple, unstructured living. There was a calmness to it, even within reach of a growing city.

By the mid-2010s, much of that had changed. Familiar places became harder to recognize as fields and

forests gave way to development - more housing, more highways, more of everything. The pace of life shifted with it.

Somewhere along the drive through the rolling hills of New Brunswick, we both went a little quiet. It felt like we had stepped into something we hadn't realized we'd been missing. The air felt different, the landscape stretching on uninterrupted, with trees that seemed to outnumber people. It was quieter, not just in sound, but in pace.

We eventually found ourselves in Saint Andrews, arriving at the tail end of the tourism season. Shops were beginning to wind down, and the town was settling into a slower rhythm after a busy summer. And yet, what stood out most wasn't what was closing. It was how people showed up.

Conversations came easily. A simple stop could turn into a genuine exchange, people asking where we were from, how we had found our

way there, and taking the time to listen to the answer. There was a sense of openness and connection that felt increasingly rare. It wasn't something advertised or explained; it was simply part of the fabric of the place.

That feeling stayed with us long after we returned home.

Back in our routine of commuting, working, and moving through the familiar pace of daily life, something felt noticeably absent. We couldn't quite name it at first, but we both felt it; that quiet sense of belonging we had experienced, even briefly, in a place we had stumbled upon almost by accident.

Eventually, we said it out loud: something was missing.

So, we made a plan: we packed up our lives, said goodbye to family, and moved across the country to follow a feeling we couldn't ignore.

Nearly ten years later, I still think about that decision and how grateful

I am that we made it.

In many ways, life here isn't all that different from what we had before. The responsibilities are the same. The routines still exist. But the experience of them has changed.



In larger centres, it can feel like you're always chasing quality of life. Working harder, moving faster, trying to create space for the very things that matter most. Here, it has a way of finding you instead. It's shaped by the rhythm of the seasons, by the people around you, and by a shared understanding of what it means to be part of a community.

Over time, priorities shift. Life becomes more intentional. There's space to notice things again, a conversation, a walk, a moment of quiet.

And perhaps that's what so many people are discovering when they find their way to Charlotte County.

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A Perfect Day in Charlotte County

A seasonal look at life, places, and small moments across Charlotte County.



St. Andrews Blockhouse at sunset. PHOTO: CINDY KOHLER

By Brittany Locking
Community Contributor

While the early morning sun and the faint chirping of returning birds are a welcome sign of spring, it's the low-lying Fundy fog that truly signals the season's arrival in Saint Andrews. The air carries a crisp saltiness as the town slowly wakes, and I begin my day the way many good days here start, with a quiet walk down Water Street.

Inside Honeybeans, the warmth of fresh coffee and familiar conversation offers a gentle contrast to the cool coastal air outside. Latte in hand and a perfectly soft cinnamon roll that only appears on Saturdays, making the timing feel especially fortunate, I step back onto the street as shop doors begin to open and the town fills with easy greetings exchanged between neighbours, visitors, and friends.

The Van Horne Trail offers a slower rhythm. Morning walkers pass with nods and smiles, deer move quietly through the brush, and glimpses of waterfront homes give way to the natural beauty surrounding Pagan's Point. Along the shoreline facing Ministers Island, I wander farther than expected as the tide retreats, pockets gradually filling with sea glass in shades of white, green, and blue. By the time I turn back toward

town, the fog has lifted, replaced by the gentle warmth of an April sun.

By the time lunch rolls around, it feels well-earned, followed by an unhurried afternoon spent drifting through local boutiques, where carefully chosen pieces reflect the creativity and character of the community itself. Not every seasonal favourite has reopened just yet, a small reminder that spring here arrives gradually, but anticipation is part of the charm.

As evening settles in, dinner stretches into conversation and shared plates, the kind of meal best enjoyed slowly. From the Blockhouse, the day closes with a sky brushed in raspberry and burnt orange as the sun slips behind Maine's distant treeline. To the east, the crescent moon rises above the Algonquin Resort, standing watch over the harbour like a familiar landmark at the end of a perfectly ordinary and quietly extraordinary day in Charlotte County.

As the last light fades and the harbour settles into evening calm, it's hard not to notice how differently time seems to move here. Days unfold gently, shaped less by schedules and more by moments, a walk, a conversation, a view worth lingering over. Perhaps that's the real rhythm of Charlotte County: not rushing to fill the day but learning to fully notice it.

Living Here

Notes on everyday life in Charlotte County.



Seaweed harvesting boats in the harbour. PHOTO: CINDY KOHLER

By Brittany Locking
Community Contributor

Spring arrives quietly in Charlotte County. It doesn't announce itself all at once, but instead unfolds through small, familiar signs, longer stretches of daylight, fishing boats returning to a steady rhythm, and the first mornings when the air carries more warmth than winter's bite.

Living here, you learn to be patient with change. Fields soften gradually, walking trails reappear beneath melting frost, and favourite seasonal places return one by one, each reopening a small signal that winter is loosening its hold. Rather than rushing forward, spring feels like a shared transition, experienced differently across coastal towns, inland communities, and rural roads, yet recognized by everyone at the same moment.

There's a shift in energy during these weeks. Subtle, but noticeable. Conversations linger a little longer, outdoor projects begin again, and neighbours re-emerge after months spent largely indoors. The landscape feels as though it is stretching awake, and with it comes a renewed sense of possibility - plans forming, calendars filling, and the anticipation of warmer days spent outside.

As spring settles in, signs of the coming season appear everywhere: patios reopening, festival plans taking shape, dooryard gatherings returning, and communities preparing to welcome both familiar faces and new visitors. It's a gradual awakening rather than a sudden change, one that reminds you how closely life here moves with the seasons, and how each year begins again with a quiet sense of renewal shared across all of Charlotte County.

Community Event Highlights

A few upcoming events and gatherings happening across Charlotte County this season.

SPRING FEVER BY THE SEA

April 10-12

A new town-wide celebration welcoming the arrival of spring in St. Andrews. Local shops, restaurants, and community spaces will mark the season with special events, workshops, and fresh seasonal offerings; a chance to reconnect with the town before the busy summer months begin.

More information:

www.springfeverbythesea.com

RUN THE RUNWAY

May 2 | 10:00-11:30 AM

Participants are invited to walk or run a 5K along the Giddens Memorial Airport runway in support of Charlotte County Cancer. The event takes place rain or shine, with registration available through Run NB.

Details and registration:

www.events.runnb.ca

CHARLOTTE COUNTY RECREATION & HOME SHOW

May 8-9

Local vendors and exhibitors gather to showcase recreation, home, and lifestyle ideas for the season ahead.

Friday: 5:00-9:00 PM

Saturday: 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

SAINT ANDREWS TOWN-WIDE YARD SALE

May 9 | 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

A community-wide day of treasure hunting as residents across town host yard sales throughout Saint Andrews, a spring tradition for bargain seekers and casual explorers alike.



Reading Between the Listings

Why “Days on Market” Means Something Different in Charlotte County

By **Brittany Locking**
Community Contributor

If you’ve been watching local real estate listings lately, you may have noticed something that feels a little confusing.

Some homes sit on the market for months, quietly, and then suddenly sell close to asking price. Others move quickly, often because of location or timing rather than major differences in condition or price.

To someone following national real estate headlines, this might seem unusual. But here in Charlotte County, it’s actually quite normal.

And understanding why can help sellers set expectations that match our local market, not someone else’s.

Our market moves with the seasons.

Unlike larger urban centres where buying and selling happens at a steady pace year-round, our market is strongly tied to the calendar.

Many buyers discovering Charlotte County are coming from away. They visit during warmer months, explore communities while vacationing, or begin seriously searching once travel becomes easier in the spring and summer.

That means winter listings often spend time waiting, not because



something is wrong, but because the right buyers simply haven’t arrived yet.

In many cases, a home doesn’t change. The season does.

Location often outweighs timing.

In a lifestyle-driven market like ours, buyers are frequently motivated by specific goals: water access, walkable communities, privacy, or proximity to familiar coastal areas.

Because of this, buyers may watch listings for weeks or months before acting. They’re not always comparing dozens of similar homes, they’re waiting for the right fit.

When that match happens, decisions can move surprisingly quickly, even after a long period of little visible activity.

Time on market isn’t always a warning sign.

It’s easy to assume that a longer listing means a problem. In some markets, that might be true. Here, it often just reflects the size and rhythm of our buyer pool.

A property can sit through the quieter months and still sell very close to asking price once seasonal demand returns or the right buyer discovers it.

Patience, in many cases, is part of the strategy.

What sellers can take from this?

If your home is on the market right now, the most important question isn’t always “Why hasn’t it sold yet?” but rather, “Who is the likely buyer, and when are they most active?”

Charlotte County real estate tends to reward preparation and realistic expectations more than urgency. Understanding the natural pace of our market helps sellers avoid unnecessary stress and make decisions with confidence.

As we move toward the spring season, more eyes begin turning toward our communities again and activity often follows.

Because here, reading between the lines sometimes means recognizing that timing isn’t just about days on market. It’s about understanding the rhythm of the place we call home.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I would like to thank *The Courier* for the excellent Op-Ed piece in the March issue.

In the March issue, Vicki gave us an important summary of our country’s nature: “Elbows up. Hands Open.”

Like this letter writer, Vicki found the Tumbler Ridge school shooting a terrible event, not one we should ever get “used to” as occurs south of our long border. Fortunately, Canadians will never develop a “thick skin” about those types of events.

As Vicki said, despite the many deaths, Tumbler Ridge brought out the best in us as when our Prime Minister and our Leader of the Opposition held hands at the vigil.

In the age of Social Media, it is not always easy to be a journalist or a reporter. It does not require empathy or compassion when all you have to do is press “send” to deliver a nasty message, or drop a bomb on another country.

But equally, it is important for journalists to be accountable for what they write. As I said in an earlier issue of the new Courier: “One of the great things about local journalism, is that you face the people you write about in the street, the day the newspaper is published.”

Let me sound, for a minute, like the crusty older editor of *The Saint Croix Courier* that I was back before the turn of the century - I signed all my editorials. I believe having one’s name on an editorial helped to stay accountable to the readers and the wider public.

In my view, having an editorial signed by “The Board” with no real names of the writers, just doesn’t cut it.

Meantime, keep up the great work.

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Aerial view of Rossmount Inn and surrounding property. PHOTO: CINDY KOHLER

At the Rossmount Inn, a Passing of the Torch

By **VICKI HOGARTH**
Reporter, The Courier

Change has come quietly to one of Saint Andrews' most cherished places. After a quarter century guiding the Rossmount Inn, Chef Chris and Graziella Aerni have passed ownership of the historic retreat to Alicia and Ryan MacDonald, local entrepreneurs with deep roots in Charlotte County.

Since 2001, the Aernis built the Rossmount's reputation on thoughtful hospitality, culinary excellence, and a deep connection to community, helping establish Saint Andrews as a global destination for food and travel, without losing its sense of place.

Feeling that their own retirement was on the horizon, the Aernis knew finding the right buyers mattered. They were deliberate about choosing

successors who understood what they were taking on. Enter Alicia and Ryan MacDonald who have made waves in Charlotte County with their expansion of The Hollows Golf Course in Utopia and the creation of The Rouxbarb Restaurant.

"It's the best case scenario," Chris Aerni told The Courier. "You've got local people buying [the Rossmount] who have the energy, who have the experience in business, and who are great employers."

The Aernis will also stay involved for the next two years, helping guide the handover and preserve the Rossmount's defining values. Current Chef de Cuisine Michael McKnight will take the helm from Aerni in the kitchen.

The sale includes the inn and 33.4 hectares (82.5 acres) of land. The well-used carriage trail up Chamcook

Mountain will remain open to the public, continuing a long-standing connection between the inn and the community.

"They didn't just buy the property, the Rossmount; they also bought the brand," said Aerni. "It's a win-win situation for the staff who get to keep their jobs, and for the Rossmount staying in the community."

For the MacDonald's, keeping the Rossmount alive for a new generation — a restaurant where they are considered regulars — was the point. Writing its next chapter is not something they take lightly.

"There are moments in life that feel larger than anything you imagined — moments filled with gratitude, humility, excitement, and a profound sense of responsibility. For us, this is one of those moments," Alicia MacDonald said to The Courier.

"The Rossmount is more than a place. It is memories, celebrations, traditions, and quiet moments overlooking Passamaquoddy Bay. It is woven into the lives of those who call this place home and those who return year after year. We will honour that."

In a town where change moves carefully, the Rossmount's next chapter isn't about reinvention but continuity. Guided by new hands, and an old sense of care.

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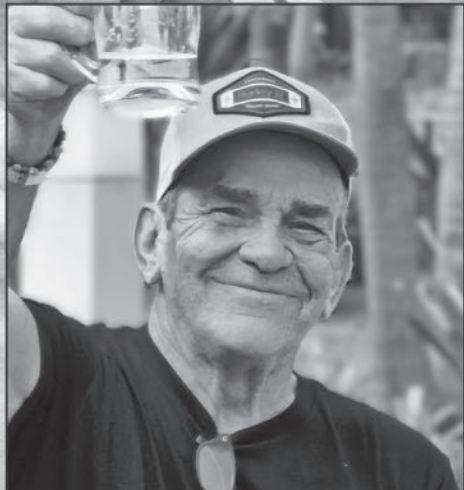
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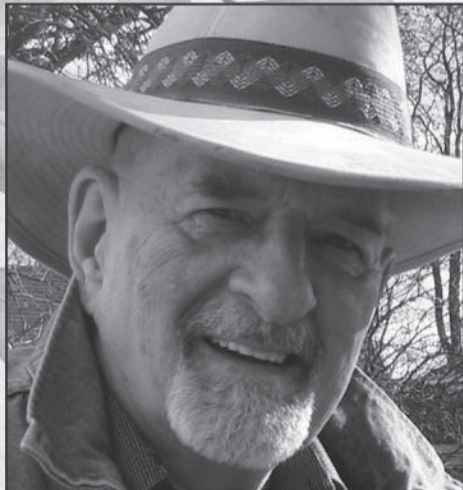


WILLIAM CLONEY

It is with great sadness that the family of William "Will" Cloney, 72, of St. Stephen, announce his unexpected passing on February 26, 2026.

Will is survived by his loving children: Melinda Moffatt (Aaron), Josh Cloney (Kristan), Liam Cloney (Taylor), and Meghan Cloney (Lawson); and his cherished grandchildren: Rylan and Cage Cloney, Arya Moffatt, and Gannon and Bryer Cloney. He is also survived by his beloved brothers, Bennett Cloney (Zita) and Jeff Cloney (Sandra), his partner, Lynda Henderson, and his loyal dog, Molly, along with a wide circle of extended family and lifelong friends, too numerous to name but never forgotten.

A celebration of life was held March 4.



WEBBER A. BURNS

Webber A. Burns passed away on Saturday March 14, 2026, in St Stephen, New Brunswick.

He is survived by his children and will be remembered by those who knew him in his best moments.

A graveside service will be held at the Milltown Roman Catholic Cemetery, Barter Settlement, NB, time and date will be announced.

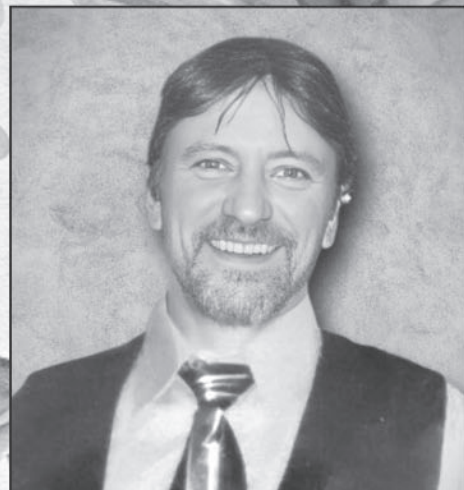


CECILE M. JONES

It is with heavy hearts, we announce the unexpected and peaceful passing of Cecile "CC" M. Jones on Thursday March 5, 2026, with her family by her side, at the Saint John Regional Hospital Saint John, N.B.

She is survived by her son; Matthew (Adam), fur grandbabies; Kai, Rayna, Zena, Louie and Wyatt, siblings; Rose Dickinson, Joey Dickinson (Donna), Maurice, Theresa Brewer (Norman), Francis Comeau, uncles; Harold (Helen) and Glendon, several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Funeral service and visitation were held March 10.



DAVID MCLEAN

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of David McLean at the Saint John Regional Hospital, Saint John, N.B. on Wednesday, March 4, 2026 with his family by his side.

David is survived by his daughter, Emily McLean (Kinzie), brother Mike McLean (Olivia and Gabriel), father, Rawleigh, several aunts, uncles and cousins.

Funeral service and visitation were held March 9.



SHIRLEY E. STEWART

With the love of her family surrounding her, St Stephen's New Years baby of 1937, Shirley E. Stewart, quietly left us to be with her beloved Bertie on Sunday March 8, 2026, at Lincourt Manor St Stephen, New Brunswick.

Shirley is survived by her children and grandchildren; Terry (Margot) and children, Jordan (Amy) and Nathan (Sara); Tim (Colleen) and daughter, Haley (Jeff); Sandi (Doug), their children, Paige (Stuart) and Nick; Donna (James) and children, Maggie and Holly; Chris (Angela) and children, Alex (Mariah), Katie and Laurent, five great-grandchildren, several nieces, nephews and cousins.

In keeping with her wishes, a private graveside service will be held in the spring 2026.



BERTHA BERNIER

It is with heavy hearts that the family of Bertha A. Bernier announces her passing at the Saint John Regional Hospital Saint John, New Brunswick on Saturday March 7, 2026.

She is survived by her loving husband; Ivan Bernier, her sons; Gary Boyd (Robin), David Boyd (Shirley) and Kevin Boyd (Julie) and her daughter; Brenda McDonough (Kelly), her cherished grandchildren; Amanda McDonough, Shawna Moore (Nathan), James Boyd (Megan), Galen McDonough, Kara Storey, Larissa Boyd, Carter Boyd, and Layton Boyd and her great-grandchildren; Colton Boyd and Claire Boyd.

She will also be lovingly remembered by her extended family; Jacques, Jean, Giselle and Scotty, her sisters; Helena Kent (Doug) and Florena Stewart, extended family member; Joan Beaumaster, several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Funeral service and visitation were held March 12, 2026



ERIKA K. BROWN

Erika K. Brown passed away peacefully on Friday March 6, 2026 in Ontario at the age of 98.

Erika was predeceased by two beloved husbands, John Whitlock in 1983 and later Charles Edward Brown (Ed) in 2013. She is survived by her loving stepchildren from her marriage with Ed: Robert (Marion), Bill, Sharon, Janet and Carolyn (Stephen). Erika was a devoted grandmother to Ben (Jess), Colin, Margaret and Patrick.

From her German family: She is survived by her sister-in-law Sonja, niece Sandra (Stefen) and nephew Reiner (Marike). From her Canadian family: She is survived by her sisters-in-law Marilyn (Dave) and Theresa as well as many nieces and nephews.

Interment will take place in St. Stephen Rural Cemetery at a later date.



JUANITA STURGEON

It is with heavy hearts that we announce the passing of Juanita Sturgeon, at the Charlotte County Hospital St Stephen, NB on Monday March 2, 2026.

She is survived by her parents; Gary Sturgeon (Karen and Micheal), and Mary Ann Hallihan, her brother; Owen Sturgeon (Kelsey, Bentley, Kensleigh and Colton).

Juanita was a proud and devoted mother to Brittney and Tyler (Kayla). Her greatest joy in life was being "Little Nana" to her beloved grandchildren, Skyler, Wyatt, Memphis, Maddox, Waylon, Macy, and Alana. She also lovingly welcomed many bonus children and grandchildren along the way — if you ever needed a place to go, her door was always open. Juanita will be missed dearly by her special cousins and many close relatives in Miramichi, NB.

There will be no funeral service or visitation held.



GARRETT CHASE

It is with profound sadness that the family of Garrett Chase announce his unexpected passing at the Saint John Regional Hospital on March 15, 2026, at the age of 37.

Garrett leaves behind his loving life partner, Holly Tucker; his children Nolan, Claire, Ryan, and Emma; his father Kenny Chase (Marlene); his mother Lyn Ross (Jim); his sisters, Alicia Chase (Sean); Nicole Breen (Pat), Hillary Hastey (Najee), Jessica Ross, and Mallory Coutinho (Sean). He will also be deeply missed by his extended family and friends.

Funeral service and visitation were held March 20, 2026.

FULL OBITUARIES AVAILABLE AT WWW.MEHANFUNERALHOME.CA



FRANK MCCRAY

It is with great sadness that the family of Frank McCray announce his passing on Monday, March 9, 2026, at his home in Upper Mills, NB surrounded by his loving family.

Frank is survived by his loving wife of 64 years, Carol (Harper), their children; Dianne, at home, Karen (Mark) Northrup of St Andrews, NB, Doug (Bev DeLong) of Upper Mills, NB, grandchildren; Everest McCray of Woodstock, NB, Stephen Northrup of Saint John, NB, Vikki Northrup (Eric Arsenault) of Saint John, NB, Sarah (Allan) Grenier of Salt Springs, NB., great-grandchildren; Aiden and Owen Grenier, brothers; Earl (Kay), Emmett (Marsha), sisters; Nora (John) McLean, Barb McLean and Susan Davidson, sisters-in-law; Janet Harper and Mary Pulk, several nieces and nephews and special friend Helen Torrance.

Private graveside service will be held at later date.



John Herbert Norris

January 14, 1927 - March 22, 2026

John Herbert Norris, a longtime member of our St Andrews community has passed away at age ninety-nine. He died peacefully at home on Sunday, March 22, surrounded by family.

John is survived by Brenda, his beloved wife of 68 years as well as his four children, Christopher, David, Felicia (Charlie Bartlett) and Peter (Lisa Wood). He had eight grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Among many of John's accomplishments, he was instrumental in bringing the Alcan Aquarium Dolphin Show to Expo 87, founded the Montreal Zoological Society and established the Falcon Golf Course in Hudson, QC. He also created PJ Pet Centres with 40 locations as far as Edmonton to Boston.

John was the perfect gentleman. He will be remembered for his wit, charm and legendary one-liners that could make a room erupt in laughter. With his unique sense of humour, warm smile and grace-he was a person one never forgot.

As a family man, he was adored by his children and grandchildren alike.

For the Norris clan, St. Andrews was their special summer oasis, away from the everyday demands of life in downtown Montreal. John and Brenda spent close to 70 years at their summer residence along the St. Croix River. They brought their children and grandchildren each year to enjoy the ocean and all that St. Andrews has to offer. He loved sailing and motoring around Passamaquoddy Bay. Equally as fun, never ending swims and life on the dock at Chamcook Lake. Many a gathering was held throughout the years.

Some of John's favourite evenings were spent with family and friends at Treadwell Inn, the Chandler Room as well as The Rossmount. Some would say he had an equal loyalty to the Oak Bay Dairy Bar!

A celebration of John's life will be held this August in St. Andrews when all family will be present.

We are with the Norris family as they navigate the loss of their beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather.



Elizabeth (Lizzie) Ireland Mann

1949 - 2026

I lost my love, my best friend and my riding buddy on March 15, 2026 due to cancer.

Lizzie was born in Montreal on June 14, 1949 and was predeceased by her parents Ethel and J. Albert Ireland. She was also predeceased by her brother-in-law, Alan Knopp.

She is survived by Patrick (Pat) Mann, her loving husband of 42 years along with her sons Paul and Paddy Ireland.

She is also survived by her sisters-in-law Katherine (Muff) Hoodspith (Chris) and Keren Mann-Knopp and brother-in-law Craig (Boo) Mann (Nancy) and 12 nieces and nephews and 12 great nieces and great nephews.

Lizzie had an artistic soul and was an accomplished artist and musician.

She also had an adventurous spirit and together we rode over 300,000 kilometres in about 20 years on our motorcycle. We had many adventures through northern New England and Atlantic Canada where we had many adventures discovering new roads, and meeting new people.

She loved being near the sea and wanted to live there full time so after retiring from work in the medical field, in 2012 we moved to Saint Andrews, NB, not knowing a soul there.

She thrived in St. Andrews, quickly getting involved in the community. It didn't take long for her to join a local ladies' exercise program where built many friendships and came to see the older ladies her "role models".

At her request there will be no funeral.

The family would like to sincerely thank the staff at the Charlotte County Hospital for the compassionate care she received. We would especially like to thank the nurses in the Oncology Unit for the excellent care, support and love we received throughout Lizzie's multi-year battle.

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All Saints Church - 75 King Street, St. Andrews

Sundays
8:00 am Holy Communion
11:00 am Holy Communion or Morning Prayer

Wednesdays
10:00 am Holy Communion

Mondays through Fridays
9:00 am Morning Prayer

St. John the Baptist Chapel of Ease
4691 Highway 127, Chamcook

Sundays 7:00 pm (June 22nd through October 12th)

Broadcast on CHCO-TV

Sundays
10:30 am, 12:30 pm, 7:00 pm

Mondays and Wednesdays
9:00 am recorded service of Morning Prayer

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Find Your Best Career

The hidden cost of staying comfortable in your career



Jennifer Bouley

We all get to a point in our careers where we feel a lack of growth or are just comfortable. For some, comfort is very good because they know what to expect, and for others, it can lead to stagnation. But eventually, just being “comfortable” in your career can lead to dissatisfaction. This is not to say that if you are happy in the role, you are not growing, but for some individuals, this can be the case. This article will focus on what to do if you are feeling comfortable in your career and are seeking growth.

I was working at in 2010, which led me to jump-start my career, when my entry role was feeling stagnant.

When you are feeling stagnant, here are a few areas you can explore to upgrade your career:

Comfort vs. alignment – Are your personal values in line with what you want in your career? Are you staying because of predictability? Make sure that if you do move on to the next role, it is aligned with your values.

When growth stops, confidence often leaves gradually after that – Ask yourself how confident am I feeling in my role, life, or career?

Financial impacts – When you don’t stretch yourself professionally, you often miss out on new opportunities, which can affect your earnings.



Growth doesn’t always mean leaving your company. It can mean taking on new responsibilities if you feel you have the capacity, taking on new professional ventures outside of your day job, like starting a side business that you have always had your eye on, or seeking out new professional development opportunities.

Growth and stagnation can be beneficial to show us that we need to grow, but it is not good if it drags on. This is your opportunity to open the door to conversations with other professionals whom you feel you need to connect with to do some exploration. This is where informational interviews come in. Informational interviews are where you meet with another professional to discuss their experience in a company, organization, or field that may interest you. Personally, I got into Human Resources by asking for my first informational interview at a large telecommunications company

What you want to typically see is an increase in your earnings. However, this may not always be the case, as sometimes we do career pivots that bring us to roles that may align with our values but do pay less.

The main thing is to ensure that you are not limiting yourself due to loyalty, knowing that you need to stretch (even when things aren’t bad) and not doing something about it. Take the time and look around the job market before making any leaps, make a plan, and strategically find your next endeavour.

Jennifer Bouley is a Career Development Practitioner located in St Stephen. She has a passion for helping others find wellness in their careers, while finding fulfilling jobs.

Jennifer can be reached at blisspluseyou@gmail.com.



UN treaty must reach isolated older adults



Heather Campbell Pope

Last month, energy was high at the United Nations as an intergovernmental working group began the formal process of drafting a convention on the rights of older persons. The momentum is welcome. Older people have long received limited attention in international human rights law, and ageism remains embedded in legal and social systems.

But as the global community moves toward a treaty, the challenge is not simply to expand autonomy but also to ensure that rights are practical and responsive to the realities of isolated lives. Many older adults face social disconnection, whether due to lost family ties, outliving friends, institutionalization, mental health conditions, or loneliness that can lead them to push others away.

Over the past two decades, the U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) has influenced how the world thinks about capacity and autonomy. Article 12 encourages moving away from substitute decision-making, where decisions are made on a person’s behalf, and calls for countries to let individuals make their own choices with support from someone they trust.

In New Brunswick, this international movement found concrete expression in law when legislation formalizing supported decision-making came into force in January 2024, placing the province alongside jurisdictions such as British Columbia, where similar legislation was enacted in 2000.

Yet this shift raises an accessibility question: how can a model built on chosen support work for those who have no trusted network? Consider an 82-year-old woman with dementia sitting in a hospital room. She has no spouse, no children, no close friends. The neighbours who once checked in have moved away. A social worker

is trying to arrange her discharge, but there is no one to call, no one authorized to help her navigate housing, finances, or medical care. For so-called “unbefriended” older adults, the promise of supported decision-making can ring hollow. The framework assumes trusted relationships. For some older people, those relationships simply do not exist.

We should also avoid assuming that everyone wants friends or family to assist them. Some may prefer to delegate decisions to state authorities rather than rely on personal contacts.

As convention drafters move forward, it is important to bear in mind the limits of supported decision-making. Indeed, Canada’s long-standing interpretation of the CRPD recognizes that substitute decision-making should continue in appropriate circumstances.

Attention must also be paid to the risk that coercion can occur behind the veneer of a “supported decision,” giving the appearance of genuine choice when the individual’s autonomy has in fact been compromised. In such cases, carefully structured substitute decision-making by state authorities may better protect the person’s safety and rights, relieving an older adult from the dominating tactics of an abusive adult child, for example.

As international and domestic systems advance decisional support, autonomy must be paired with accessible rights so that no older adult is left invisible. Legal frameworks must address the structural and personal barriers that make it difficult for some older adults to access trusted support networks, and progress may require innovative approaches to ensure support is available where informal networks are absent. The experiences of isolated seniors illustrate the limits of well-intentioned legal reforms: rights cannot fulfil their promise if they fail to reach the most isolated among us.

Heather Campbell Pope is founder of Dementia Justice Canada and writes on legal issues affecting older adults.

The Etiquette Guy AT LARGE

Part III: Three everyday practices



Jay Remer

Series overview

Civility is usually discussed as a set of rules, manners, or expectations imposed on behavior. But historically, civility emerged much earlier and much more naturally — through shared cultural practices that required cooperation, restraint, emotional awareness, and mutual respect.

This three-part series explores how music, the arts, and cooking and dining together have quietly shaped civil societies across cultures and generations. Each essay stands alone, yet together they reveal a simple truth: civility is learned through participation, not instruction.

The series avoids politics and ideology, focusing instead on universally recognized human activities that transcend differences and foster social stability.

PART III: The Table Is the First Classroom of Civility

In many communities today, eating has become something we do between obligations—hurried, solitary, or improvised. This shift has contributed to the erosion of civility: for most of human history, cooking and dining were central to learning cooperation, sharing responsibility, and passing down culture.

If we want to understand the erosion of civility in modern life, we should start with the table—and everything that leads to it.

Civility does not begin when the

food is served. It starts in the unseen work that comes before the meal. Growing crops teaches patience and stewardship. Raising livestock teaches responsibility and consistency. Preparing food teaches planning, timing, and care for others.

Storing food teaches thrift and respect for resources. These habits, developed long before anyone sits down to eat, form the backbone of community life.

A meal is the final expression of a long chain of cooperation.

The act of cooking—especially when done together—requires communication, delegation, timing, and trust. Someone chops while another stirs. Someone seasons while another sets the table. Mistakes are corrected, ideas negotiated, and preferences considered. These interactions are not trivial. They are practices for living alongside one another.

And then comes the dining itself: one of the simplest yet most powerful civilizing rituals we have.

At the table, people must wait their turn, listen, and speak respectfully. They share space with others—who may think, believe, or feel differently. The table is where children learn self-regulation and gratitude. It is where adults reconnect after days spent in fragmented environments. It is where disagreements can soften and where laughter can reorder a difficult day.

Meals slow us down just enough to see one another clearly.

In today's chaotic society, these benefits are increasingly fragile. Many households eat on different schedules. Many children grow up without ever helping to prepare a meal. Fast food and on-the-go eating have replaced the slower rhythms that once anchored family and community life. In losing the table, we have lost not only a tradition but a training ground for civility.

We underestimate how deeply eating together shapes character.

Communal meals teach that everyone has a place and that nourishment is shared, not hoarded. They show us that comfort, conversation, and belonging cannot be rushed. These lessons linger long after the plates are cleared.

Cooking and dining together help counter social isolation, a growing problem. People can live under the same roof yet experience entirely separate lives. A shared meal re-establishes a sense of “we.” Often, this is exactly what many communities need.

When people gather at a table—whether in a home, a community center, a cultural festival, or a long-table event in the town square—they rediscover what civil society requires: presence, patience, curiosity, and connection.

In an age of distraction and division, the table remains one of the few places where all of these qualities come naturally.

Let us return to cooking and communal dining, not as optional niceties, but as everyday actions essential to our wellbeing. Commit to preparing food with others and sitting down regularly to share it. Make the table a deliberate practice—invite friends, family, or neighbors, and reclaim this space as the foundation for a calmer, more stable, and compassionate community.

Short editor's note

At a time when public discussion about civility often becomes political or moralistic, this series takes a different approach.

Rather than arguing about who is right or wrong, or proposing new rules for behavior, the essays that follow ask a quieter question: How did human beings originally learn to live together at all?

The author suggests that civility did not begin as an abstract idea or a formal code, but as a lived skill developed through shared cultural experiences — making music, creating art, and gathering around the table. These practices appear in every culture, across history, and require no agreement beyond participation.

Readers skeptical of “soft solutions” may be surprised to find that the essay series is not about nostalgia or sentimentality. It is about practical human behaviors that teach listening, emotional regulation, responsibility, and cooperation — the very capacities modern societies say they want, yet they struggle to cultivate.

Whether one agrees or not, the series invites reflection on something often overlooked: before we tried to manage civility, we practiced it — together.

Jay Remer was raised in the United States and emigrated to Canada roughly 30 years ago. Since then, I have been involved in the writers' community and the hospitality industry. I live in Saint Andrews, NB, and look forward to the day when healthy, civil debates bear more compassionate outcomes.

Please feel free to send your questions: jayremer@chco.tv

Civility is fed long before it is spoken.

The table has always known this.



For the Love of Maud



First-Class Dogs in a First-Class Town

By VICKI HOGARTH
Reporter, The Courier

There are many ways to measure the quality of a place. Some people look at property values, school rankings, or the price of a decent latte. I look at how dogs get on.

By that measure, Saint Andrews is one of the finest places on earth.

Our love of dogs is immediately apparent to even first-time visitors. Stay at the Algonquin Resort and you will be greeted by Leia, the historic hotel's famous lobby dog. While her human co-workers help guests check in, Leia welcomes visitors by offering an ear for scratching or rolling over on her dog bed for a belly rub. Her relaxed state tells visiting canines that dogs, too, are meant to enjoy their time here.

Downtown on Water Street, a dog cannot so much as glance toward a storefront without being rewarded for it. Accompanying their humans while they run errands is not a chore for the local canine population but a kind of tasting tour, a carefully paced downtown sampling circuit. The local economy may technically run on tourism and small business, but it is equally sustained by dog biscuits and puppy-dog eyes.

At the post office, dogs wait with the quiet dignity of someone expecting important correspondence. The postmaster delivers each biscuit like registered mail—priority, hand-stamped, handled with care.

At Cockburn's Drugstore, there is no need for such formality. The treat appears the moment Maud crosses the threshold, as if conjured. It is understood that she is here on official business, and that business is being a good girl.

Around town, she has her stops: The Crocker Hill Store, Buoy Up!, Cummings Convenience, LH Boutique, where the treats are selected with the seriousness of a wine pairing. Over time, a dog begins to understand the geography of generosity. They learn the route. They remember who carries what. They develop relationships.

And that's the thing about a small town. You don't just have places you go. You have places where you are known, whether you have two legs or four.

By the time we complete a loop of town, Maud has effectively enjoyed the canine equivalent of a full Costco sampling circuit, only without the existential dread of spending \$300 on things you didn't know you needed.

Then there are the days that go above and beyond.

When we order from King Street Pizza, Maud stations herself by the door long before the car arrives, alerted by some internal radar system. Caroline appears not just



with pizza for us, but with what can only be described as Maud's personal charcuterie: slices of ham, presented immediately, no waiting, no sharing, no questions asked. It is, frankly, Michelin level service.

In the summer, Sea La Vie hands out pup cups, tiny servings of soft ice cream that transform an already good day into something cinematic: a dog eating ice cream by the sea, living a life most people would envy and few dogs fully appreciate.

And then there is the local Tim Hortons. If you think all Tim Hortons are the same, then you've never been to St. Andrews.

The drive-thru means only one thing to Maud: a plain Timbit. She begins her ascent from the backseat like a mountaineer, climbing over my husband Patrick as though he were simply part of the terrain. By the time we reach the window, she has wedged herself into the driver's seat,

head out, eyes bright, nose working overtime.

She drools. Profusely.

It drips onto Patrick—his coat, his arm, his dignity.

"Oh, Maud," he says every time, in the same tone of mild betrayal.

And every time, we do nothing to stop her. Because this absurd, slightly chaotic, deeply joyful ritual is part of the point.

Maud loves the Timbit, yes. But more than that, she loves the recognition. The way the person at the window lights up and says her name like they've been waiting all day to see her. The way she is not just a dog at a drive-thru window, but a regular. A customer. Someone expected.

We learned just how unusual this was years ago when we took Maud to the city and she attempted, with great confidence, to insert herself through the drive-thru window of a Saint John A&W. She was not met with the usual enthusiasm she generates back home. Instead, Maud's theatrics incited genuine terror from a poor employee who was absolutely not prepared to be greeted by a large, enthusiastic dog trying to order her own meal.

It was a humbling moment for Maud.

But an educational one for us.

Because that's when you realize that what feels normal in a small town is not normal everywhere. Not everywhere is a place where people know your dog, where they keep treats behind the counter just in case, where a quick errand quietly turns into a series of small, friendly encounters.

A dog measures a place very simply: Who is happy to see me? Where do I get my cookie? Where does everyone know my name?

By those measures, Maud thinks there's no place like home.

And honestly, she's right.



6th Annual “Hillary’s Hope for Hunger” food drive



By Patty Borthwick
Hillary’s Hope for Hunger Organizer

EVENT DETAILS:

Saturday April 26th, 11:00 am to 2:00 pm, Main Street, St. George

Hillary was such a light for everyone who knew her and her presence remains forever with the ones who love her. She had a heart as big as her personality and would never turn a blind eye to someone struggling, despite the struggles she faced herself.

We want to continue to honour this memory of her in a way we know she would appreciate, by focusing on one of the many contributing factors that impact mental health.

Too many people are struggling to put food on the table for them and their family every single day, not knowing how they will provide their next meal. Too many children go to sleep hungry and have to go to school worrying about when they will eat next while knowing some of their peers can’t even imagine that life. These are people we know, people we work with, people we see every day in our community. These are children you teach, coach and watch your kids play with.

So, **MARK YOUR CALENDARS AGAIN** as this year will be the 6th

Annual “Hillary’s Hope for Hunger” food drive. Please come help us celebrate and honour her memory by helping fellow members of our community.

Like every year, all proceeds will be donated directly to our local food bank in St. George.

We are always grateful and always blown away by the success of this event every year, with combined food and cash donations totalling well over \$120,000.

We hope this year can be just as successful, but even helping one family makes a world of difference.

If you would like to contribute to a cause dear to our hearts, we will be located at the food bank pantry on Main Street in St. George and accepting food/cash donations from 11 am - 2pm. If you can’t make it that day but still want to help, we will also be accepting donations by e-transfer to Patty’s email: Lthsekpr@nb.sympatico.ca and we ask anyone donating via e-transfer to please make your security answer 2026.

We hope that if you can, you will take a few minutes out of your Saturday and prove again that we are a community strong. Especially in times like these, we need to take care of each other.

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