

St. Stephen Homeless Shelter Sparks Talk About Wider Impact

Nathalie Sturgeon
Reporter, LJI

When Peter Fitch looks down from his second-floor bedroom, it doesn't take him long to see something that makes him feel uneasy.

Fitch owns the home right across from Lighthouse Lodge, the shelter for unhoused people in St. Stephen.

"I think most of us would say the same thing, that we are very concerned about the folks that are staying there," he said, speaking to *The Courier*. "We want them to be out of the cold, for sure, but we've had a great disruption in our life."

He said there have been nights he and his wife have awoken to screaming in the courtyard, just several hundred metres from their front door.

"It feels like this shelter was kind of crowbarred into this space," he said.

In December 2023, the Municipal District of St. Stephen (MDSS) declared a state of emergency over the growing number of people experiencing homelessness in the small community along the Canada-U.S. border.

It was later rescinded by former public safety minister Kris Austin.

How the shelter operates

A month later, a proposed homeless shelter on Happy Valley Road was put on "pause" by the Progressive Conservative government of the day over concerns from area residents, who said it was too close to the local high school, businesses, and raised fears over increased crime.

In November 2024, the new Liberal government announced that 9 Main Street would be the location of a new permanent shelter for the area. Fitch said the neighbouring properties were invited to an open house two days before it opened the doors.

"I do believe that this group has done everything to try and make it better, as they have put up a fence, which helps people walking by, [but] it doesn't help us," he said.

The shelter has 20 regular beds and 10 overflow beds. It is consid-



ered a "wet shelter," meaning people who are inebriated by drugs or alcohol can stay there.

It operates under the harm reduction model, which deploys safer use, managed use, abstinence, meeting people "where they're at" and addressing conditions of use along with use itself, according to the National Harm Reduction Coalition.

Fitch describes moments of intense violence.

"What I can't live with is men screaming the worst obscenities in our language at women ... We witnessed a group of people sitting beside the shelter, and a man came running from the shelter, knocked one of the women to the ground, started beating her, then started kicking her in the head. When we started screaming at him to stop and screaming at the staff members to get over to where everybody actually was, instead of the courtyard property of the shelter, the man started screaming obscenities at us."

Fitch said he feels you cannot help one group of people while harming another.

Fellow resident Stacy Arseneault has similar feelings. He lives down the street from the shelter.

"What we're noticing is quality of life, since this was opened in November, [that] has changed dramatically," he said in an interview with *The Courier*.

Arseneault said he feels unsafe — a feeling he wasn't expecting when he moved home to St. Stephen from out of province. He was able to meet with Social Development

Minister Cindy Miles, which has given the residents some hope.

But they have yet to be able to present to MDSS during a regular meeting of council.

"We want to be sitting at the table and have some transparency with the municipality, but they are not returning our calls," he said.

Both Fitch and Arseneault said they understand housing and homelessness are under the provincial mandate, but add they only wish to be heard by their local representatives.

The group petitioned the council through a lawyer to make their presentation.

The Courier reached out to MDSS Mayor Allan MacEachern, but he declined to comment citing an ongoing legal petition on the group's request to present.

Frustration over communication

Arseneault said there is a frustration that has been brewing in the community.

"There doesn't seem to be any collaboration," he said. "Everything seems to be happening behind closed doors."

A new municipal plan that is under review by the local government and the public said it wishes to approach homelessness "in a fair and compassionate manner."

It also seeks to work with non-profit partners and the provincial government to "phase out the existing emergency shelter site and zone locations for any future temporary emergency shelters based upon the policy of the municipal plan or through a site-specific rezoning and consultation."



Peter Fitch and Stacy Arseneault said they want to deal with the issue in a compassionate manner but their quality of life has definitely changed. (Nathalie Sturgeon/*The Courier*)

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The Courier

The trade name and written works within are originally published by



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 News Director, *CHCO-TV*
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Funding

Some of the content was made possible through the Local Journalism Initiative



Publishing in Print

is made possible through a grant from New Horizons for Seniors through Vision St. Andrews.

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NB Commission Urges Mandatory Training for Municipal Leaders



Nathalie Sturgeon
 Reporter, LJI

The Local Governance Commission in New Brunswick is recommending the provincial government implement mandatory training for municipal leaders and senior staff.

In its first report since being created in the spring of last year, it said this recommendation addressed many of the challenges facing local governments since reform.

"These recommendations are grounded in the experiences of local government councillors and senior employees who have shared their concerns with us," said Giselle Goguen, the chair of the commission.

The training would address several key areas:

- Code of conduct: including sections on harassment and bullying.
- Conflicts of Interest.
- Roles and responsibilities of elected officials and staff.
- Financial requirements and matters.
- Right to Information and Protection of Privacy Act requirements.

It says the training should happen within the first six months of an election or appointment and failure to complete the training should come with the appropriate sanctions.

"Specifically, confusion over governance principles and legal obligations is leading to avoidable conflict, expense, and stress. Mandatory training in the key areas identified by the Commission is a straightforward and efficient way the Department can help support local governments, especially newly-amalgamated communities," Goguen said in the release.

Dan Murphy, the executive direc-

tor of the Union of Municipalities of New Brunswick (UMNB), said this recommendation aligns well with the work the organization is already undertaking.

"It evolves over time," he said. "What are the foundation blocks of local government ... making sure there is a clear understanding of how we handle and work on code of conduct complaints and conflicts of interest, just general financial stuff, things around asset management and how do you make responsible decisions around maintaining and replacing infrastructure in your community."

He said this is important as the province heads into a municipal election in May 2026.

"There are a lot of factors at play, but like any other position, education is always a benefit to what you're doing and helps make your job better," he said in an interview with *The Courier*.

Murphy explained the organization is happy to work with the department, but also with municipal stakeholders on the delivery of this training.

For local leaders like Allan MacEachern, the training is welcome news.

Former Coun. Earle Eastman, who died this summer, and Chief Administrative Officer Jeff Renaud were working on an orientation package for the incoming council in 2026.

"I'm glad to see they're looking into doing that or planning to do that," he said. "Councillors still need to understand their role and it is good for that."

MacEachern said there is a lot to learn and that takes time.

"I walked in and you're ready to change the world but there are so many things you have to learn in a short period of time," he said. "You can lean on a senior councillor that has been around."

He explained the UMNB also does

some training already. "Understanding your role ... understand [the] process, what you can and cannot do," he said.

Eastern Charlotte Mayor John Craig has been a part of local government for nearly two decades.

"I think it is something that everybody welcomes, to have more training, more education, the more the better," he said. "I've been involved with the municipal government for ... 19 years and I'm still learning. I could be at it for another 20 years and still be learning."

He said the biggest thing that comes to mind for him is learning procedures – especially procedural bylaws.

"Everybody has a different role to do and a different job to do and sometimes those lines get mixed over time," he said. "So, I think it's good training to have ... and it's easy to do because everybody has their passion for [doing] the job."

The commission also made several other recommendations as part of its first report, which were given to Local Government Minister Aaron Kennedy:

- Allowing the Commission to order training as a sanction in cases involving breaches of conflict-of-interest provisions or code of conduct by-laws.
- Introducing regulatory changes to prohibit reprisals against complainants.
- Expanding the Commission's authority when reviewing regional service commission boundary alteration requests to ensure larger impacts of such requests are always considered.
- Requiring an independent 7-year mandatory review of the Local Governance Commission Act.

Truth and Reconciliation Day in Qonaskamkuk

More than 200 people gathered at Indian Point to take part in the ceremony

Kate Akagi's great aunt told her when the remains of hundreds of Indigenous children were discovered at the site of a former residential school – the earth had been keeping them safe.

She is a member of the Peskotomuhkati Nation – one of the founding first nations in New Brunswick alongside the Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik.

"They weren't found, Mother Earth kept them safe until people were willing, ready and able to understand why those children were lost for so many years," she said. "[She] gave them back to the people and now is the time for the healing to continue."

More than 200 people gathered around Indian Point in Saint Andrews to mark those children – Indigenous – who were the victims of residential schools in Canada.

People there took part in ceremonial smudging, but also a silent walk – to the beat of the Indigenous drum.

Akagi helped organize the event. The tradition started with Phyllis Webstad, a member of the Stswecem'c Xgat'tem First Nation (Canoe Creek Indian Band).

"When she went to school, she and her grannie had saved up their money, and bought an orange shirt and when she went to residential school her shirt was torn off her, her hair was cut and she never saw it again," Akagi said. "Which was devastating and she was in [a] residential school for a while."

She said after many years, as the healing process began, elders began to talk about the experience they faced in residential schools.

"They weren't found, Mother Earth kept them safe until people were willing, ready and able to understand why those children were lost for so many years,"

"They decided they should have orange shirt day," Akagi explained. "She started to come and talk about what happened to her and how she felt and so did other elders."

In those days, the orange shirt became the everlasting symbol of every child matters, she said.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission began in 2008 and ran until 2015 – and Orange Shirt Day was first observed in 2013 – and as of 2021 is now a statutory holiday, as well as a government-based holiday in New Brunswick.

More than 1,000 unmarked graves have been discovered in Canada of Indigenous children who were in residential schools.

The commission also made 94 calls to action, of which, only 14 have

been completed.

"We're hoping that people ... will be more responsive to completing the 94 calls to action," Akagi said.

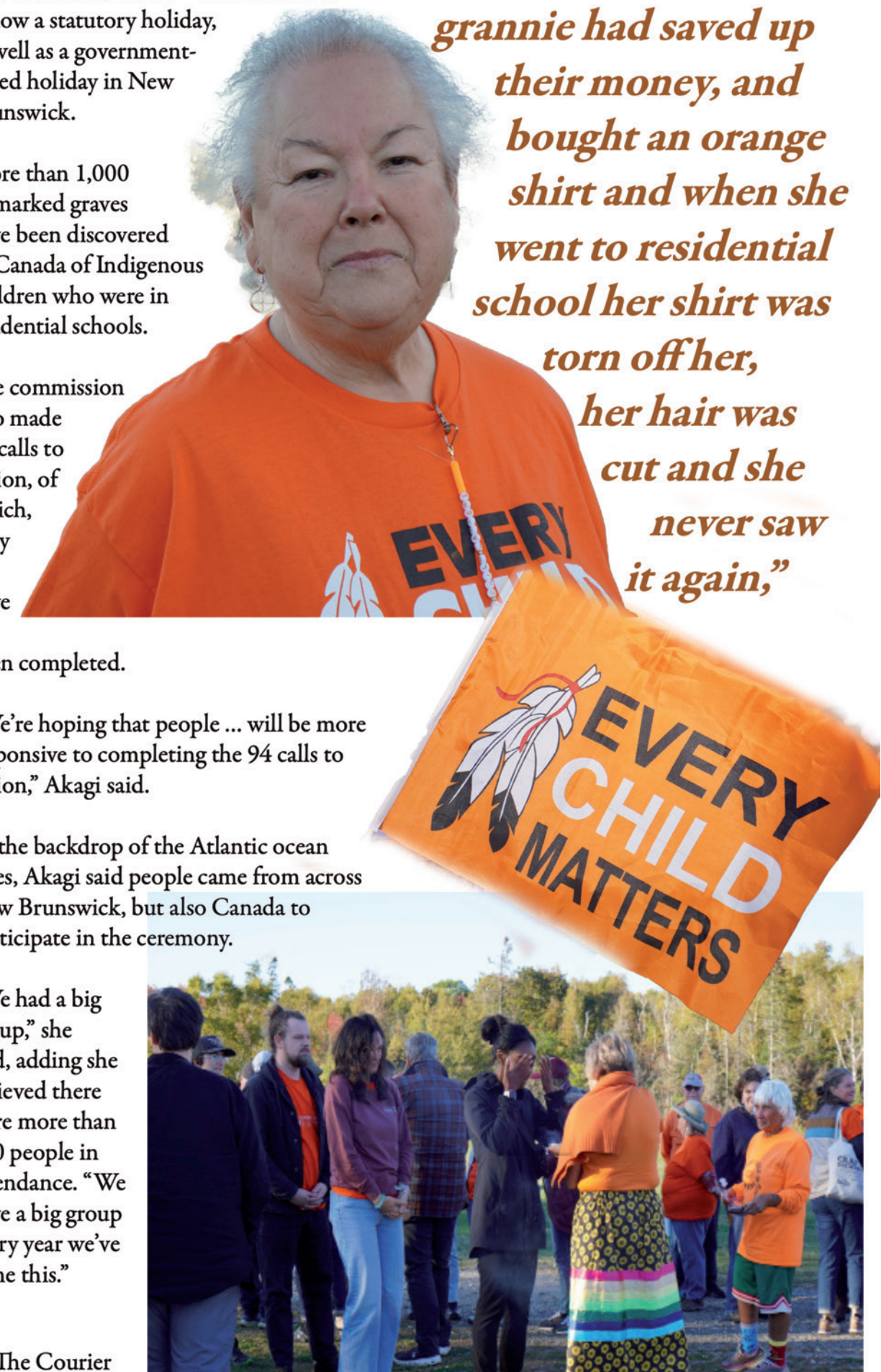
At the backdrop of the Atlantic ocean tides, Akagi said people came from across New Brunswick, but also Canada to participate in the ceremony.

"We had a big group," she said, adding she believed there were more than 200 people in attendance. "We have a big group every year we've done this."

And pinned on her shirt, with white and orange beads, are the words "every child matters," made for her by a student she spoke to about Canada's history of residential schools.

"I really think that we need to be unified, and we really need to work together toward that and it is going to take a long time," she said.

"When she went to school, she and her grannie had saved up their money, and bought an orange shirt and when she went to residential school her shirt was torn off her, her hair was cut and she never saw it again,"



Photographs by Nathalie Sturgeon, Editor-in-Chief of *The Courier*

New Brunswick Power Seeks Rate Hike of 4.75 Per Cent

Nathalie Sturgeon
Reporter, LJI

NB Power is seeking a 4.75 per cent rate hike for customers in the spring.

The utility said it will add \$10.90 per month for the average residential customer using 1,350 kilowatts (kWh) per month – or about \$130 per year. The province's main utility will file an application with the Energies and Utilities Board (EUB) for review with the increase scheduled to apply across all rate classes on April 1, 2026.

Lori Clark, the president and CEO of NB Power, said its debt is expected to continue to increase given the "significant capital investment" the utility plans to make in the infrastructure.

In May, the deadline to reduce the utilities more than \$5 billion in debt from 80 per cent to 20 per cent by 2029 was removed by the Liberal government.

"We would have seen a 15 per cent increase in rates had we been regulated to meet the 80-20 debt equity ratio by 2029," she said speaking with reporters last week. "The mandate letter we received from the shareholder said we need to make progress but there is no defined date."

This rate hike application comes after a 9.7 per cent rate hike in April 2025.

Clark explained that rates have been low for many years, which has left the company in this situation.

"We always try to keep rates low and it is always a last resort before you raise rates for customers," she said. "But we're at a place where in order to continue to provide



secure, safe, reliable electricity for New Brunswickers now and into the future, we need to deal with the infrastructure deficit that we have and the new assets that we have to bring on [to] the system to deal with the increasing load in the province."

She said the utility did consider a higher rate increase. Charlotte County has struggled with unreliable power in the past, including during a major storm in December 2023.

On Canada Day in 2024, power was cut off to Saint Andrews following contact by an animal with power infrastructure.

It said the primary reason for the continued rate hike is 80 per cent for improvements in reliability and station performance to address infrastructure deficit and 20 per cent due to inflation, market prices and customer support.

In February, J.D. Irving Ltd laid

off 140 employees due to what it called "uncompetitive industrial electricity rates."

The company also faced scrutiny over smart metres in the winter after many customers complained to the utility that power bills had spiked significantly.

A third-party independent review said there were no issues with the metres but rather was a combination of colder weather, longer billing cycle and fewer power outages.

Point Lepreau offline in 2026
Clark said the Point Lepreau Generating Station is also expected to be shut down next year – in addition to it being offline for about 8 months in 2024, and scheduled to be offline for 140 days – which began in July.

Clark has previously said the outage costs about \$1 million per day.

"There is an outage planned in the 2026-27 application that would last 419 days," she said.

Point Lepreau, located in Charlotte County, was brought up during a visit by the three-person review panel that visited Saint Andrews.

The review was initiated by the Liberal government to explore options about the utility's future, which could include the sale of the Crown corporation.

Kim Reeder, a resident of Saint Andrews, spoke about how long Lepreau was offline and how it isn't generating any power for the folks who continue to pay for it.

"It seems during marketing that nuclear and Lepreau is promoted as the be-all-end-all, but there are

so many days a week, and so many months a year, that Lepreau isn't running," she said during an interview with *The Courier* at the time. "And we act like it is."

In the meeting, Anne Bertrand, Duncan Hawthorne and Michael Bernstein spoke about the fact they think Lepreau can be successful, but it needs work.

They said the recommendations they make will all be actionable.

"Whatever we recommend, we see as being actionable and if there isn't a will to action, then I don't know why we're here," Hawthorne said during the meeting.

Review 'unique opportunity'

Clark said she thinks the review being undertaken by the panel and the government is a unique opportunity – adding many levels including the board of directors and union that want change.

"The 4.75 [per cent] was what we told New Brunswickers is how we would raise rates in our three-year plan, and given the amount of uncertainty we're facing, it was the right number," she said.

The utility is estimating that rates could increase by 6.5 per cent in the coming years, but Clark said it will review those numbers as the comprehensive review continues as recommendations are finalized.

"We will do everything we can to minimize that increase," she said.

Now that the utility has submitted the application to the EUB, a hearing is expected to be called in the early winter of 2025, and in late winter 2025 a decision could be issued for rates to increase on April 1, 2026.

66-Unit Apartment Complex Planned in St. Stephen

Vicki Hogarth
Reporter, The Courier

A new 66-unit apartment complex will soon replace the former Border Arena site in St. Stephen through a partnership between the municipality and Dock Apartments Inc., a local company led by Charlotte County developer Tressa Bevington.

Mayor Allan MacEachern said the development represents a major step toward addressing the community's housing needs.

"It means a lot, especially in this competitive world of encouraging and finding developers," MacEachern said to *The Courier*. "We are so lucky to have Tressa and her family stepping up to the plate once again in our community. The location is great. It checks all the boxes—close to all their amenities: school, shopping, groceries—everything. It's right in the core."

The project will move ahead through the town's existing incentive policy, which offers tax-based grants to help attract developers and speed up construction timelines.

"We used our incentive policy, which works very well," said MacEachern. "We were very aggressive because we know the urgent need for housing in our community. We also helped speed up the process to encourage a quicker turnaround time on starting to build. All that together got us to where we're at today."

Building indoors for a Canadian winter

In an innovative approach to construction, Bevington's company plans to use the existing arena structure to build components of the new apartments inside before demolition begins. The Border Arena building has been used mainly for storage since the Garcelon Civic Centre opened in 2014.

"It's big enough that they can pre-assemble or prefab a lot of work beforehand," MacEachern explained. "They're really smart that way—proactive and efficient and



From left to right: Rivers Corbett of Future St. Stephen, Tressa Bevington, and Mayor Allan MacEachern.

using the tools they have to help with their build. It's a great idea."

Bevington said she was drawn to the site because of its central location and its potential to fill a critical housing gap.

"After we finished the Compass building in St. Andrews, we were approached by the Town of St. Stephen and Future St. Stephen about building there because of the housing crisis," she said. "I was really interested in the arena site because of its location—close to schools, workplaces, and the grocery store—so it's convenient for future tenants. We're working with the town to tear the arena down starting in January, and we're looking forward to turning the site into a 66-unit apartment building."

Local partnership

Bevington said the municipality made the project possible by providing access to the land and economic incentives.

"There's a land agreement and some economic incentives," she said. "The biggest thing is making the land available and giving us the arena to make it happen."

MacEachern said the town's incentive policy was essential to bringing the project forward.

"Our incentive works based on the tax generated," he said. "They'll get a percentage of that back over the years. At the end of the day, it's like a tax break, but it's a grant

that covers that extra tax that we're receiving. It's money in, money out. It's not like we're losing money, because it doesn't exist today."

Housing that helps the community thrive

Bevington, whose previous projects include the Anchors Landing and the Compass buildings in St. Andrews and Beacon Apartments in St. Stephen, said housing has a transformative impact on individuals and communities.

"Through developing, I've learned how much housing can change a person's life," she said. "When people move in and get the keys, they're often starting a new chapter. It's not just an apartment—it's their home. Focusing on that helps families and the wider community immensely."

She said the new building will feature studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, each with balconies, and will include a mix of housing options to meet community needs. Bevington said the project's focus remains on keeping rent reasonable and that exact affordability targets will depend on Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation funding and its conditions.

"It benefits everyone: people looking for a home, seniors who want to downsize, businesses trying to attract talent, and the hospital that needs staff but lacks housing,"

Bevington said. "It impacts many parts of the community and shouldn't be discounted as a small project."

Bevington said her team uses local tradespeople and takes pride in building close to home.

"I want to see Charlotte County thrive, not just survive," she said. "I use all local trades—everyone was excited to get going again. My father is my project manager and does an amazing job. You have to enjoy the process, and I do."

Looking ahead

Construction is expected to begin in January 2026 with a timeline of 18 to 20 months.

"For reference, the Compass took about a year," Bevington said. "As long as there's a housing crisis and I can be part of the solution, I'll keep building."

MacEachern said the town has heard consistent calls for more housing and acted quickly to make this project happen.

"The community has been really pushing for housing," he said. "We had to make it happen. We had to speed it up. We had to get in there and make it work."

"We have to call it out when we see it, and that's what the municipal district did."



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St. Stephen Homeless Shelter Sparks Talk About Wider Impact (continued from page 1)

The facility has put up a fence, but Fitch looks down into the courtyard from his second floor.

This plan has not been adopted by the council and would need to consider the feedback collected through public consultation before coming to a vote for adoption.

The St. Stephen detachment of the RCMP said 16 calls for service were attached directly to the shelter's address in September.

Three calls were also recorded in the immediate area of the shelter, bringing the total for the month to 19.

Fitch and Arseneault both feel the approach to solving this issue is trauma-informed and multi-pronged.

Finding the right balance

Julia Woodhall-Melnik, an association professor of social science at the University of New Brunswick based in Saint John, said we haven't thought of homelessness as being a rural problem.

"Over the past few years, especially post COVID-19 and during COVID-19, we've seen increased vulnerability in renters in small places and even homeowners in small places," she said in an interview with *The Courier*. "[They] are struggling with things like mortgage rate hikes, increased taxes, increased cost of living, and when it [also] comes to things like food costs."

She said many people looked to smaller more rural communities during the pandemic for a quieter way of life, but incomes have not kept pace with rents and mortgages.

Woodhall-Melnik said not all rural communities have the variety of resources present in larger cities like Saint John, Moncton and Fredericton – like access to food programs, multiple shelters, housing supports, harm reduction supplies and mental health resources.

Small communities also don't receive the proper funding from other levels of government needed to operate more robust programming.

She understands the perceptions and concerns raised by those living near the shelter.

"We shouldn't just be laughing off or shoving off community members' experiences or their feelings and concerns about the fact their community is changing," she said.

Ultimately, Woodhall-Melnik said a shelter is better than people dying in the streets or in wooded areas – but the balance is tricky.

"Folks work hard to maintain their households," she said. "I do have sympathy for that ... I'm always a big fan of instead of saying no, enthusiastically say yes, but ask for what your community needs."

Each community is different, she said, but if there is concern about individuals wandering around the community at night or during the day – it should be a question of how do we create a place for those unhoused individuals to go that has the right funding and resources to ensure their needs are met.

These include: allowing spaces like public libraries with computers for individuals to use, day-programs with activities, employment assistance programs, social assistance and mental health resources.

"The only reason why we stigmatize the homeless population is because there is no door to close," she said.

Woodhall-Melnik said if the concern is safety, the question must become, how do we address that problem at its root.

"We need to help these individuals. We can't not, but in doing so we don't want to harm other societies either," she explained.

Dealing with the root causes of homelessness and mental health, she added, will not immediately result in change but will result in a healthier community.

She said there has to be strong leadership from the various levels of government to address both sides of this problem.

"If I was social development, I would be out knocking on doors of folks who are in the neighbourhood that is slated for a shelter and saying, 'OK, what are your concerns, and I'm going to listen to them,'" she said.

Woodhall-Melnik believes municipalities have not been set up for success when it comes to dealing with this crisis.

"I run into my local councillor at the grocery store all the time, and he often says to me that this is something that has spiraled out of control of what he thought he would have to deal with as a city councillor," she said. "He was hoping to work on bylaws for the city, waste disposal, traffic mitigation, all of that stuff. Now it's become dealing with a life or death crisis."

"This is a new reality for New Brunswick municipalities."

She said unlike Ontario, where there are more resources for mu-

nicipalities to deal with housing and homelessness, it does not exist in New Brunswick.

"Their role is really advocacy and then it is to reduce red tap to building, and to identify land that can be used, but to advocate for both their citizens who are housed and unhoused."

Status quo "unacceptable"

"We really do need to see bold leadership and listening. People need to be heard through this crisis, and it's the only way we're going to weather the storm and still maintain communities that are functional, compassionate and work toward a better sense of equity."

David Hickey, the minister responsible for housing, said he does understand that both the people living in homelessness, around it and working in it feel the status quo is "unacceptable."

"I think what I'll say is it's critical to have buy-in from everybody that is involved," he said speaking with *The Courier*. "That's really what led us to the decision of saying we need a centralized task force that offers clarity to New Brunswickers on who is making the decisions and who is setting the vision on this."

He said if things are not working on the ground in St. Stephen, the government needs to be nimble enough to respond to those issues.

The task force is a ministerial one, which includes Hickey, Social Development Minister Cindy Miles, Justice Minister Rob McKee – who is also responsible for addictions and mental health – Public Safety Minister Robert Gauvin and Local Government Minister Aaron Kennedy.

"The hope is to try and do things a little differently from the way that they've been done before, so that there is community buy-in and so that we can build clarity on this, so that people can see an impact in the communities that have been dealing with visible homelessness in ways we've never seen before," Hickey explained.

He said there is a funding announcement coming "to set the tone for how we see a reduction of visible homelessness in the community," in the next few weeks.

Hickey explained the provincial government will be leaning on municipalities and asking them to provide the best context for the situation the community finds itself in.

"We need to be able to support

mayors and councils in those local communities," he said.

Neighbourhood Works Inc (NWI), the non-profit organization responsible for overseeing the Lighthouse Lodge, said in a statement from its board of directors that it cares deeply about the wellbeing and safety of everyone in the town – both those who live and work in the shelter and those who live and work around it.

"The Lodge does not tolerate violent or unsafe behaviour," the statement said. "Such behaviour is always met with sanctions—with staff following clear policies and procedures. Depending on the incident, someone may lose access to the shelter for a designated time."

It said they also use the opportunity to teach people about "safety, the respectful treatment of others, and the importance of healthy coping and communication strategies," adding if someone is barred from the facility, an outreach team is meeting these individuals in the community.

It said when the open house was held by NWI, only five people attended.

"Since then, our managers and staff have responded to every call and email from neighbours," it said in the statement. "NWI has taken concerns about noise, trespassing, and drug use seriously and acted on them where it can in conjunction with the RCMP, municipal authorities and the province according to the law."

It said homelessness is a complex issue and no municipality can fix it, but it adds new safety measures and staffing supports as needs arise.

"Guests at the shelter have an urgent need for access to detox and rehabilitation programs; however, these provincial services are not currently available in our region," it said in the statement. "NWI and the staff at The Lodge are committed to safety, respect, and open communication. We know the Lodge presents difficulties and sometimes negatively affects the immediate neighbours. We are committed to seeking solutions in collaboration with our community, caring for those who need shelter, and being transparent and responsive with our fellow residents of St. Stephen as we move forward together."

The next committee meeting for MDSS is scheduled for Oct. 15.

New Brunswick Health Coalition Pushes Province to Sign Pharmacare Deal

Brian Owens
Reporter, LJI

Healthcare campaigners in New Brunswick are pushing the province to join the federal government's national pharmacare plan, which would provide free coverage for contraceptives and diabetes medications.

Last month the NB Health Coalition, a campaign group supported by healthcare worker unions, community groups, and individual experts, submitted an open letter to the Legislative Assembly signed by 44 organizations calling on the province to finalize negotiations with the federal government on joining the plan. They followed that with a second letter to Premier Susan Holt and health minister John Dornan on Oct. 2 urging them to "act in the best interest of all New Brunswickers."

"We want NB to sign a deal with Ottawa," said Tracy Glynn, national director of projects and operations for the Canadian Health Coalition, who is based in Fredericton. "There is money on the table for four years to cover diabetes drugs and contraceptives."

The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives estimates that New Brunswick would likely receive around \$136 million over four years from the federal government for pharmacare.

Glynn said that New Brunswickers are among those who stand to gain the most from joining the national plan. A poll by Environics last year found that 24 per cent of New Brunswickers polled said they are not filling or renewing their prescriptions, or they are making them last longer by skipping doses or splitting pills due to cost – the highest in Canada. And 27 per cent said they were hesitant about quitting or changing jobs because of worries about losing prescription drug coverage – also the highest in Canada.

Free contraceptives were a promise in the NB Liberal Party's 2024 election campaign, and Dornan said in an email statement that the government remains committed to joining the federal plan at some point.

"Our government has always been committed to signing a pharmacare agreement. The voices calling for progress on this issue are clear and compelling. We remain dedicated to working toward a pharmacare solution that reflects the needs of our province and builds on the strengths of our existing system," the statement read.

But Dornan told the NB Health Coalition and other activists at a meeting in September that the health insurance industry may respond to pharmacare in New Brunswick by eliminating private coverage for the diabetes drug Ozempic, according to Steve Staples, the Canadian Health Coalition's national director of policy and advocacy, who was at the meeting.

That could significantly increase the number of people seeking coverage for Ozempic from New Brunswick's provincial drug plan, Dornan said, which would lead to \$60 million in additional costs.

The Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association (CLHIA), however, told *The Courier* that since Ozempic and other drugs like it, known as GLP-1 drugs, are not covered by the national plan, private insurers would continue to cover them in provinces that join the federal plan.

"The Pharmacare Act is clear that insurers cannot cover any drugs that are covered by single-payer government pharmacare," Karen Leiva, a spokeswoman for the organization, said in an email. "However, in provinces that have signed deals with the Federal government to date, GLP-1 drugs are not covered by pharmacare. As such, insurers will continue to cover these drugs in all provinces and territories, including those with federal pharmacare."

CLHIA has made this clear in meetings with provinces where pharmacare has already been or is going to be implemented, she added.

The fact that the NB Drug Plan provides limited coverage for Ozempic complicates things, she said, but in general the national plan should not affect access to the drug.



"There could be coverage through the province and a private plan may require that the claim first be assessed by the provincial plan for coverage. Others may not require this step and provide coverage, if eligible, right away," said Levia.

The Department of Health did not respond to questions about why Dornan told campaigners that private insurers would end coverage for Ozempic, or where the \$60 million figure came from.

An 'unrealized dream'

The Pharmacare Act was passed in October 2024, and is "part of the unrealized dream of medicare" in Canada, said Glynn. Canada is the only country in the world with a universal health care system but no universal coverage for medication outside hospitals. While the first phase of the plan is focused on diabetes and contraception, the goal is to expand it to other drugs and conditions in the future.

Prince Edward Island is one of four provinces and territories, along with British Columbia, Manitoba, and the Yukon, that have signed on to the federal plan so far. The province launched the program on May 1, with the federal government providing more than \$30 million over the next four years to cover most contraceptives and diabetes medications, as well as expanded access to blood glucose test strips.

"Since launching the program, National Pharmacare has significantly improved access to essential medications," PEI's Depart-

ment of Health and Wellness said in an email statement. "Over 5,000 Islanders have accessed free contraception, saving more than \$500,000 in out-of-pocket costs, while over 20,000 people with diabetes have benefited from covered medications and supplies, saving more than \$200,000 in out-of-pocket costs."

B.C., which already has provincial coverage for contraception, reached an agreement that allowed for the additional funding of hormone replacement therapy.

Green Party leader David Coon said in a press release that it was "incomprehensible" that the government might limit pharmacare to contraceptives.

"Properly investing in diabetes medications and equipment will save lives, but it's also a preventative measure that will benefit our healthcare system by keeping New Brunswickers healthier," said Coon. "The Premier needs to step up and sign an agreement with the federal government for both diabetes medications and equipment, and contraception."

"We want NB to sign a deal with Ottawa"

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Letters to the Editor

The views expressed in letters to the editor are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Courier or its staff.

Letters to the editor should be limited to a maximum of 200 words and can be sent to thecourier@chco.tv and although all letters will be read, the Courier reserves the right to not publish letters that are unsuitable for a Community newspaper.

Dear Editor,

What compelled us to write a letter to the editor. We are new residents to the area, I'm originally from St. Stephen but moved to US when I got married we recently bought land here and are building our forever home here.

Having witnessed two tragic deer-vehicle collisions within a single week in St. Andrews, it's clear that a proactive, community-wide effort is needed to address this ongoing issue. While existing signage like posted speed limits and deer crossing warnings are in place, they're often overlooked or ignored, particularly by visitors and newcomers who may not be familiar with the area's high deer population. This points to a deeper problem that requires more than just passive warnings; it demands a comprehensive, educational campaign that promotes shared responsibility for deer safety.

We believe a public awareness campaign, specifically targeting tourists and new residents, is essential. This campaign should go beyond simple warnings and provide practical, actionable information. The goal is to raise awareness not just of the potential for collisions, but also of the proper protocols for handling them. For example, many people don't know who to call or what the process is after hitting a deer. Is it the police, a local animal control service, or another agency? What's the responsibility of a homeowner if a deer is injured or deceased on their property? Providing clear answers to these questions would empower individuals and ensure a more coordinated and humane.

The Rogers family

Dear Editor,

According to the Canadian Drought Monitor, Charlotte County experienced a once-in-50-years drought this past summer. Indeed, all of New Brunswick experienced drought conditions be-

tween July and September with Charlotte County experiencing severe conditions. Yes, we've had some rain more recently but not anywhere near what we previously considered normal. However, we have had enough precipitation to put the wildfire season behind us. Now is the time to prepare for the 2026 wildfire season because we are definitely not ready for it.

In St. Andrews, St. Stephen and St. George, we live in lush forested and green surroundings. We have wonderful walking trails that take us beside rivers, along the sea shore, and into the forests. We hope these natural resources will be around for many years to come. That may not necessarily be the case.

Along our beautiful walking trails you will experience a lot of fallen trees, accumulated brush, tinder dry ground cover. A heedlessly tossed cigarette or a spark from a poorly-maintained four-wheeler or a very rare lightning strike could quickly turn these trails and walkways into wildfire infernos and piles of ash. We need to take action now before we have another excessively dry spring and summer.

Our town councils should be addressing this situation. We will have no use for parks and recreation departments if wildfire claims the landscape. What is more concerning though is that most of these trails and walkways - and their associated tinder-dry fuel - are within sight of our homes. We live and walk in the midst of a potential fire disaster.

I am not a scientist so I am not prepared to say that this past summer - weather-wise - was a clear indication of the new normal. However, I trust knowledgeable scientists and they are giving us every indication that hot, dry summers are going to be more frequent. People in this province have personal experience of knowing what that can mean for distress and tragedy. It behooves us to urge our town councils to take action now and to plan ahead to

avoid people and property loss due to wildfires.

Bob Johnson

St. Andrews, NB

Dear Editor,

Recently, knowing I would be away for lunch, I bought ready-made sandwiches from the grocery store in St Andrews.

However, I wasn't prepared for the fact I needed a knife, scissors (and preferably a hacksaw) to open the heavy plastic encasing the sandwiches.

Why is necessary for so many grocery and other products to be encased in heavy plastic? The store told me they have no choice, the plastic casing for their sandwiches is provided to them by Loblaw's.

According to what I have read, only 20% of plastic put into recycling is actually recycled. That leaves 80% ending up in our environment.

Sincerely

Gillian Pedersen-Mjaanes

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EDITORIAL: Homelessness Hits Home: A Crisis We Can't Ignore

The Courier Editorial Board

Homelessness is no longer hidden - it is on our doorstep, in our communities, on our sidewalks - and bare the faces of people who are our neighbours, our coworkers or our classmates. It can no longer be ignored.

University of New Brunswick associate professor Julia Woodhall-Melnik said homelessness was not thought of as a rural issue - but Charlotte County has not been spared this life-and-death crisis. But the question is: how did we get here?

The answer is a combination of things like the rising cost of living, rent increases, stagnant wages, the opioid epidemic - and in a wider context - the growing economic uncertainty. Many people in our community are one emergency, one job loss, one rent increase away from losing their homes. It's not a personal failure, but a systemic one.

In New Brunswick, homelessness has increased more than 200 per cent - with more than 1,500 people experiencing chronic homelessness - meaning they've lived outside for more than six months consecutively. The Human Development Council, a non-profit organization in Saint John, said between 2019 and 2024, rent increased by 34.7 per cent, while res-



idential property prices rose by 84 per cent. In that same time, food bank visits rose 45 per cent and about 45 per cent of employees in the province make less than a living wage - estimated to be \$24.62.

It is not hard to understand why so many people are falling through the cracks.

Small towns were never built to respond to a crisis like this. Leaders and community members are struggling with it - both in trying to find solutions, but also in wanting their community to feel safe - but feeling the weight of the change it has undergone.

How can a community truly be healthy when the resources it needs aren't available?

In Saint John, for example, 200 of those experiencing homelessness are youth. Many of them are from

the foster care system - and when they leave the protection of the Department of Social Development, there is no stable housing,

no income, no support. This is the system we've built for our most vulnerable youth. Is this what we want for our next generation?

Homelessness is not someone else's problem, it's ours. As citizens, neighbours, business owners, voters, we need our government to step up in the right ways. We need them to build more affordable housing, invest in rehabilitation, mental health and addiction services, to ensure the cracks people fall through get smaller every day.

Most of all, remember the numbers you see are people too - who deserve dignity, safety, and hope. There is work to be done and it starts here.



Grocery Ninja: Save Time and Money by Making your own Convenience Foods

Laverne Stewart
Columnist, The Courier



Instructions:

1. Whisk eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Scramble in a pan over medium heat.
2. Remove eggs and sauté vegetables until softened.
3. Warm tortillas, then layer eggs, vegetables, meat, and cheese.
4. Roll burritos tightly, wrapping in foil or plastic wrap.
5. Freeze in a zip-top bag.

Microwave for 1-2 minutes or heat in a skillet for a crispy texture.

Lunch/dinner salads and protein bowls.

Salads and protein bowls make quick, healthy lunch and dinner options. Salads in jars are a great way to prepare fresh, portable, and long-lasting meals. The key to making them successfully is layering ingredients properly to keep everything crisp and fresh.

How to Layer a Salad in a Jar

1. Dressing (Bottom Layer): Add about 2 tablespoons of dressing to the jar. This prevents the greens from getting soggy.
2. Hearty Vegetables: Add firm



How many times have you looked in the fridge or freezer hoping a ready-made meal would magically appear?

Food delivery services and prepackaged meal kits promising quick, easy, delicious meals are popular but come at cost.

Sure, they save time and effort but they can be grocery budget busters. What if you could have ready-made meals waiting at home when you want them? How convenient would it be to pop a breakfast sandwich into the microwave on those busy mornings when you're rushing to get out the door?

How about taking a homemade and satisfying lunch with you to work rather than paying for overpriced, underwhelming fast food?

And there would be no need to pick up an expensive pizza on your way home from work because you'd already have one you've made yourself for pennies on the dollar waiting for you at home.

A little time in the kitchen will deliver huge food savings. By preparing these homemade convenience foods, you can also save time and eat healthier meals.

Prepare full meals in advance and freeze them for reheating. This can easily be done simply by doubling up on a recipe. Make one for now and freeze one for later. Or schedule a few hours where you prepare meals for the week. This time and effort will be well worth it. You won't have to think about what's to eat because your meals will be waiting for you whenever you want to eat them. You'll also notice how much money you're saving on prepackaged, store-bought convenience meals and takeout.

Here are a few recipes for breakfasts, lunches, and dinners to try:

Freezer-Friendly Breakfast-Burritos

Ingredients:

- 6 large eggs
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1 cup shredded cheese (cheddar, Monterey Jack, or your choice)
- 1 cup cooked breakfast meat (sausage, bacon, or ham)
- 1 cup diced vegetables (bell peppers, onions, spinach)
- 4 large flour tortillas
- Salt & pepper to taste

veggies like cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, carrots, or red onions. These serve a barrier between the dressing and the softer ingredients.

3. Proteins & Grains: Include ingredients like grilled chicken, beans, tofu, quinoa, pasta, or chickpeas.

4. Soft Vegetables & Fruits: Add ingredients like avocado, berries, or corn.

5. Leafy Greens (Top Layer): Finish with lettuce, spinach, kale, or arugula. This prevents wilting by keeping the greens away from moisture.

6. Crunchy Toppings (Added Later): Nuts, seeds, or croutons should be added just before eating for maximum crunch.

Tips for Success

- Use a Mason Jar: Wide-mouth jars make layering and eating easier
- Pack Tightly: Less air helps keep ingredients fresh.
- Store in the Fridge: Most salads last 3-5 days when stored properly.

Protein bowls are a nutritious and balanced meal option, combining a mix of protein, fiber, and healthy fats. They typically include a protein source, grains or greens, vegetables, and healthy toppings like nuts, seeds, or dressings.

How to Build a Protein Bowl

1. Base (Grains or Greens)
 - Brown rice, quinoa, couscous, farro
 - Spinach, kale, arugula, romaine
2. Protein
 - Animal-Based: Grilled chicken, salmon, shrimp, steak, eggs
 - Plant-Based: Chickpeas, black beans, tofu, tempeh, lentils
3. Vegetables
 - Roasted or raw: Bell peppers, carrots, cucumbers, tomatoes, avocado
 - Cooked: Sweet potatoes, zucchini, mushrooms, broccoli
4. Healthy Fats & Extras
 - Nuts & seeds: Almonds, walnuts, sunflower seeds, chia seeds
 - Cheeses: Feta, goat cheese, Parmesan
 - Avocado, hummus, guacamole
5. Dressing or Sauce

Whether premade or homemade, dressings and sauces add a depth of flavour which will enhance your protein bowl meal.

Laverne Stewart has spent her entire career as a writer, journalist, and communications professional. She can be reached at lavernestewart24@outlook.com.

It's a Start, but One Strong Sentence Won't Stop the Next Grandparent Scam

Heather Campbell Pope
Columnist, The Courier

"Grandma? It's me, your grandson," the voice on the phone trembled. "I got into a car accident and they said I hit someone. Please don't tell anyone," pleaded the caller. "I've been arrested and need bail money right away."

The scammer pressed on, sounding urgent and scared. "The lawyer said someone can come pick up the cash from your house. Can you help me? I need you to trust me, Grandma. I'm in so much trouble, please don't call Mom and Dad."

For countless seniors, these desperate words are all too familiar. The "grandparent scam" has become one of the most pervasive frauds in Canada, with con artists manipulating older adults, preying on their trusting nature, and in some cases, exploiting the confusion or cognitive decline that can come with dementia to make their deception even more convincing. Now, these schemes are growing even more sophisticated, as scammers use artificial intelligence to mimic family members with alarming accuracy.

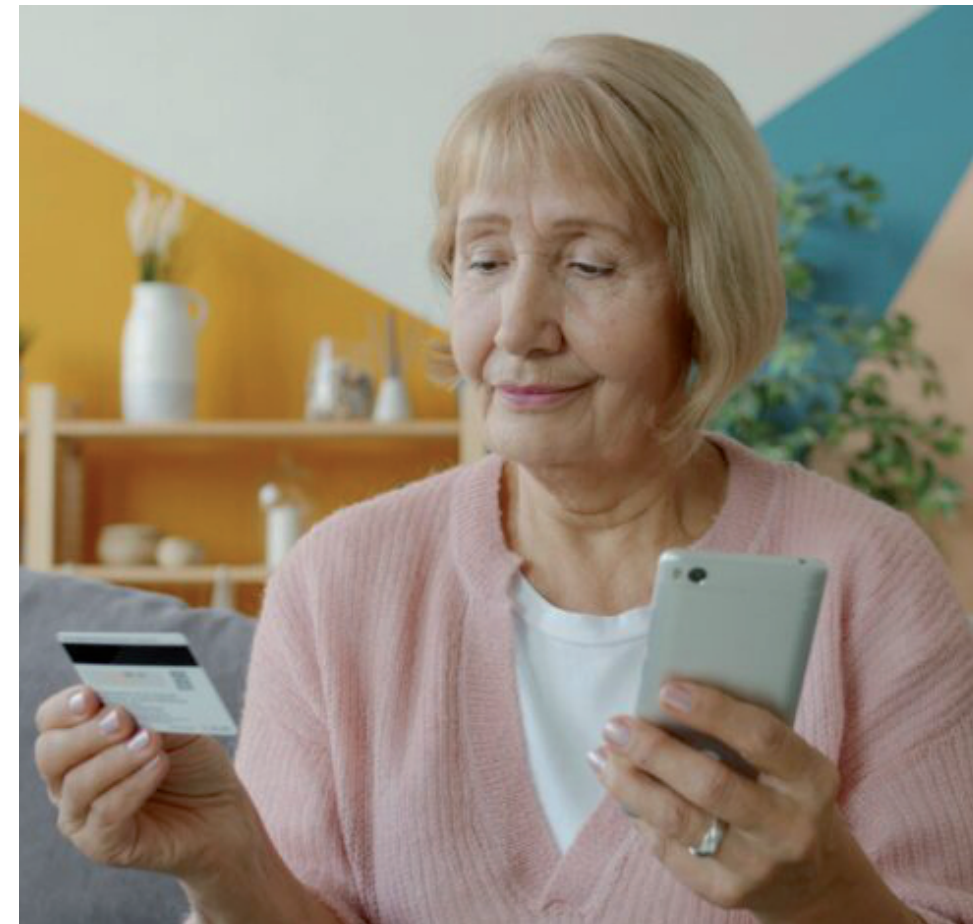
Recent data from the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC) reveals that the scale of the problem is growing fast. In 2022, the CAFC recorded \$530 million in total fraud losses in Canada, a nearly

40 percent jump from \$380 million in 2021. Of that, more than \$9.2 million was lost to "emergency scams," a category that includes grandparent scams. This was up sharply from about \$2.4 million the year before.

In New Brunswick, the RCMP has documented a troubling rise in recent years, issuing repeated warnings as grandparent scams continue to target older residents in the province. In recent months alone, reports have come in from the Greater Moncton Region, Kings, Madawaska, and York counties, involving callers posing as distressed grandchildren or legal authorities demanding money immediately.

Amid this surge in scams, one recent Manitoba case offers a glimpse of justice catching up with bad actors. Last month, a Winnipeg man was sentenced to three years in prison and ordered to pay \$31,700 in restitution for his role in a series of grandparent scams that defrauded eight seniors, aged 73 to 89, of thousands of dollars.

What makes this case especially noteworthy is the judge's decision to go beyond what the prosecution had requested. The Crown had sought a two-year prison sentence, but the judge imposed three, noting that the Crown's recommendation was too lenient given the seriousness of the offence, its growing frequency in Manitoba and across Canada, and the offender's high degree of cul-



pability. "This crime has become notorious," the judge said. "Sentences must be severe enough to serve to denounce the crime and deter others from taking the risk of engaging in what is essentially elder abuse."

The sentence sends a clear signal that the courts are taking the emotional and financial toll of these crimes seriously, recognizing that exploiting seniors is not a minor offence but a calculated act that preys on our most basic instincts of love and trust.

While this scam ended with a con-

viction, protection must begin long before these cases reach the courtroom, through awareness campaigns, community vigilance, and honest conversations about trust and vulnerability that help seniors recognize the signs of fraud. When families talk, neighbours pay attention, and authorities respond, we can build a safer and more just society for all of us as we grow older together.

Heather Campbell Pope is founder of Dementia Justice Canada, a small nonprofit dedicated to safeguarding the rights and dignity of people with dementia.

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For the Love of Maud: Chapter 6

Chippy the Chipmunk

Vicki Hogarth
Columnist, The Courier

In a town full of deer, it's no wonder that Maud barely turns her head when passing one of the majestic creatures as they graze on home gardens lacking fences and gobble shrubs like they're feasting on corn on the cob. And, to be fair, the deer in St. Andrews have acquired a quiet confidence among the local canine population, barely faking a soft jog to get out of their path when they see one of their furry counterparts being walked on a leash by their master. "Hardly intimidating, but I'll play along," you can almost hear them say.

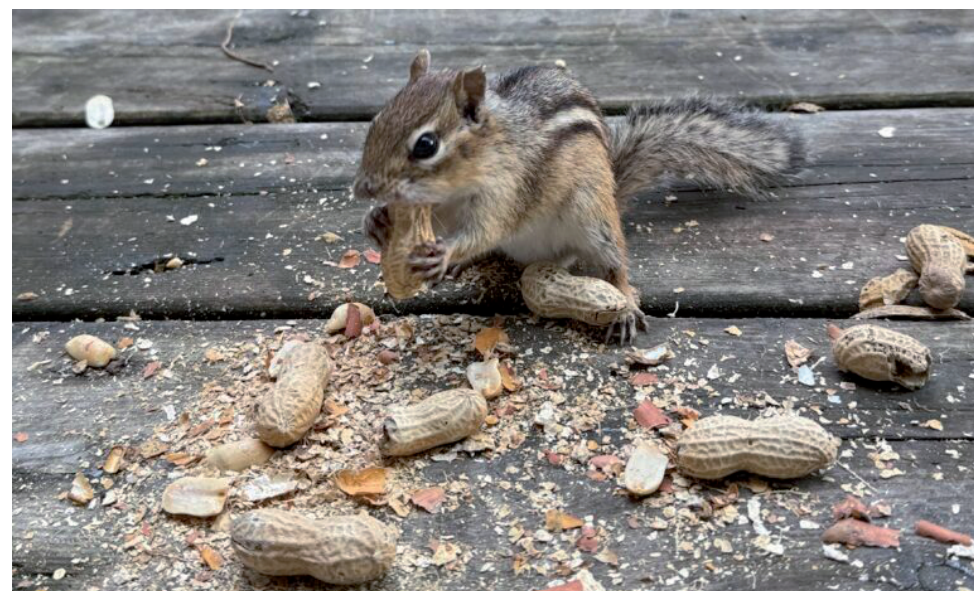
I am particularly fascinated by our local piebald deer population, and on my walks with Maud, I've mentally mapped out their favourite haunts based on their markings and have even started to get to know their personalities. There's Gickles, named after Matt Gick who passed away this summer. Matt was a bold redhead, and Gickles is all white except for a patch of auburn fur on his head. There's also a very good chance Gickles is a girl, but time will tell. Gickles is both social and a loner and, despite being quite young, is unflustered by humans—even those accompanied by dogs who stop to

stare and take photos.

Maud is patient with me. I think she understands that piebald deer are my squirrels. She has little interest in animals that outsize her but is deeply obsessed with squirrels and chipmunks. When we're on a quiet street and she spots a squirrel, I'll often let go of her leash and let her chase one up a tree. She's never caught one—and I'm not sure she actually wants to—but she loves the chase. She waits for me while I photograph deer, and I wait for her to return from the tree after she's watched the squirrel in question disappear into the upper branches. This is just our way of life on our walks together, finding joy not in distance but in observation—two creatures taking turns to indulge our curiosities.

Our first walk of the day is the shortest—up Edward Street to my parents' house for coffee. If I'm lucky, I'll catch an early morning glimpse of Gickles. It's rare, but I keep my eyes peeled. I've hoped to see him framed in the autumn leaves of my favourite tree just behind the Greenock Church. One day, maybe. A girl can dream. Maud has better luck, often chasing a squirrel up that very tree before I've even had my first cup of coffee. For her, the chase is caffeine.

When we get to my parents' house,



I put coffee on and, while it brews, scatter peanuts on the back porch. Maud stands behind the French doors, waiting for the daily return of our beloved backyard chipmunk, Chippy. The clatter of peanut shells hitting the wood is Chippy's alarm clock. Within minutes, she emerges from her network of underground tunnels and makes a beeline for the porch, dodging squirrels and blue jays that try to intimidate her. With cheeks that can stretch to three times the size of her head, she's able to carry multiple peanuts back to her burrow without missing a beat.

Maud is enthralled. Her body goes rigid, her eyes wide, reverent. She has no desire to chase Chippy. Chippy is not a squirrel. Somehow, even Maud knows she's a kindred spirit.

My mother and I have grown just as attached. Over coffee, we've learned that Eastern chipmunks—the kind we have here in New Brunswick—spend their fall days in a flurry of preparation, sometimes making a hundred trips a day to store seeds and nuts underground. Unlike squirrels, they don't hibernate fully; they fall into a state called torpor, waking now and then to nibble on the food they've tucked away. It's an oddly

comforting image—Chippy in her burrow, waking up midwinter for a midnight snack, alive and well under the snowdrifts.

Chipmunks typically live two to three years, though some stretch it to eight in good conditions. We've known Chippy for three and counting. Her continued existence feels improbable, a small rebellion against the odds.

And so, we celebrate her—Maud, my mother and I—these tiny rituals that tether us to something beyond the screen, beyond the scroll, beyond ourselves. There is joy in looking up from our phones long enough to spot a piebald deer in dappled light. There is amusement in letting my dog run wild after a squirrel she'll never catch. There is wonder in watching a chipmunk fill her cheeks for a future she may or may not live to see.

Maybe that's what love really is—not the grand gestures, but the quiet noticing. The small, deliberate act of bearing witness to life, even the tiniest form of it. Every morning, when Chippy appears and Maud stands frozen in awe, I feel it—the fragile, persistent heartbeat of this town, of this porch, of this shared world we all inhabit. One peanut at a time.



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Through her Daughter's Eyes: A Mother's Cancer Fight

Vicki Hogarth
Reporter, The Courier

At 22, Hillary Russell found herself navigating a world suddenly rearranged. Early in 2025, her mother, Cheri, was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 50. The timing was abrupt: Hillary was away from home finishing her final year of university in Fredericton, and her younger brother Sawyer was busy with competitive hockey. Her parents, who were normally immersed in their careers and active in the Charlotte County community, now found their days reoriented around a new reality, reshaped by hospital visits, medical schedules, and fears of the unknown.

Russell turned to photography as a way to process the shift. For a university course called *Images and Insights*, she documented a single weekend in March 2025, just before her mother's first round of chemotherapy. Cheri had asked for a celebration before the difficult months ahead, and the family gathered with friends to fill three days with music, dancing, laughter, and togetherness.

The resulting photo essay captures fleeting moments—the shoes piled at the door, the hum of conversation in the kitchen, a quiet glance in the mirror before hair loss began. In her notes, Russell described the work as both inti-

mate and ordinary, writing: "Motherhood doesn't pause for illness." Though it began as a class assignment, the project became a lasting document of resilience, joy, and the ways families hold fast at the threshold of uncertainty.

Russell has also taken on new roles in the wake of her mother's diagnosis: fundraiser, community organizer, and emotional anchor. Meanwhile, her mother has had to navigate her own shift—learning to set boundaries, accept help, and let others step in when needed.

"Her sense of identity has definitely shifted," Hillary said in an interview with *The Courier*. "But she's still killing it as a mom."

Out of this experience, Russell has revived *Rah Rah for the Ta Tas*, a community fundraising initiative that began in 2009 by Cheri's group of friends and their daughters in memory of loved ones lost to breast cancer. This year, under the banner of *Rah Rah for the Ta Tas 2.0*, the effort will culminate with the CIBC Run for the Cure on October 5 in Fredericton, a national day of giving and awareness. Cheri has been asked to lead the first lap for the "Participants of Hope," those who have or have had breast cancer.

In the lead-up, Hillary organized *Sing for the Cure* at Drewhaven in St. Andrews, an open-mic and silent auction evening featuring



local musicians and her own performances. The event was as much about gathering as fundraising, channeling the Maritime tradition of music and community into support for a cause.

Russell has also been candid about the financial toll of cancer. Beyond medical procedures, there are travel costs, food, medications, and countless hidden expenses. "It's expensive to be sick, and it's shocking how expensive it is," she said.

Her mother's treatment plan has evolved over time. What was first expected to be a mastectomy became six cycles of chemotherapy, surgery, and additional treatments. She also underwent cold cap therapy at the Charlotte County Hospital, an uncomfortable procedure aimed at reducing hair loss.

When the Russells shared Cheri's diagnosis publicly—after she rang the bell marking the end of chemotherapy—support poured in from neighbours, former students, colleagues, and families who had walked the same road. Hillary sees that openness as a kind of handoff, turning private struggle into collective strength.

Her message to others is simple: grace. She urges those carrying unseen burdens to go easy on themselves, and she invites the wider community to show up—whether by singing, baking, donating, or simply cheering for the *Rah Rah for the Ta Tas* team on

October 5.

"Every single chemo treatment, she wore a shirt that said, 'I've got this,'" Hillary said of her mother. "I don't think that there's ever hopelessness. I think that there is



Cheri Russell and friends photographed for "A Weekend Before the Fight"

always hope."

In a small town, gestures matter. And through her lens, her activism, and her resolve, Hillary Russell is reminding her community that hope is not only private—it is something to be shared.



Cheri Russell photographed for "A Weekend Before the Fight" (photo by Hillary Russell)

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Saint Andrews Teen Raising Funds for Wheelchair Accessible Van

Nathalie Sturgeon
Reporter, LJI

Marielle Symonds has always valued her independence.

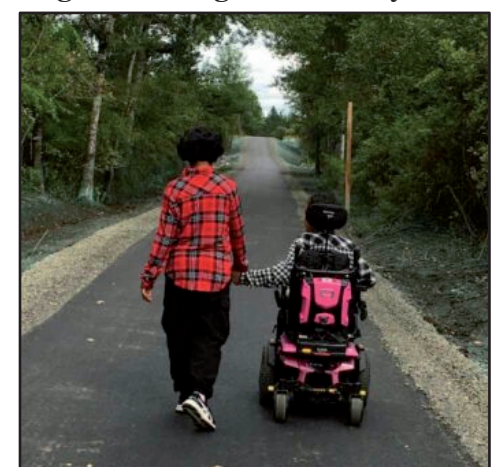
She has laminopathy, a rare form of muscular dystrophy that causes her muscles to weaken over time. In a matter of years, Symonds has gone from being able to fully wave her arm, to only partially being able to lift it, to today – where she can't lift it at all.

It's why she needs a wheelchair accessible van.

"I got the diagnosis on my third birthday, actually," she said in an interview with *The Courier*. "So I don't remember a time where I didn't have it, at least not very well."

A wheelchair accessible van can cost upwards of \$90,000 and lasts about 10 years. It is something the family simply cannot afford.

"When I'm traveling or going out with my family, you know, going to the mall or hanging out with friends or whatever, I need to bring my wheelchair, of course, so a wheelchair accessible van would



Marielle Symonds on the Trail (Submitted Photo)

help me bring it and be able to go more places," she said, speaking to how critical it is to her independence.

When she found out her parents weren't in a position to afford a new van, she started to think of ways she could fundraise – and landed on GoFundMe.

It is a popular crowd funding campaign available to people in Canada – where individuals, organizations and businesses can donate money to a specific cause or person.

"It's very trusted," she said. "So, I was like, well, maybe this could be an option that we could explore."

Her GoFundMe has amassed 48 donations, as of Oct. 15, reaching more than \$10,200. Her hope is to raise about \$28,000.

"The whole point of getting the van is, like, just making sure that I can obtain as much freedom as possible," she said.

Anyone wishing to donate can do so by visiting her GoFundMe page at <https://gofund.me/29fb2c6f>.

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Trendy Terms

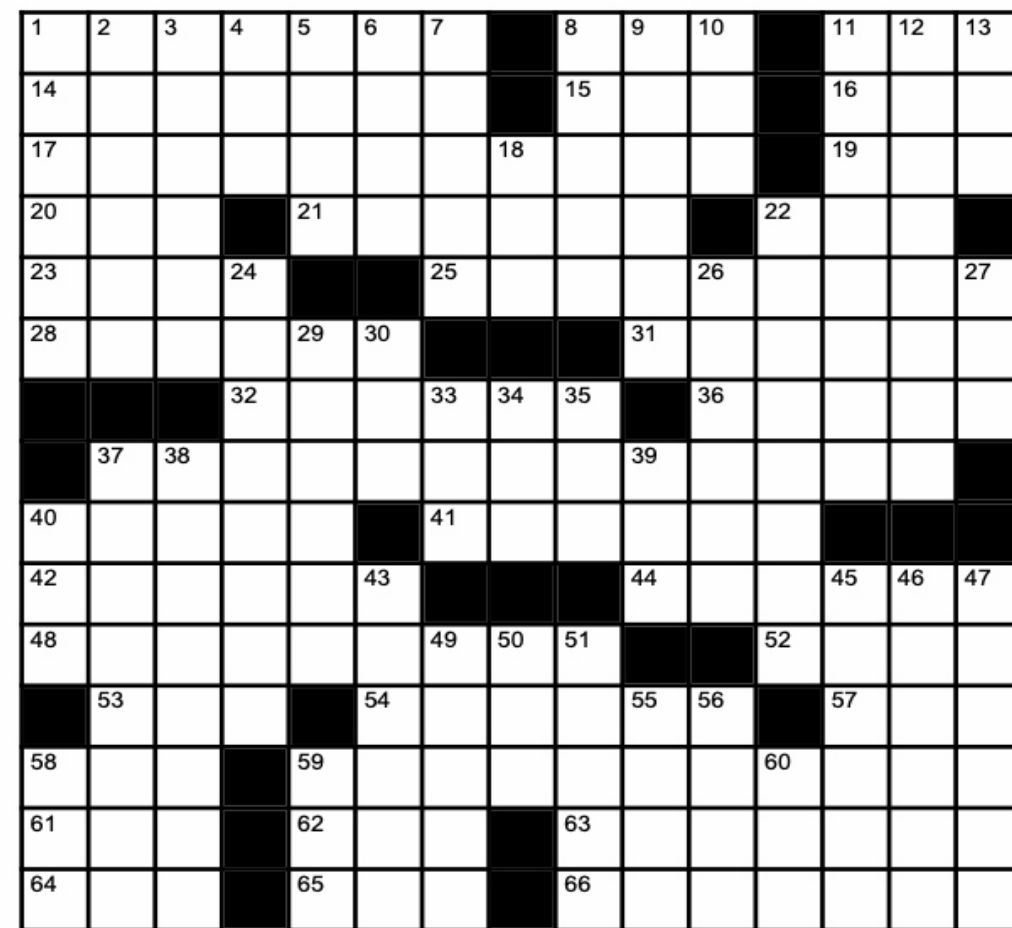
by Barbara Olson
© ClassiCanadian Crosswords

Across

- 1 Detroit hockey pro
- 8 Wig-wearing "Chandelier" singer
- 11 Function
- 14 Rigby in a Beatles song
- 15 Blasting need, for short
- 16 Ikea founder's ctry.
- 17 Supporting a movement from the comfort of one's couch
- 19 Witchy woman
- 20 To hear, to Hernando
- 21 As sharp as a tack, for example
- 22 Quill, for Shakespeare
- 23 Onetime NHL enforcer Tie ___
- 25 3D virtual reality world
- 28 Artery inserts
- 31 "I Am Canadian" beer sloganeer
- 32 Utter debacle
- 36 Motorhome camping
- 37 Doing no more than the basic job requirements
- 40 Division of Islam
- 41 Counts (on)
- 42 Catching certain sushi fish
- 44 Ontario town nicknamed "Home of the White Squirrel"
- 48 General feeling of the times
- 52 All there, so to speak
- 53 Typist's wrist malady, e.g.: Abbr.
- 54 Three-horse Russian wagon
- 57 Channel with "Tic Tac Dough" reruns
- 58 "The ___ Coast" (B.C., jokingly)
- 59 Screen meeting overload
- 61 Yeoman's "yes"
- 62 Rooster's wakeup sign
- 63 Congealed sewer stopper
- 64 Roy, in a colour mnemonic
- 65 2 toppers on keyboards
- 66 Loop holder on a bus

Down

- 1 Lays down the lawn again
- 2 Actor Page, once known as June Page
- 3 "Oh, heavens!"
- 4 WWII servicewoman



- 5 Calligrapher's supply
- 6 Words said to the Little Red Hen
- 7 Jakob or Wilhelm of fairy tales
- 8 Basketball's Wilt the ___
- 9 Line of jeans?
- 10 Bank entranceway fixture
- 11 Welcomes, as a new era
- 12 Performer's final act
- 13 It makes medical head lines?
- 18 Try to win, with "for"
- 22 Skeletal swivellers
- 24 Nissan make suggesting eternity
- 26 Tornado spiral
- 27 Universal language: Abbr.
- 29 Getting even, in a way
- 30 Settled on a settee
- 33 Crossword letter holder: Abbr.
- 34 Pool hall wall hanging
- 35 ___ patch (Alberta job hub)
- 37 Fab Five makeover series
- 38 Not in the phone book
- 39 Item ditched on Casual Day, maybe
- 40 "___ who?!"
- 43 Command said while pointing to the door
- 45 Identified on Instagram
- 46 Make certain (that)
- 47 Not do as promised
- 49 Items for the press?
- 50 Mogadishu's land: Abbr.
- 51 Lovers' quarrels
- 55 Pitcher Jim with a feline-sounding name
- 56 "___ girl!"
- 58 "Of course you realize, this means ___" (Bugs Bunny line)
- 59 Half of a Gabor name
- 60 "Son of," to a Saudi

Young-Onset Dementia: An Invisible Challenge for the Justice System

Heather Campbell Pope
Columnist, The Courier

September is World Alzheimer's Month. Tucked into this annual campaign is World Frontotemporal Degeneration (FTD) Awareness Week, running from Sept. 21 to Sept. 27 this year. It is also called frontotemporal dementia or Pick's disease. FTD is an umbrella term for a group of relatively rare disorders that mainly affect the areas of the brain associated with personality, behaviour and language.

First held in 2015, the global event aims to raise awareness about FTD symptoms and inform the public about how it differs from other forms of dementia like Alzheimer's disease.

"We want people to know that FTD typically first appears as changes in behaviour, personality and language, not memory," said the Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration (AFD), a U.S.-based organization that focuses exclusively on the disease.

An estimated 2 to 10 per cent of all dementia cases are FTD, though it is the most common form of dementia in people under age 60. FTD typically starts younger than Alzheimer's disease, with most cases striking those between 40 and 65.

FTD is often misdiagnosed as depression, mental illness, Alzheimer's or Parkinson's disease. People with FTD may behave inappropriately at work and in

other social situations. They may act impulsively, which can bring them into conflict with the law.

Indeed, anti-social or criminal behaviour like shoplifting and indecent exposure in otherwise law-abiding people in their later adulthood may be an early symptom of FTD.

These cases pose a challenge for the criminal justice system. Oftentimes, the FTD patient has little insight into their condition and there has been no diagnosis. Those around them may simply consider the person to be rude, hostile or aggressive.

As a result, people with FTD may be charged and prosecuted for a crime that was really a manifestation of their brain disease. They knew it was wrong, but with diminished impulse control, they did it anyway. Combined with their apathy and loss of empathy, undiagnosed patients often attract little sympathy from others and are at risk of being criminalized for behaviours that are beyond their control.

Given their younger age, people with FTD may also be physically fit, making it difficult for police to recognize and de-escalate situations where the person appears defiant.

Even older folks are at risk of harm. From time to time, stories of seniors with dementia being violently arrested for petty crimes have captured headlines, especially when the person has trouble speaking. While progress is being made, we must do more to help



well-meaning officers identify FTD scenarios.

With enhanced screening protocols and training about the disease, law enforcement and prosecutors can divert more of these cases away from the justice system to appropriate services. Such initiatives can build on existing partnerships among first responders, the courts and local organizations that aim to reduce contact between people with dementia and the criminal justice system.

FTD is a difficult, often invisible

disease. This World FTD Awareness Week, let's talk about the brain disorder to reduce its stigma, increase understanding about its symptoms, and strengthen the criminal justice system's capacity to treat FTD patients with compassion and dignity.

Heather Campbell Pope is founder of Dementia Justice Canada, a small nonprofit dedicated to safeguarding the rights and dignity of people with dementia.

NOVEMBER SUDOKU

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Kenneth "Kenny" Moffatt

It is with great sadness and deep sense of loss, the family of Kenneth "Kenny" Moffatt announce the peaceful passing at home on Wednesday, October 1, 2025.

He was born in 1957, the son of Helen Taylor and the late Joe Moffatt.

Kenny is survived by his wife of 38 years, Tracy (Hartford), his mother; Helen, brothers; Darryl, Joe (Kathy), sister; Wendy Fagan (Marshall), brothers-in-law; Robert Hartford (Gloria) and Randy MacIntosh, sisters-in-law; Andrene Davidson, Illetta Chisholm (Jeff) and Sharon Hartford, uncles, aunts several nephews, nieces, great-nephews and great-nieces.

By Kenny's request, there will be no funeral service or visitation.



Lena "Lee" C. Miller

The family of Lena "Lee" C Miller are saddened to announce the passing of their mother at Lin-court Manor, St Stephen, NB on September 22 2025.

She is survived by her children; Laraine (Wayne), Curt (Linda) and Marilyn (Ken), brothers; Cal and Dean, several grandchildren, great-grandchildren great-great children, nieces and nephews.

A graveside service will be held in the summer of 2026.



Linda Arsenault

Linda A. (Colford) Arseneault of Maxwell Crossing, NB passed away on October 11, 2025, at the Charlotte County Hospital St Stephen NB.

Linda is survived by her husband, Cyril; their son Amos of Valley Road and his children Ayden, Benjamin and Allie; son Jamie of Grand Prairie, Alberta, his wife Samantha and their children Quinn and Emery; great-granddaughter Easton; sisters-in-law Mary Ann Chambers, Mina Little, Nancy Arseneault and Denise Trafton (Danny); brothers-in-law David and Jimmy Arsenault; aunt; Carol (Hovey) Cunningham (Jack); special cousins Effie and Essie, several nieces, nephews and cousins.

Funeral service and visitation were held on Friday October 17 2025.



Barry MacLean

It is with heavy hearts the family announce the passing of Barry MacLean on Sunday September 21 2025, at Saint John NB.

Barry is survived by his loving wife; Melvina, children; Scott and Jason MacLean (Cheryl) stepdaughters; Heidi Gowan (Eugene), Tania Johnson (Jason), Tanya Shannon (Luke) Kelly Cabrera-MacFarlane and Angie Neate (Nick), four grandchildren, five step-grandchildren, two great step-grandchildren, sisters; Donna (Cecil) Debbie (Donnie), Norma (Heather), Laurie (Cindi) Shelli (Leo), sister-in-law; Anita Savoie (Romeo), brothers-in-law; Vincent (Amanda) and Vernon Daigle several nieces and nephews.

Funeral service and visitation were held on Friday, September 26, 2025.



Donald L. Fairweather

It is with a deep sense of sorrow and loss we that we announce the sudden passing of Donald L Fairweather, son of Albert and Delia Fairweather of St Stephen, NB. on Saturday September 27, 2025, at his residence in Fredericton, NB.

In addition to his parents, Donald is survived by his siblings: Tammy Libby (Ricky), Timmy Roy and Rhonda Fairweather (Mike), daughter; Lyla Fairweather, partner; April Thorne niece; Irene Hatt, nephew; Wesley Hatt, several aunts, uncles and cousins.

Funeral service and visitation were held on October 3, 2025.



Jean (Simpson) Henry

It is with deep sadness that we announce the passing of A. Jean (Simpson) Henry of St. Stephen, NB, at the Charlotte County Hospital.

Jean was the devoted wife and best friend of Stuart Henry for 19 years. She was a loving mother to the late Jacalyn (Don) Hulsman, Chris (Gail) Hatt, Stephen (Brenda) Hatt, Mikki Hatt (Judy), and Anne (Andy) Small. She was also a proud grandmother to Brad Hulsman, Jesse (Kristy) Hulsman, Nick Hatt, Josh (Sherri) Hatt, Stacey (Jason) Desrosiers, Troy (Darbi) Hatt, Andrew (Natasha) Reid, Dan (Nicole) Reid, Alex (Amy) Reid, Mitchell (Kaitlin) Small, and Carter (Sara) Small. Jean's legacy continues through her shared 17 beloved great-grandchildren. She also leaves behind a dear friend, Betty Moulton.

A celebration of Jean's life was held on Wednesday, October 15, 2025.

*Forever Loved,
never forgotten*

Charlotte County Remembers

Several ceremonies are expected to be held in throughout the region for Remembrance Day

Remembrance Day In Charlotte County

Saint Andrews, N.B. – A ceremony will take place at All Saints Anglican Church Hall, located at 77 King Street, and starting at 10:45 a.m. Attendees are asked to arrive by 10:15 a.m.

St. Stephen, N.B. – Milltown Cenotaph at 11 am.

St. Stephen, N.B. – The Royal Canadian Legion St. Croix Branch 9 will hold a ceremony at the Cenotaph on Milltown Boulevard in St. Stephen. Attendees are asked to be there for 10:40 a.m.

St. George, N.B. – St. George Legion beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Blacks Harbour, N.B. – Blacks Harbour Stella Maris beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Mushquash, N.B. – Mushquash Fire Station #1, 31 Malcolm Meehan Road Road. Ceremony begins at 11 a.m. with people encouraged to be there early. A light snack will be provided following the ceremony.

In Flanders Fields By John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,

That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders Fields

A Tapestry of Remembrance

In St. Andrews, a wave of red poppies now blooms along Water Street — not in gardens, but on lampposts, lovingly knitted and crocheted by caring hands. The community's Poppy Project began when resident Brenda Waiwood sought a creative way to honour all who have served, including her father, a veteran of the Second World War. What started as a simple call for volunteers has grown into a cherished town-wide tradition.

Each handmade poppy, stitched through laughter and shared stories, adds to a living tapestry of remembrance that brightens November's chill with warmth, gratitude, and quiet reflection.



Charlotte County Christmas Events 2025 Guide

Vicki Hogarth
Reporter, The Courier

It's the most wonderful time of the year in Charlotte County. From festive markets and sparkling parades to cozy community gatherings, there's no shortage of ways to celebrate the holiday season close to home. *The Courier* and CHCO-TV have teamed up to bring you the "Christmas in Charlotte County 2025 Guide" — your one-stop list of holiday happenings from Eastern Charlotte to St. Stephen to St. Andrews and beyond. Bundle up, shop local, and make memories at the many magical events that make our corner of New Brunswick shine brightest at Christmastime.

12th Annual Magaguadavic Christmas Craft and Gift Show

Shop local this holiday season at the 12th Annual Magaguadavic Craft and Gift Show. Browse handmade goods, wood-working, jewelry, and more — there's something for everyone. Don't miss the \$50 gift card door prize!

Where: Magaguadavic Place, St. George
When: Saturday, Nov. 1, 2025
Time: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

ABC Christmas Bazaar in St. Stephen

Kick off your holiday shopping at the ABC Christmas Bazaar, featuring local artists, bakers, and crafters with handmade gifts, festive décor, and treats — the perfect start to the Christmas season!

Where: Royal Canadian Legion, 43 Queen Street., St. Stephen
When: Saturday, Nov. 1, 2025
Time: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Kirk-McColl United Church Christmas Bazaar

A long-standing community favourite featuring baked goods, handmade crafts, preserves, and festive décor for all ages.

Where: Kirk-McColl United Church, St. Stephen
When: Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025
Time: 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.

2025 St. George Christmas Craft Fair

Celebrate community and creativity at the St. George Elementary Home & School's annual Christmas Craft Fair.

Discover handmade treasures, delicious treats, and thoughtful gifts while supporting local makers.

Where: Fundy High School, St. George
When: Saturday, Nov. 8, 2025
Time: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Deck the Walls 2025: Folklore & Fable

Celebrate the magic of the season through art at Sunbury Shores' annual holiday exhibition and sale, Deck the Walls: Folklore & Fable. Featuring local artists and unique works inspired by storytelling and tradition. Opening night includes festive refreshments and community cheer.

Where: Sunbury Shores Arts & Nature Centre, St. Andrews
When: November 14 – December 22, 2025
Opening Reception: Friday, Nov. 14, 5 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Holiday Sip & Shop at Marmalade

Enjoy a cozy evening of local shopping, music, and refreshments at Marmalade's annual Holiday Sip & Shop. Pick up unique gifts and soak in the festive spirit of Saint Andrews. (*Ticket required*)

Where: Marmalade, Saint Andrews
When: Friday, Nov. 14, 2025
Time: 4 p.m. – 8 p.m.

25th Annual Christmas Craft Fair – Charlotte County SPCA

Support the Charlotte County SPCA while shopping local! This long-running craft fair features handmade goods, baked treats, and more — all for a great cause.

Where: St. Stephen Legion, 43 Queen St., St. Stephen
When: Saturday, Nov. 15, 2025
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Jingle All the Way Christmas Craft Sale

Find festive décor, homemade crafts, and local treats at the Eastern Charlotte Lions Club's "Jingle All the Way" sale — a fun stop for holiday shoppers of all ages.

Where: Eastern Charlotte Lions Club, 5316 Rte 1, Pennfield
When: Saturday, Nov. 15, 2025
Time: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Pirates of the Passamaquoddy – A Pantomime

Set sail for laughter with *Pirates of the Passamaquoddy!* St. Andrews Commu-



nity Players present this lively pantomime full of music, mayhem, and maritime mischief — a fun-filled show for all ages.

Where: O'Neill Theater, 24 Reed St., St. Andrews
When: Thursday–Saturday, Nov. 20–22, 2025, 7 p.m.–9:30 p.m.; Sunday, Nov. 23, 2025, 2 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

Downtown Dollar Sale – St. Stephen

Bargain hunters rejoice! The Downtown Dollar Sale features great local deals and early holiday shopping opportunities at participating businesses.

Where: ANR Building, 123 Milltown Blvd., St. Stephen
When: Friday, Nov. 21, 2025
Time: 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Kick Off to Christmas – St. Stephen

A full day to launch the season: Downtown Dollar Sale, Moonlight Madness Market at the Garcelon, and the Walk of Lights "light up" with hot chocolate.

Where: Downtown St. Stephen & Garcelon Civic Center
When: Friday, Nov. 21, 2025
Time: Dollar Sale 9 a.m.–2 p.m.; Market 4–9 p.m.; Walk of Lights 5–6 p.m.

Walk of Lights – St. Stephen

Gather at the waterfront for the *Walk of Lights* and help kick off the Christmas season in St. Stephen! Enjoy hot chocolate, cookies, and plenty of photo opportunities with Christmas characters as the town's sparkling light display comes to life.

Where: Waterfront Park
When: Friday, Nov. 21, 2025
Time: 5 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Moonlight Madness Market

Join the festive fun at St. Stephen's Moonlight Madness Market! Explore vendors, enjoy treats, and soak up the lights and cheer at the Garcelon Civic Center.

Where: Garcelon Civic Center, St. Stephen
When: Friday, Nov. 21, 2025
Time: 4 p.m. – 9 p.m.

Moonlight Madness – St. Stephen

Join Downtown St. Stephen and local Chamber of Commerce businesses as they stay open late for *Moonlight Madness!* Shop through the evening under twinkling lights, enjoy festive deals, and take in the magic of downtown during one of the town's most beloved shopping nights.

Where: Downtown St. Stephen
When: Friday, Nov. 21, 2025
Time: Hours vary

Christmas Craft Fair on Union Street

Shop for handcrafted gifts and festive finds at this cozy Christmas Craft Fair — perfect for discovering local talent and unique holiday treasures.

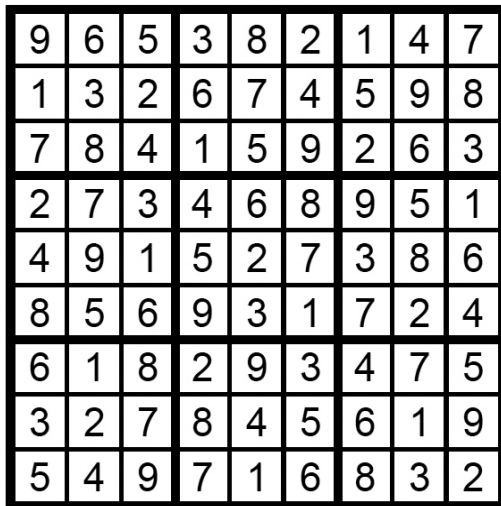
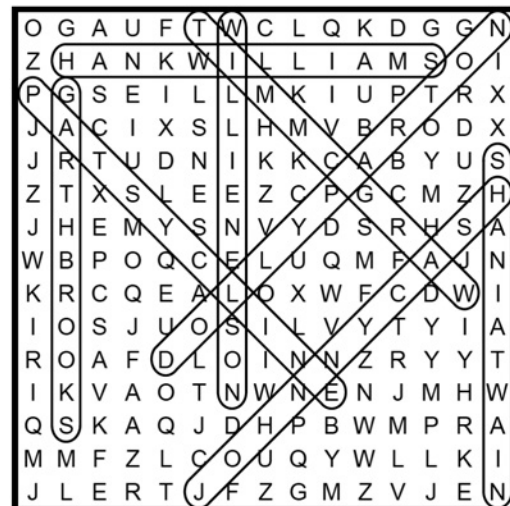
Where: 59 Union St., St. Stephen
When: Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025
Time: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Christmas Market at Mayfield Gardens

Celebrate the season surrounded by nature's charm at Mayfield Gardens' Christmas Market. Enjoy handmade gifts, warm drinks, and holiday spirit in full bloom.

Where: Mayfield Gardens, St. Stephen
When: Saturday, Nov. 22, 2025
Time: 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Trendy Terms



Downtown Tree Lighting – St. Andrews by-the-Sea

Join in the glow of the season as downtown St. Andrews lights up for the holidays. Enjoy the lobster-trap Christmas tree unveiling, festive decorations, and community cheer.

Where: Town Hall & Market Square, 212 Water St., St. Andrews
When: Friday, Nov. 28, 2025
Time: 5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Eastern Charlotte Christmas Parade – "Mattel" Theme

Kick off the holiday weekend with a colourful community parade celebrating this year's "Mattel" theme — expect toy-inspired floats, festive lights, and fun for all ages as the procession travels from Little Lane to Riverside Park.

Where: Little Lane → Riverside Park, Eastern Charlotte
When: Friday, Nov. 28, 2025
Time: 6:30 p.m.

Christmas Kickoff – Eastern Charlotte

Ring in the holiday season with a weekend of parades, skating, markets, and community cheer during Eastern Charlotte's Christmas Kickoff! From Back Bay to Pennfield, festivities light up the region November 28 – 30.

Lighting Up Milltown

Kick off the holiday season in Milltown with the annual lighting ceremony, featuring twinkling displays and community cheer in Memorial Park.

Where: Memorial Park, Milltown (St. Stephen)
When: Friday, Nov. 28, 2025
Time: 6 p.m.

Black Friday Gift Gala – St. Stephen

An evening shopping gala with gift ideas, vendors, and festive deals under one roof.

Where: Garcelon Civic Center, St. Stephen
When: Friday, Nov. 28, 2025
Time: 5 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Sparkle by the Sea – St. Andrews by-the-Sea

Two days of late shopping, promotions, treats, and festive storefronts. A perfect kickoff to holiday shopping in a scenic seaside town

Where: Downtown St. Andrews
When: Friday, Nov. 28 & Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025
Time: Friday evening & Saturday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Eastern Charlotte Public Skating

Lace up your skates and enjoy an afternoon of family fun on the ice at the Eastern Charlotte Recreational Complex.

Where: Eastern Charlotte Recreational Complex
When: Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025
Time: 1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Eastern Charlotte Pucks & Sticks

Stay on the ice for "Pucks & Sticks," a friendly recreational hockey session that's perfect for teens and adults looking for some active fun.

Where: Eastern Charlotte Recreational Complex
When: Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025
Time: 2:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Christmas Market at Sea View Full Gospel Church

Shop local treasures, festive crafts, and baked treats at this cozy community market. After the Back Bay Parade, Santa will greet families at the church — the perfect photo op to cap off a festive afternoon.

Where: Sea View Full Gospel Church, Back Bay
When: Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025
Time: 3 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Back Bay Christmas Parade

Enjoy small-town holiday spirit at the Back Bay Parade as floats circle the scenic Back Bay loop. Stick around afterward to meet Santa at the Sea View Full Gospel Church.

Where: Around the Back Bay Loop
When: Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025
Time: 5 p.m.

Live Nativity

Experience the story of Christmas brought to life at the Pennfield Anglican Church. This outdoor nativity scene features community members and animals in a moving holiday tradition.

Where: Pennfield Anglican Church
When: Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025
Time: 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.

Festival of Trees at The Algonquin Resort

Wander the historic halls of The Algonquin Resort as they transform into a festive wonderland of beautifully decorated trees created by local organizations. This first-annual display celebrates community creativity and generosity, with all proceeds supporting the St. Andrews Open Door Food Program. The public is welcome to visit and enjoy the displays throughout the season.

Where: The Algonquin Resort, St. Andrews-by-the-Sea
When: Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025 – Friday, Jan. 2, 2026
Time: Daily during lobby hours

Inquiries: Brandy Atkinson – (506) 478-6741

Christmas Craft Market at the Legion

Enjoy a day of festive shopping at the Royal Canadian Legion's Christmas Craft Market, featuring local artisans, homemade goodies, and cheerful community vibes.

Where: Royal Canadian Legion, 43 Queen St., St. Stephen
When: Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025
Time: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

3rd Annual Christmas Craft and Bake Sale

Warm up with homemade treats and handcrafted goods at the 3rd Annual Christmas Craft and Bake Sale — a perfect way to support local makers and bakers.

Where: St. Patrick's Hall, 407 Milltown Blvd, St. Stephen
When: Saturday, Nov. 29, 2025
Time: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Santa's Helpers Telethon on CHCO-TV

Be part of a cherished Charlotte County tradition. The 55th annual Santa's Helpers Telethon raises funds for holiday gifts for children and Christmas meals for local families. Businesses and organizations are encouraged to arrange on-air giant cheque presentations in advance.

Where: Live on CHCO-TV
When: Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025
Time: 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Grand Manan Christmas Parade

Santa's coming to Grand Manan! The annual parade starts at St. Paul's Stone Church (Ingalls Head) and ends at the Grand Manan Community Center. To participate, call 662-7059. Prizes: 1st \$500; 2nd \$250; 3rd \$150; Best Sports Team \$250; Best Utility Vehicle/ATV/ Dirt Bike \$100; Best Walker/Group \$100.

Where: St. Paul's Stone Church to Grand Manan Community Center
When: Saturday, Nov. 30, 2025
Time: 6 p.m.

Community Church Service

Close out the Kickoff weekend with a community worship service celebrating the true spirit of the season. (Time TBA — check local postings for details.)

Where: Pennfield Anglican Church
When: Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025

Time: 10 a.m.

St. Stephen Christmas Parade

A beloved annual tradition! Floats, lights, and holiday spirit fill the streets from the Ganong Factory to Ferry Point Bridge.

Where: Downtown St. Stephen
When: Friday, Dec. 5, 2025
Time: 6 p.m.

Holiday Market at Magaguadavic Centre

Wrap up your shopping at St. George's Holiday Market, filled with handmade crafts, food, and gift ideas for everyone on your list.

Where: Magaguadavic Centre, St. George
When: Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025
Time: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

St. Andrews Christmas Farmers Market

Experience the charm of the St. Andrews Christmas Farmers Market, with local produce, crafts, and baked goods — the perfect final stop for fresh, local holiday fare.

Where: Sir James Dunn Academy, Saint Andrews
When: Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025
Time: 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Crafts with Christmas Characters – St. Stephen

Join Mickey, Minnie, Santa, and more for crafts, cookies, and family fun during this joyful community event.

Where: Garcelon Civic Center, St. Stephen
When: Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025
Time: 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Firemen's Santa Claus Parade – St. Andrews

A festive evening parade down Water Street featuring floats, lights, and Santa himself. Great family fun!

Where: Town Hall & Market Square, 212 Water St., St. Andrews

When: Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025
Time: 5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Christmas Fest in St. Andrews-by-the-Sea

Celebrate the magic of the season at Christmas Fest in St. Andrews-by-the-Sea — a joyful outdoor celebration for the whole family! Enjoy live music, cozy firepits, a Christmas Village in Market Square, and festive favourites like the dog costume contest, figgie pie eating contest, and ugly sweater contest. Warm up with hot chocolate from DrewHaven, snap a photo with Santa, and capture the fun at the 360 photo booth.

Where: Market Square, St. Andrews-by-the-Sea
When: Saturday, Dec. 13, 2025
Time: 1 p.m. – 7 p.m.

Tinsel and Tidings Community Christmas Concert

Celebrate the season with festive music and community spirit at the annual Tinsel and Tidings Christmas Concert. Enjoy performances that capture the joy of the holidays.

Where: Wesley United Church, St. Andrews
When: Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025
Time: 2 p.m.

Eastern Charlotte Night Market – Christmas Edition

Shop local under the twinkling lights at the Eastern Charlotte Night Market's special Christmas Market. Enjoy festive vendors, food, and holiday cheer at the Riverside Park Pavilion.

Where: Riverside Park Pavilion, St. George
When: Friday, Dec. 19, 2025
Time: 4 p.m. – 8 p.m.

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Santa's Helpers Telethon Returns to CHCO-TV

Vicki Hogarth
Reporter, The Courier

John Craig and MLA Kathy Bockus — will join volunteers, special guests and performers to read pledges on air and encourage giving.

Organizers are urging early donations this year.

"We're seeing more families struggling with the basics," said Lexi Brisley, elementary school teacher and president of Santa's Helpers. "If you're able to give, please give early. A pledge today means a child wakes up to Christmas, and a family sits down to a holiday meal."

Businesses and community groups are especially encouraged to get in touch ahead of broadcast day to arrange cheque presentations and brief on-air interviews with telethon hosts Vicki Hogarth and Jonathan Brittain. Early coordination ensures your contribution is spotlighted and your team has a chance to share why you're giving back.

The annual Santa's Helpers telethon on CHCO-TV returns Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025, from 1–6 p.m. — with an earlier start time to meet what organizers anticipate will be an even greater need across the region this holiday season. The five-hour broadcast raises funds for holiday gifts for children and Christmas meals for families right here in Charlotte County. Every dollar stays local.

Viewers will be treated to performances from nearly 1,000 Charlotte County students, pre-recorded by CHCO-TV, filling living rooms with carols and community pride. Throughout the afternoon, local leaders — including Mayors Allan MacEachern and



dination ensures your contribution is spotlighted and your team has a chance to share why you're giving back.

How to donate early :

E-transfer:
santashelpers_chcotv@outlook.com (include contact info for a receipt)

By mail (cheque):

Santa's Helpers of Charlotte County Inc., 8 McAdam Court, St. Stephen, NB E3L3G6 TaxID: 790294615RR0001

Early-bird recognition for

businesses (by Nov. 18):

\$500+ — on-air mini-interview & cheque presentation

\$250–\$500 — two live mentions during the broadcast

Phone on Telethon Day:

506-529-8826

More than a fundraiser, Santa's Helpers is a community lifeline — and a celebration of how neighbours show up for one another. Tune in, call in, and give what you can. Sometimes it takes more than a village—it takes the whole county.

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Algonquin Resort Breaks Ground on New Nordic Spa

Nathalie Sturgeon
Reporter, LJI

A new spa has broken ground in Saint Andrews — hoping to take the shoulder season to the next level.

Usva by the Sea will be a flagship Nordic spa based at the Algonquin Resort. Geneviève Nolet founded the brand — and currently owns a spa located in Moncton — about 253 kilometres from Saint Andrews.

Nolet told *The Courier* this isn't a traditional spa, but one that promotes "Scandinavian wellness traditions, designed to promote relaxation, rejuvenation, and holistic well-being."

She said it is about the thermal cycle.

"The thermal cycle includes three steps: the heat, the cold and the relaxation," she said. "For the heat, you'll have sauna facilities ... then for the cold, we'll have a cold plunge, and for relaxation — we will have some outdoor pools."

She said there also might be some surprises along the way for those who choose to come to the new facility. Nolet said in many Scandinavian countries, mainly men use the thermal spa.

In general, she hopes to help the Algonquin — and the town — reach its potential of becoming a year-round destination.

"We really believe this is going to bring more business into the town," she said. "All businesses that revolve around giving people an experience when they come to town — that is what we're hoping to bring to the table."

She said the goal is to be up and running by spring 2026 — adding some things may be out of her con-

trol.

Many businesses and tourism spots close for the winter season — with more than 80,000 people flocking to Saint Andrews in the summer months. Canada Day serves as Saint Andrews busiest day of the season.

Coun. Steve Neil said he hopes the popularity of Usva in Moncton means it will help turn the community toward becoming a four-season destination.

"It's been a great addition to the town ... and I hope to see it continue to grow," he said.

There has been plenty of activity at the Algonquin, including the modular fabrication of new senior employee housing, something Neil said signals the continued investment in the community by the ownership of the resort.

"They've been very energetic, very eager, and I mean, they've been great to work with," he said. "They've come with tons of ideas on how they can help improve the experience here."

Lydia Chen, the president and CEO at InnVest Hotels, said it is proud to partner with Usva to bring the experience to the Algonquin guests.

"Usva by-the-Sea will complement our resort's legacy and help position The Algonquin Resort as a leading wellness destination," she said in a release.

"We really believe this is going to bring more business into town"



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