

The Citizen

Free PLEASE TAKE ONE

VOLUME 10 - ISSUE 4

APRIL 2024

www.nivervillecitizen.com

DISTRIBUTED FREE TO NIVERVILLE, ÎLE-DES-CHÊNES, STE. AGATHE, ST. ADOLPHE, TOUROND, OTTERBURNE, NEW BOTHWELL, AND GLENLEA



REWARDS FOR REFERRALS

REFER A FRIEND AND BE ENTERED TO WIN A \$250 GIFT CARD AND A CHANCE TO WIN OUR GRAND PRIZE AT OUR AGM.

PIZZA PIZZA



UNLIMITED MEDIUM 2-TOPPING PIZZAS
(minimum of 2 required)

STARTING FROM **\$8.99**

204-388-0311



LOCAL NEWS

Multimillion-Dollar Wastewater Investment Announced

■ A big wastewater project bringing together four municipalities, including Niverville and Ritchot, got a major funding boost this month.

Details on Page 6

LOCAL NEWS

Municipal Water vs. Private Wells?

■ Many residents in the older sections of Niverville are faced with a big, complicated choice.

Details on Pages 10-11

SPORTS & REC

Athlete Brings Home Special Olympics Medals

■ A local speedskater came home this winter with several medals from a Special Olympics event in Calgary.

Details on Page 22

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Composer Shortlisted for Film Score Contest

■ Evan St. Cyr of Niverville was named a finalist last month for Cue Tube, a prestigious contest for film score composers.

Details on Page 26



Parents Call Out Education Track Discrimination at Niverville High School

➤ READ MORE ON PAGES 3-5

📷 BRENDA SAWATZKY

MEMBERBONUS

\$12 Million In Cash
IT PAYS TO BE A MEMBER



scu.mb.ca/bonus



Is your family's wealth protected?

Learn how to Preserve, Equalize and Maximize your Estate.



To learn more, scan the QR code or visit www.courcellesgroup.com/whitepaper



Dean Melnychuk



Don Courcelles

www.courcellesgroup.com | 204.792.2489

Investors Group Financial Services Inc.

MORTGAGES TAILORED FOR YOU.

BUY. BUILD. RENOVATE.

Gain a personal advisor while achieving your goals.

Refinancing | Renovating
Buying a new home.

Niverville CREDIT UNION
nivervillecu.mb.ca

NatureCure Clinic

Naturopathic medicine & Acupuncture in Niverville
At Niverville Family Chiropractic - 106 Main St, Unit 102

- Gut health •
- Detecting and healing food sensitivities •
- Hormonal balance & Women's health •
- Chronic inflammation and pains •

Dr. Azza ElBakry
NATUROPATHIC DOCTOR

BOOK ONLINE: www.naturecure-clinic.janeapp.com

BOOK BY PHONE: 431-277-9977

CASH ADVANCE

BEAT THE BANK

with a cash advance from Manitoba Crop Alliance!

Interest-bearing rate = prime - 0.50%.

Low interest rates, knowledgeable staff, fast service.

To get started, visit mbcropalliance.ca or call us toll free at 1-877-598-5685

Cash advances are made under the Government of Canada's Advance Payments Program.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Parents Call Out Education Track Discrimination at Niverville High School **3**
- New Multimillion-Dollar Wastewater Investment Announced **6**
- Ritchot Council Considers Food Waste Recycling Opportunity **8**
- NHS Students Lead Middle Schoolers on Forest Field Trip **9**
- Niverville High School Principal Announces Job Transfer **9**
- Municipal Water vs. Private Wells: Wading Through the Murky Details **10**
- HSD Board Raises Education Taxes and Staffing Levels **12**
- Tortuga Smokehouse and Whitetail Meadow Join Forces **13**
- SRSD Board Puts End to KAP and Initiates Fee for Enhanced Bussing **14**
- SRSD Board Casts Tight Vote on Education Tax Hike **14**
- A Review of Niverville's Open Fires and Fireworks Bylaws **16**
- New Development Focuses on Energy Efficiency **17**
- Nighthawks Earn Playoff Berth for Second Straight Season **18**
- Local Athlete Wins at Special Olympics **22**
- Niverville Rec Director Wins Prestigious Award **23**
- CRRC Event Connects Young Women with Sports **24**
- Accessible Sport Expo Comes to Niverville **25**
- Niverville Composer Shortlisted for Short Film Score Contest **26**
- Celebrating Nature: Local Artist Brings World to Life on Canvas **27**

Parents Call Out Education Track Discrimination at Niverville High School

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

It's been over a year since *The Citizen* covered a story on project-based learning (PBL) at the Niverville High School (NHS).

At the time, at least one student and a good number of parents chose to speak out regarding their disappointment in the school's one-track mode of teaching for students in Grades Nine and Ten.

Since then, a second track has been added to the school's programming for those grades, reflecting a more traditional style of learning. It's been dubbed by school administrators as standalone learning.

According to parents whose children opted in for standalone learning this year, it mimics the style of learning their kids became accustomed to throughout their elementary and middle school years.

For parents and students who believe that traditional learning techniques better suit their needs, the return to this mode has been a welcome change.

If the first eight months of standalone learning has demonstrated anything to these families, it's that a degree of discrimination appears to exist between the two learning tracks.

A number of standalone students feel like they're being punished for their choice to be here.

These feelings of discrimination have arisen as a result of students being left out of school-organized field trips that are geared exclusively for students in the PBL learning track. The field trips have taken students to the Museum of Human Rights, The Forks, and escape rooms in Winnipeg. The escape rooms are billed as a fun way to experience team-building skills, and the museum visit has to do with curriculum coverage—the

same curriculum, parents argue, which applies to both tracks.

These are also excursions, parents argue, that every student in those grades could and should be able to benefit from, regardless of learning track.

While PBL students are off enjoying these field trips, standalone students are kept back. The students who feel this marginalization most succinctly are those who share a math class or elective class with students in the PBL track.

According to the students left behind, which in some classes is as few as two or three, they are expected to keep themselves entertained in empty classrooms. Learning is paused to prevent them from getting ahead of students who are out on the field trip.

But there's another reason that parents with kids in the standalone program get the distinct feeling that administrators at NHS may not be fully supportive of their kids.

Despite the school's choice to offer a standalone track last year, the NHS website has yet to provide any indication that this mode of learning is even available to children coming into ninth and tenth grades.

Still on the website is the promotional video that came out when the school first opened its doors. This video was created to promote the PBL program. The school's principal, Kimberley Funk, introduces PBL as an optimal learning style in comparison to an education style that was "built on a system of long ago" and prepares "kids for jobs that don't even exist."

For at least a handful of parents, the video seems to send a clear message: administrators here don't want to promote or encourage traditional learning for students in these grades.

Yet when the standalone option

became available to students for the first time last fall, 40 percent of students across Grades Nine and Ten opted in for the 2023-24 school year.

In total, 44 of 110 Grade Nine students are enrolled in the standalone program. In Grade 10, that number is 38 out of 95.

With ratios this closely matched, many parents feel that the school should have received the clear message that parents and students want options, and both options should be promoted, encouraged, and given equal treatment by school staff.

PBL VS. STANDALONE

If parents of students in the standalone track want to make anything perfectly clear, it's that they have nothing against the use of the PBL model. For many children, they say, it provides a unique way of learning, especially for students who struggle to learn in a more traditional environment.

But it's not for all kids, and offering options is imperative if the goal is to keep Niverville's high school students in town.

As the name suggests, PBL focuses heavily on learning the curriculum through completing hands-on projects, both individually and in groups.

The school introduced PBL when they first opened the doors in 2019. It has been in ubiquitous use across Grades Nine and Ten until this past fall with the introduction of standalone learning.

Many see PBL as traditional learning's opposite. The PBL mode does away with textbooks, lecture-style instruction, notetaking, fact memorization, and test and exam writing.

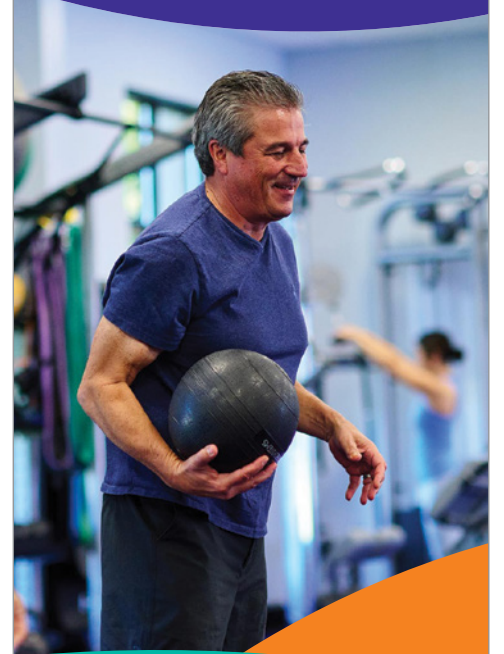
Without the use of textbooks, students are encouraged to use the internet for their research as well as speak to experts in fields that

(continued on page 4)

START YOUR
**FITNESS
JOURNEY**
AND FEEL
GOOD

50%
✂️
OFF
**ENROLMENT
AND
1ST MONTH!**

LIMITED TIME OFFER.
SEE STORE FOR DETAILS.



**ANYTIME
FITNESS**

204-961-1919

40 Drovers Run, Niverville

facebook.com/anytimefitnessniverville
FOR DETAILS VISIT ANYTIMEFITNESS.COM

The Citizen

Box 266, Niverville, MB R0A 1E0
www.nivervillecitizen.com

Managing Editor:
Evan Braun

Sales Manager:
Ray Dowse

Operations Manager:
Cara Dowse

Design/Production Manager:
Dustin Krahn

Contributors:
Evan Braun, Brenda Sawatzky,
Ty Dilello, Sara Beth Dacombe, Jennifer Lavin

CONTACT US

Letters to the Editor:
editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Advertising Sales:
sales@nivervillecitizen.com

Classifieds/General Information:
info@nivervillecitizen.com

Artwork/Ad Proofs/Graphics:
ads@nivervillecitizen.com

The Niverville Citizen is published monthly and distributed through Canada Post to all those with a postal box in Niverville, Île-des-Chênes, St. Adolphe, Ste. Agathe, New Bethwell, Otterburne, and Tourond. Additional copies are distributed to businesses in the aforementioned communities. The paper is printed in Canada by Derksen Printers Ltd. Republishing of this paper in whole or in part without prior approval is strictly prohibited.

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



The advertising deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the 20th of each month. The paper will be distributed the first week of every month.

Our commitment to the reader is to provide a professional and reliable means of communication that both residents and businesses will value. This newspaper is 100 percent supported by those who choose to advertise within it. Readers who support the businesses who advertise in this publication are also supporting the development and circulation of future issues of this newspaper. Together, we can help build stronger communities.

**FREE TO SHARE.
PLEASE RECYCLE.**



RED RIVER GROUP
REAL PROPERTY SOLUTIONS

Real Estate Appraisals | Property Management | Reserve Fund Studies | Real Property Consulting

1-855-371-5833 | www.redrivergroup.ca



(continued from page 4)

are relevant to their topic.

Students are no longer graded based on percentages but rather a scale of *limited, basic, good, very good, and excellent* to indicate their understanding of a subject.

The philosophy behind PBL is that it can provide students with more freedom and decision-making power in their education.

Still, there seems to be a con-tingent of students who enjoy the challenges of fact memorization, test writing, and all that comes with more traditional methods. This is where they thrive.

Perhaps this is why, in other Manitoba schools, PBL is considered an opt-in program that runs alongside but not exclusive to the traditional learning track.

INEQUALITY BETWEEN TRACKS

Chantal Wieler is a local mom with two kids attending NHS, a son in Grade Nine and a daughter in Grade Ten. She describes her kids as having different learning styles and yet feels they would still benefit from traditional learning.

Wieler's daughter is a high-achieving student, typically averaging scores in the 90 percentile and demonstrating strengths in fact memorization through testing.

This child spent her Grade Nine year in PBL, before traditional learning was an option at NHS. But Wieler says her daughter was so unhappy in that setting that she asked to enroll at the Steinbach Regional Secondary School for Grade Ten, simply as a way to get back to traditional learning.

Wieler's son isn't quite as driven as his sister, but Wieler wants to see him challenged, something which she feels can only happen through the grading and rigorous testing of traditional learning.

"I wanted him to be able to learn to do his own work and get his own mark," Wieler says. "Whether or not he gets a lower mark than he would have in PBL is irrelevant. At least it's his mark."

For these reasons, Wieler was excited to discover that standalone learning was finally being introduced for the current school

year. Wieler loves her community and wasn't thrilled with the prospect of her kids attending school elsewhere.

Wieler herself is a high achiever, having completed bachelor's degrees in both the arts and education. In that setting, she first became aware of the PBL teaching style. While she has never been opposed to its use in schools, on its own she doesn't believe it prepares kids well for postsecondary education, where traditional learning methods are still the norm.

"I want to keep my kids' post-secondary education doors open," Wieler says. "And in the majority of postsecondary education, it's still standardized. You're still writing tests, still writing papers."

After watching her daughter struggle through one year of PBL, Wieler had some big concerns.

Firstly, she found the elimination of textbooks problematic, since such books are understood to be vastly more reliable sources of facts than the internet. They've been carefully vetted by an educational council prior to their approval for use in the classroom.

Secondly, Wieler says that her daughter couldn't thrive in such a loosely structured environment.

With the development of standalone learning this year, Wieler felt confident that things would improve significantly for her daughter. And for the most part, that has happened.

But the underlying feeling of discrimination hasn't been lost on either of Wieler's kids. In fact, Wieler says that even her school friends in the PBL track see the injustice. Thinking the first field trip exclusion was a one-off incident, Wieler encouraged her kids to let it go. After all, life isn't always fair.

When the same scenario continued to play out, however, Wieler decided to bring it up with NHS administration. Perhaps there was simply a misunderstanding.

Unfortunately, she says that she was given little empathy or reassurance. Neither did Wieler receive any reassurance that standalone learning would be offered again next year, a fact that she found disconcerting.

So in February 2024, Wieler decided to reach out to the Hanover School Division. She was invited to a sit-down meeting with vice superintendent Colin Campbell. This was a productive meeting, she says, and she felt heard and understood.

According to Wieler, Campbell agreed that her concerns were valid, indicating that better information needed to be coming out of NHS regarding the availability of both learning tracks. As well, she says that Campbell promised to look into the culture at NHS in the hopes of ensuring all students can move forward feeling equally represented and respected by school staff.

Campbell also assured Wieler that the standalone stream would be available again in the 2024-25 school year.

"Next year I'd like to see equal treatment between the two groups," says Wieler. "We're just looking for that equality."

PUNITIVE TREATMENT

Colleen Dyck's son attended a private school during his Grade Nine year but returned to Niverville for Grade Ten when standalone was offered.

Within his first couple of months back, though, Dyck says she saw that his attitude toward school began to spiral. On field trip days, he'd ask to stay home since he knew he wouldn't be included and didn't want to sit in a virtually empty classroom with nothing to do.

Since then, he has transferred back to private school.

"He chose to switch schools for the second semester due to concerns about the quality of education, along with what feels like punitive treatment of students who elected not to participate in the PBL experiment," Dyck says. "I'll clarify that this isn't a comment about the quality or passion of the teachers in any way. My son is good at rolling with the punches, and we've taught our kids that life isn't fair and they must respect authority as long as it doesn't compromise them respecting themselves."

After the first missed field trip, Dyck says that she encouraged her son to tough it out. But the trend didn't change.

"As time went on, I saw his

motivation and engagement dwindle," says Dyck. "This unequal treatment wasn't just about not being able to go on outings. This was starting to affect him on a different level. He's an academically focused kid and this change in him was worrisome. Our kids deserve our best. They need to be challenged and respected, especially as they transition through the stage of life where they are establishing their worldviews."

Dyck says that she regrets not taking her concerns to upper administration at NHS. However, based on their historical lack of response to other parents who'd tried to get answers, she'd lost optimism that anything would change.

At this point, she's just pleased that her son has found a school where traditional learning is taken seriously.

"PBL might work well for some kids, but it hasn't gone over well for just as many," Dyck says. "There is no one-size-fits-all in education and being open to new ways of learning is great. I commend the teachers and administration [at NHS] for being open-minded enough to try a different approach. However, when embarking on implementing a new methodology of learning, it is extremely important to be nimble and receptive to feedback and to give credence to concerns of parents."

As for the omission of information regarding standalone learning on the school's website, she says this just serves to reinforce her belief that NHS leadership isn't interested in listening to what so many parents have had to say.

ANONYMOUS PARENTS

Some parents who agreed to comment on this story asked to remain anonymous, in order to protect their kids from further discomfort. The first is a dad we'll call Paul.

Paul has a daughter attending Grade 11 and a son who just entered Grade Nine. His daughter pushed through two years of PBL at NHS—but it cost her, he says. According to Paul, she went from a high-achieving student with marks always in the highest percentile to a C-averaging student by the end of

her Grade Ten year.

Her self-confidence plummeted, until Paul took matters into his own hands and hired a private tutor to get her back on track.

"I've spent probably close to \$2,000 getting her tutoring because she wants to have an academic [career] and she'd almost relegated herself to the idea that maybe it's not for her," Paul says.

From his perspective, PBL is an experimental technique being tested on students at NHS. If this wasn't the case, he adds, other schools in the division would be rolling it out, too.

"Usually the high achievers are the ones doing a lot of the work [in PBL]," Paul says. "PBL tends to pick up the marks of the lower achievers and tends to drop the marks of the high achievers. So I need to understand why that's a good thing, especially given the competitiveness of postsecondary education. When they're applying for different schools or trying to get scholarships, one percent matters."

After his daughter's experience in PBL, Paul and his wife began looking at private school options for their son, who was about to enter Grade Nine.

Thankfully, the standalone program was introduced just in time for his enrollment at NHS.

Within the first month of Grade Nine, though, Paul received a text message from his son while he was in school: "Hey, all the PBL kids went to an escape room and The Forks for lunch and I'm sitting here by myself in math class doing nothing."

When it happened a second time, Paul spoke with the vice principal, Graham Sereda. He was told that opportunities would arise for the standalone students as the year progressed.

But when his son was left behind for a third time in January, Paul reached out to Sereda again.

"It's like, throw a couple of extra [standalone] kids on the bus and give them an assignment [based on the field trip]," Paul says. "What would the cost of that have been? Like, nothing."

According to Paul, Sereda seemed to empathize with the

JWH
MECHANICAL

Plumbing • Heating • Air Conditioning

204-388-5366

AUTOWORKS
Sparkline
SERVICE CENTRE

Alignments- Brakes-Tire-Safeties
Diagnostics-Free Shuttle and Courtesy Car

20 CEDAR DRIVE, NIVERVILLE, MB
204-388-4888 www.sparkline.ca

prairiesoul
DANCE COMPANY

Directors:
Melanie Ducharme
Danielle Auld

info@prairiesouldancecompany.ca
204-392-5624
10 Cedar Drive, Niverville

ROYAL ACADEMY OF DANCE
REGISTERED TEACHER

Follow us on
f i t

plight of the standalone students. Even so, he says there's been no evidence of any changes since then.

In March, Paul says that his son decided to enroll at the SRSS next year. There, he hopes to have a better experience.

The second anonymous parent, who we're calling Lisa, has a son in Grade Nine enrolled in the standalone program. When trying to determine which track to choose for him, she says that the information coming from the school's administration felt biased.

"There was a big push to get kids to enter into the PBL program," says Lisa. "Very little information was provided upfront about the standalone classes. Even after meeting with the principal and asking specific questions, we struggled to understand what the standalone curriculum was going to look like. We still don't have a clear understanding into the second semester."

This kind of perceived bias and vague feedback has Lisa and her child considering a move to another school next year. That, and the lack of opportunity their child has had in terms of educational field trips.

"We know quite a few parents that will be looking at sending their kid to SRSS starting in September 2024," Lisa says. "We are also looking into this option. However,

when kids from Niverville want to go to SRSS, they are forced to choose vocational [courses] or they will not be considered. This is unfortunate."

By mid-March, NHS had yet to offer the standalone students any field trips or excursions, whether alongside PBL students or on their own.

PARENTS WHO BELIEVE IN THE PBL MODEL

A number of parents have also stepped forward to offer a different viewpoint.

One of those parents is Allison Hornung, whose son is enrolled in PBL this year for the first time. She says it took him a while to come around, but he's doing well now.

Hornung also says that she and her husband made the decision to place him in PBL after their conversation with school administration.

"In discussion, my husband and I felt kids that were going into the workforce were often book smart but lacked the most simplistic of skills," says Hornung. "We felt that working in teams doing PBL would give them skills they may lack otherwise. Forcing them to get out of their comfort zones, if you will. We felt that my son would grow better in this experience, more so than traditional learning. And we still feel that way. This was definitely the way to go for our family."

As for regaining skills like memorization and testing, she says that all of this will come around again in Grades 11 and 12, leaving more than enough time to prepare him for a postsecondary education if that's in his future.

Another parent, this one opting to remain anonymous, has a child who successfully graduated from the NHS. In fact, her daughter received the Town of Niverville scholarship.

"PBL proved to be a perfect fit for her," she says. "Her confidence, communication, and teamwork skills are excellent and I truly believe it's because of PBL. Through PBL, she was able to speak her mind, focus on the process of her work, and produce projects of excellent quality. She finds that the skills she learned in PBL are extremely helpful in her post-grad job position."

HSD SUPERINTENDENT RELEASES STATEMENT

The Citizen reached out to HSD regarding the situation occurring at NHS this year, posing questions about what kinds of accountability and oversight are provided by the division to ensure that the PBL and standalone learning tracks are implemented effectively.

We also asked whether the division monitors the reasons that some parents take their children out of NHS to pursue their education elsewhere.

The division did not

address these questions specifically.

Instead superintendent Shelley Amos provided the following statement.

"We respect and support the choice of those students who opt for the standalone track, which offers an equally valid and effective educational path. HSD is committed to ensuring equity of programming between both tracks.

"Our shared goal is to provide all students, regardless of their learning path, access to high-quality education and resources, enabling them to achieve their full potential and prepare them for future challenges and opportunities. To that end, we are always open to feedback from students and parents and caregivers.

"Specific to learning outcomes, our schools adhere to the curriculum standards as prescribed by Manitoba Education. We are dedicated to meeting and surpassing these standards. Teachers and school administrators share responsibility for achieving the stated learning outcomes. As highly qualified and trained professionals, we have complete confidence in their abilities.

"The school administration will continue to review the NHS website to determine whether additional information or content corrections are necessary."

CITIZEN POLL

Should our schools work harder to ensure that different learning styles are supported through the provision of multiple learning tracks as opposed to single track learning?

- Yes. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions in education. Schools should diversify their approach.
- No. Catering to every learning style would stretch resources too thin, adding strain to already tight budgets.

Have a more nuanced opinion? Leave us a comment online.

Enter to Win

Take part in our monthly poll for your chance to win prizes!

Congratulations to last month's winner:

KEVIN MYERS

VOTENOW AT www.nivervillecitizen.com

LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

Is it prudent for Niverville's council to encourage a broad shift to municipal water as soon as the government grants become available?



YOUR COMMENTS:

It is the job of council and the purpose of organized government to collect tax, plan ahead, and develop projects. Through a centralized government and tax system, we as taxpayers aren't supposed to get stuck with massive and unexpected infrastructure bills. Our council doesn't seem to understand that, and they feel their job is to suggest an idea and then simply send citizens a life altering tax bill on top of all the tax they already pay (which the town is supposed to save and use for things like this). Councils job is to plan head, tax accordingly, and save for future projects if they are deemed necessary. When grants like this become available, then we are prepared and funded. Simply identifying a need and presenting citizens with the massive costs is an embarrassing failure of council's duty to plan ahead and have funding organized. Niverville started seeing municipal water over 20 years ago, and the fact council has not foreseen a need to plan ahead for future infrastructure needs, but rather expects citizens to pick up the tab, is really embarrassing.

Residents should have the right to have their own private well. Look at the areas with town water. Every year they have to ration the water. I feel sorry for them.

It has worked for 150 years. Leave it alone.

I just don't see the benefits outweighing the cost to homeowners.

I would fight to keep my well if it was functioning as it should.

I do not want to be forced to upgrade to town water. I've had no issues with my well in the four years I've lived here and with inflation it is a huge help not having a water bill.

BY's Service

Services, Safeties and Fixes on all Heavy Duty Trucks and Trailers

Open: Monday-Friday
weekends and flexible times available

Call: 204-883-2382

1755 PTH 75 Hwy, St. Adolphe

AJAX ROOFING

SERVING MANITOBA SINCE 1977

FREE ESTIMATES

AjaxRoofing.ca

New Multimillion-Dollar Wastewater Investment Announced

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

On March 26, the intermunicipal wastewater treatment plant destined for construction in the RM of Ritchot received a big financial boost.

Dignitaries from three levels of government gathered at the CRRC to celebrate the announcement of \$51 million in loan investment being offered by the Canadian Infrastructure Bank (CIB).

The CIB is a crown corporation operating at arm's length from the federal government. Developed in 2017, their mandate is to support municipal governments by providing loans for initiatives related to clean power, green infrastructure, transit, trade and transportation, and broadband.

Attached to these loans are very low interest rates and payback periods that extend beyond what commercial banks offer.

The CEO of CIB, Ehren Cory, flew in from the Toronto branch to help make the announcement.

"Our infrastructure needs [across Canada] are growing," Cory says. "And then we have the backlog of all the highways we need to build, the transit systems, the broadband we all need to be able to work, and the water systems we need to live and work in our communities. And we realize that if we don't find new and different ways to pay for the stuff, we're never going to catch up and the gap is only going to get wider."

The unique collaboration on this shared wastewater treatment plant was first announced in August 2022.

At that time, four southeast Manitoba municipalities came together



Dignitaries gather at the CRRC in Niverville for a major wastewater investment announcement.

✉ BRENDA SAWATZKY

with a sound and environmentally friendly solution to the problem of outgrowing their municipal lagoons. These municipalities include Niverville and the RMs of Ritchot, Hanover, and Tache.

With representatives from each municipality, the Red-Seine-Rat (RSR) wastewater collaborative was formed to oversee the construction of a \$110 million wastewater treatment plant to be located just north of Niverville.

The project, in its entirety, will include a series of lift stations, pump stations, and approximately 90 kilometres of effluent pipeline running to every community in the four municipalities.

The project garnered the interest of both the provincial and federal governments, who in 2022 stepped in to invest \$39 million in grant monies. The balance was to be borne by the municipalities.

Since that time, and after undergoing a number of creative design processes, the project's cost has

jumped to closer to \$190 million, according to the RSR's board chairperson, Jim Funk.

For that reason, the CIB loan announcement has been very happily received.

One of the criteria assessed by CIB when determining which projects they will back is the level of population and economic growth the project will support.

Cory cited incidents where municipal councils have had to deny new building permits since the community no longer had enough water and wastewater infrastructure to sustain further growth.

For this reason, he says, many of the projects being supported by CIB are proactive in nature.

But when municipalities don't yet have the population in place to sustain the loan repayment, CIB also offers risk mitigation.

"We only get paid back based on growth in population in the communities [that it serves]," says Cory. "So if the population doesn't grow,

we can kick it down the road a little further."

Hanover reeve and RSR board chair Jim Funk saw this announcement as further confirmation that municipal collaboration is the way to go.

"With our four municipalities working together, we can provide the region with wastewater treatment that is typically only afforded to larger urban municipalities," Funk says. "However, large infrastructure projects come with large capital costs. This is a financial burden we cannot shoulder ourselves. That is why today's announcement is so important."

Once complete, Funk adds, the new wastewater treatment facility will help ensure residential growth in the region for the next 30 to 50 years by providing capacity for an additional 12,600 new housing starts.

For Niverville alone, this means that the population could double before a treatment plant expansion would be required.

"It is projected that, over the next ten years, this project will result in nearly \$1.9 billion in new capital investment and construction, and some 3,400 new jobs for the region," Funk says.

The environmental benefits are also noteworthy, since the mechanical plant is expected to provide an overall net CO₂ emission reduction of 93 percent.

Existing lagoons can be repurposed as holding ponds during periods of high rain. Farmland can continue to be used as farmland without the need to sequester portions of it for lagoon expansions.

"It may rain buckets in Blumenort, but it doesn't rain buckets in Kleefeld, so we can [release] that water from Blumenort and at the same time hold that water back in Kleefeld so we're not overwhelming the system that's here in Niverville," says Gord Daman, the RSR's economic development consultant.

At this stage, the shared wastewater treatment plant initiative is catching the eye of other municipalities as well.

Talks are currently happening in Steinbach, La Broquerie, and one community in the RM of De Salaberry, all considering the possibility of joining the RSR.

"Because of CIB's involvement, there's more options to be able to phase in the [treatment plant]," says Daman. "The way we've designed it, they can actually add modules as needed. But the distribution route is already in place. These [effluent] pipes are already running past many of these other communities. They just have to connect in."

Funk says that the RSR is hoping to go to tender in late fall of this year.

MARCHAND DRYMASTER
for an eco-friendly carpet cleaning experience

Visit us online to book your free estimate:
www.marchanddrymaster.com

204-712-6615 Cleaning carpets, upholstery, vehicle interiors, and area rugs

50th Anniversary
snj
SMITH-NEUFELD-JODOIN LLP
LAW OFFICES

- Real Estate Transactions
- Corporate Law
- Agriculture Law
- Wills
- Estates
- Succession Planning
- Civil Litigation

204-388-9300 | www.snj.ca

Delaquis Antiques FURNITURE

- SALES •
- REFINISHING •
- REPAIRS •

204-388-4850

pgdelaquis@gmail.com

Advertise With Us!

sales@nivervillecitizen.com

done.
hair, skin & nails
donehairskinandnails.com

ColorProof
COLOR CARE AUTHORITY

ÉMINENCE
ORGANIC SKIN CARE
HUNGARY SINCE 1958

GOLDWELL

amika:

PRICKLY PEAR

ORGANIC BODY SUGARING

"I love how prickly
your legs feel."
-Said no one ever

Unit B, 10 Cedar Drive, Niverville
204.782.8610 pricklypearsugaring@gmail.com
 pricklypearbodysugaring

chamber of NIVERVILLE commerce

CHAMBER news

EMAIL: chamber@niverville.com PHONE: 204-388-6140

President: Elvin Krahn | Vice-President: Ben Dueck | Executive Director: Bre-Ann Boulet
Treasurer: Nicholas Bergmann | Executive Member: Karen Albaugh
Members: Bryan Trottier, Sara Matwychuk, Brenda Sawatzky, Ferd Klassen, Chidera Anadi-Mbanefo

www.niverville.com

Last Chance to get tickets to our Largest Event of the Year! Annual General Meeting, Awards and Dinner

When: Friday, April 12th
Time: 5pm-11pm

Where: Niverville Heritage Centre

Our largest event of the year. This evening combines our Business Excellence awards, Annual General Meeting, and an evening out with businesses from the community. Come enjoy a sit down dinner while you get the inside scoop on what's going on in town. Register online at www.niverville.com

Congratulations to all our award nominees:

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR AWARD

- Trotco Electric
- One Insurance
- Country Snacks
- Done Hair Salon
- Negash Coffee
- Your Grocery People
- Santa Lucia Niverville

OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Elvi Medspa
- Talk to the Tail
- Sparkline
- Whitetail Meadow

NEW BUSINESS AWARD

- Niverville Pita Pit
- Forgotten Flavours
- Madden West Salon

ALEX FAST SR. MEMORIAL AWARD

- Dowse Ventures (Ray Dowse)
- Red River Group - Real Property Solutions (Gord Daman)

To join or for any inquiries, contact us at 204-388-6140 or email chamber@niverville.com. Be part of our growing community, and let's work together towards a prosperous future!

Niverville | 204-803-9276
lynleyboxphysio.com

Trampoline season is upon us. Ready to join your kids jumping this year?

Start with practicing your squats. Breathe in to lower, breathe out and lift pelvic floor to stand up. Once you master this, go up onto your toes as you stand up, then baby jump squats, then big jump squats. Don't forget to practice standing up quickly too.

You got this!

BRYAN TROTTIER
204.371.8842 bryan@trotco.ca

country SNACKS

Est. 1990 —
Home of Manitoba's Best Soft Ice Cream!

SCOPE

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Building stronger leaders
and healthier teams

DARRELL KEHLER
Leadership Coach & Consultant
www.scopeleadership.com

MANITOBA INSTITUTE OF
TRADES & TECHNOLOGY

OPPORTUNITY IS KNOCKING here

**APPLY NOW FOR
WINTER 2025**

MITT.CA/NOW

Ambassador Canadian Reformed Church

What is a Reformed Church you might ask?

Over the next few months we will delve into that question, but for now we will start by giving a broad overview of its beginnings and principal tenets.

The Reformed Church had its birth in the Great Reformation of the 16th century where reformers like Martin Luther, John Calvin and Huldrych Zwingli broke (hence Reformed) from the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and thereby started the Protestant Reformation.

The Protestant Reformation manifested itself in a number of different denominations, such as the Lutherans, Anabaptists (modern day Mennonites) and the Reformed churches. Ambassador Canadian Reformed Church finds its rich biblical heritage rooted in this Protestant Reformation.

This biblical heritage, simply put, has 5 foundational principles known in Latin as "Solas" or in English as "Only" statements. They are: Sola Scriptura (Scripture Alone), Solus Christus (Christ Alone), Sola Fide (Faith Alone), Sola Gratia (Grace Alone) and Soli Deo Gloria (Glory to God Alone).

The Lord willing in the next 5 months we will deal with each of these Reformed distinctives briefly and after that deal with the 5 points of Calvinism which is also theologically intimately tied to the confessions of the Reformed Church.

Elder Trevor Schriemer
204-299-9708

www.ambassador-canrc.org

Ritchot Council Considers Food Waste Recycling Opportunity

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

In the interest of creating a more sustainable and kinder approach to the environment, the RM of Ritchot's council has been actively seeking ways to improve on what they do.

Last year, they made a commitment to restore native grasslands in the municipality's parks, trails, and retention ponds. Last month, they advertised for the new position of energy efficiency advocate, whose job it will be to promote environmental stewardship.

At their February 22 public meeting, council entertained a delegate from Food Cycle Science who had come to speak about food waste diversion options.

Brigitte Kirady is the municipal program coordinator for Food Cycle Science, an Ottawa-based corporation whose mission is to promote widespread food waste solutions for Canadians.

Last year, Food Cycle Science was chosen as a finalist in the federal government's Impact Canada Food Waste Reduction Challenge.

As such, the company received a \$400,000 grant, which Kirady says is being invested back into municipalities who are willing to partner with them.

Since that time, Food Cycle Science has been working with 120 municipalities across the country to initiate buy-in for a food waste solution they've developed.

"Food waste is a big problem that has a strong municipal impact," Kirady told council. "Because food waste makes up such a large portion of our waste stream, it's causing our landfills to fill up quickly. Operating a landfill is costly for a municipality, so we want to extend the lifespan for our



Caption.

CREDIT

landfills as long as possible."

According to Kirady, food waste comprises up to 50 percent of household waste in Canada and is responsible for creating 56.6 million tonnes of CO₂ gasses every year when it ends up in a landfill.

For perspective, she says, one tonne of food waste in a landfill has about the same environmental impact as one vehicle on the road.

While some cities, towns, and municipalities have adopted green bin programs, similar to garbage and recycling programs, the capital costs involved in the collection and processing of food waste is prohibitive and far from earth-friendly.

Inviting individual residents to do backyard composting is a really good solution, she adds, but participation rates are quite low, statistically.

A unique alternative, called the Food Cyler, is what Food Cycle Science is all about.

The Food Cyler is a home appliance that occupies about the same amount of space as a bread machine and turns food waste into a nutrient-rich soil amendment in

just a matter of hours.

The byproduct is dry, sterile, and odorless. It takes up about one-tenth the mass and weight of the food waste it originated from. It can be added to garden beds once complete.

"From an environmental standpoint, the Food Cyler is a net negative carbon solution," Kirady said. "What that means is that, just like planting trees or using solar panels, when you use the Food Cyler to avoid sending food waste to a landfill, you're avoiding more greenhouse gasses than you're creating."

The Food Cyler pilot program, on a local scale, encourages municipalities to purchase these appliances at a subsidized rate and then further subsidize the units for their residents to use.

In the case of Ritchot, Kirady recommended starting with 100 units, which would cost the RM \$10,000 plus shipping and taxes. The RM would, in turn, sell the units to local residents for in-home use.

Participating residents would

enter into the program with the understanding that they'd be part of a bigger municipal project. After 12 weeks of tracked use, residents would complete a survey provided by Food Cycle Science. For their participation, residents would be allowed to keep the appliance.

In turn, Food Cycle Science would compile the data received and present it to Ritchot's council in order to help them determine the value that was derived from the food waste diversion in their municipality.


If they believe there was merit there, grants could be sought to help expand the program locally.

Kirady says that her company's program is already servicing more than 10,000 households across the country and this has helped to divert about 3,000 metric tonnes of CO₂.

Manitoba municipalities currently partnering with Food Cycle Science include Stonewall, the RM of Montcalm, West St. Paul, and Portage la Prairie.

AREAS OF PRACTICE

- › FAMILY LAW
- › REAL ESTATE LAW
- › WILLS AND ESTATE
- › CIVIL LITIGATION
- › IMMIGRATION LAW
- › DISPUTE RESOLUTION



1-431-588-2702

Unit B4 - 10 Cedar Dr, P.O. Box 175
Niverville, Manitoba R0A 1E0

info@camslawoffice.com
www.camslawoffice.com





YOUR GROCERY PEOPLE

FULL SERVICE GROCERY,
LIQUOR & BEER VENDOR

259 MAIN STREET, NIVERVILLE

NHS Students Lead Middle Schoolers on Forest Field Trip

By Sara Beth Dacombe

sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

On March 1, a group of Grade Ten students from Niverville High School met up with a group of Niverville Middle School Grade Six students at St. Adolphe's Friendship Trail to teach them about natural resources and ecosystems.

The Grade Ten class was working on a project which combines learning outcomes in the areas of geography and science. Students learned about a variety of resources in Canada and many students chose to deepen their learning around forestry issues.

"Some of our big driving questions were, how do human activities impact ecosystems?" says NHS teacher Jennifer Hashemian. "What are issues with how we manage natural resources? How can we sustainably manage resources? What are Indigenous perspectives in regards to natural resources?"

Two students chose to learn about the National Healing Forest Initiative (NHFI), a community-led not-for-profit that has collaborated with the David Suzuki Foundation and Royal Canadian Geographical Society. The students reached out to the NHFI organizers to learn more.

"In researching healing forests, we discovered that there was a nearby healing forest in St. Adolphe called the Friendship Trail," says Hashemian. "Some of the students who studied various aspects of forestry and logging decided to team up to plan a field trip. They decided to invite a middle school class and educate them about the importance of forests as a natural resource and integral part of our ecosystems."

Hashemian says it was a group of seven students who planned the trip together, with



Students explore the Friendship Trail.

JENNIFER HASHEMIAN

the rest of the class agreeing to come to assist.

TRIP TO EXPLORE A HEALING FOREST

According to the David Suzuki Foundation, a healing forest provides safe spaces for healing, reconciliation, and community building.

The Friendship Trail in St. Adolphe received this designation in 2022 and has held many events to support truth and reconciliation, as well as provide education about plants and animals, Metis history, and the mental health benefits of being in nature.

Gerry Lagasse is on the Friendship Trail committee and helped facilitate the visit.

"It was an honour to have the Niverville Grade Sixes, with the guidance of the Grade Ten students, along with the two teachers and principal having such an amazing educational outing," says Lagasse. "There was a great ambience between the teachers and students learning and enjoying the beauty of the forest and nature surrounded by a bonfire pit and hot chocolate."

Lagasse invites anyone interested in nature to come and enjoy the beautiful trail, which also includes a bird sanctuary, firepits, picnic tables, and a photo studio.

"[The trail] is open year-round, although some of the

best times are May and June for school outings. Every group or individuals are welcome and no bookings are required."

The Friendship Trail committee supported the field trip by organizing volunteers to set up the firepits. NHS supplied everyone with snacks and hot chocolate at the end.

For Hashemian, it was rewarding to see her students exercise their leadership skills.

"The seven organizers did everything to plan the trip with my guidance," says Hashemian. "They spoke to Ms. Kimberley [NHS principal] for permission and contacted teachers at the middle school to find a class to partner with. They planned their lessons and got feedback from me on how to improve. The seven organizers, with Ms. Kimberley and I, went to the forest a week prior to the trip to see the space and plan out the details."

After identifying the learning goals for the trip, the young team decided they would make various stops along the trail to deliver their part of the lesson.

Hashemian says the older students wanted to give the younger students an important experience to learn about how valuable our forests are.

At the trail site, the students organized themselves, pairing up two Grade Six students with each Grade Ten student.

"It is important to introduce something valuable to young minds because they can start thinking about these important issues," says one of the student leaders. "Making the activities fun can really capture their attention and would make them want to learn about the topic."

Another older student says that their goal was to cover the main phases of a forest's life, as well as the effects of deforestation, using trivia questions from their in-class lessons to keep the attention of the younger students and make it fun.

"The trivia questions went really well," they say. "The kids all answered them correctly, which means the lesson went well... We also got them to decorate and write one fact that they learned on a wooden ornament to hang up in the forest."

MAKING INTERPERSONAL CONNECTIONS

The day trip provided a lot of opportunities for cementing the learning done in the classroom, and it ultimately left students with the bonus of having made new friendships and connections.

"We had absolutely beautiful weather and the connections and learning that happened that day were heart-warming," said Hashemian. "The Grade Sixes were very engaged and asked lots of questions. The connections I saw between the Tens and Sixes were amazing. It was so wonderful to see these teens be caring and tender towards the younger students."

Building connections with younger students was a new experience for a lot of the Grade Ten participants and helped them utilize interpersonal skills they may not have had a lot of opportunity to use before.

IN BRIEF

Niverville High School Principal Announces Job Transfer

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

On March 21, parents of students at the Niverville High School (NHS) received early notice from principal Kimberley Funk of her impending transfer.

In the fall of 2024, Funk will assume the role of vice-principal at the Steinbach Regional Secondary School. Funk has served as principal of NHS since 2019.

As a matter of privacy, the Hanover School Division (HSD) was unwilling to comment on Funk's transfer.

"A decision regarding Kimberley's replacement has yet to be made but will be completed before the end of this school year," says a spokesperson for the division. "The division will publicly announce when her replacement has been chosen."

Funk became known for her passion and energy at NHS through the introduction of project-based

learning (PBL).

"I want to take this opportunity to express how exciting it has been to open a new school and build something from the ground up," Funk wrote in a statement to parents. "It has definitely been a once in a lifetime experience and I am so proud of the work that we have done here over the past five years. We have also successfully weathered a few storms along the way and that has been due to the amazing teachers and incredible support staff in this building who are truly passionate about kids and providing them with the best education possible."

Funk's announcement comes after HSD superintendent-CEO Shelley Amos also gave notice. Amos's replacement has also yet to be named.

Amos will take on the role of Superintendent of Education/CEO at the Pembina Trails School Division in Winnipeg. Amos has been with HSD in various capacities for the past 22 years.



FREE
HOME MARKET EVALUATION

Katie Knebel
204-392-3030
ROYAL LEPAGE
Riverbend Realty



TAX FREE SAVINGS ACCOUNT

You'll be covered. We'll make it easy.

Caisse
Groupe Financier
Financial Group

f @ y t in

Caisse.biz

Municipal Water vs. Private Wells: Wading Through the Murky Details

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

In recent weeks, approximately 700 private well owners in Niverville have been asked to give serious consideration to the idea of hooking up to the community's municipal water system.

With plenty of indication that the town's growth patterns will continue on their upward trajectory, and the expectation that private wells will eventually become obsolete, Niverville's council has been proactively working towards creating water infrastructure to keep up with eventual demand.

In 2023, a new \$5 million water treatment plant went online and now services a good portion of the community.

At the same time, a third well is being investigated close to New Bothwell. This will add redundancy to the other two wells from which the treatment plant draws.

With the promise of government grants that could halve the cost of water main line installation throughout the non-serviced portion of town, council has decided that now is the time to ask well owners the big question: are you ready to hook up to municipal water?

Following an informational open house held by council in early March, residents have until April 15 to complete a survey provided on the town's website.

The survey results, council says, will be the basis by which they determine buy-in.

If at least 80 percent of well owners say yes to the hookup, and provided that funding is granted, council will move forward with water main line installation.

Sweeping buy-in across all the older neighbourhoods isn't required, though.

If even a segment of the community shows strong interest in hookup for their particular block, and 80 percent of the residents on that block agree to proceed, then water hookup



could go forward on an incremental basis.

SOME RESIDENTS SAY NO

For many well owners, it's a hard sell. After all, they currently have no quarterly water fees to pay and no one restricts their water consumption in dry summers. They can top up a swimming pool and water their lawn all summer long without incurring massive bills.

As a matter of fact, apart from occasional well maintenance and repair costs, this natural resource can feel like it's basically free.

Pushback from such residents could already be seen at council's recent open house on the subject. About 300 residents showed up, many voicing resistance to the idea of hooking up to municipal water.

One well owner created an informal poll on Facebook and received 144 responses, of which 97 percent voted against making the switch.

This may not be representative of all well owners, but it's nonetheless somewhat telling.

Another resident has taken it upon herself to create a petition which she hopes will convince council to proceed only if there's 100 percent buy-in, or at least only charge residents for main line installation if

they voted in favour of it.

Jake Hiebert is the owner of Trison Repair. He's been in business for 46 years, primarily contracting in Niverville.

For most of that time, Hiebert has become well known for his expertise servicing local wells and replacing well pumps when they have broken down.

Hiebert's home on the north side of town and business on the south side of town both derive their water from private wells. He says that he won't be connecting to municipal water, even if a grant is procured.

Despite the fact that many of Niverville's private wells are more than a half-century old, Hiebert insists that he's seen very few instances where they had to be decommissioned.

More often than not, he says, well failure happens because of the pump inside the well and he's replaced a countless number of them over the years. Occasionally these pumps seize up and are impossible to remove from the well.

Even so, Hiebert has developed a way to install a new pump without removing the old one.

It may be old school thinking, he says, but it's saved people a whole lot of money and it works.

But on occasion a break can happen in the well pipe casing, in which

case the only option is to dig a new well and start over.

According to Hiebert, around \$10,000 to \$15,000 should cover the cost of a new well. In most cases, because the well is shared between multiple households, that cost is split between all of the well users.

Hiebert also feels confident that there is long-term stability in the water table. In all his years of experience, he says that water has always been found at the 25- to 26-foot depth.

"The water is not going down, and that's our measuring point. So I would say we could drill many more wells," says Hiebert. "If it all of a sudden dropped to 30 feet, now [there's a risk we might be] running out of water, but that's not the case."

As for water quality, Hiebert also says there hasn't been a lot of evidence to indicate that the local water isn't perfectly safe for consumption without chemical treatment.

Of course, that's not to say that it can't become unsafe. For this reason, Hiebert recommends regular water testing.

He puts his own wells through a shock chlorination treatment every other year or so to kill off any potential bacteria in the system.

According to Hiebert, this service would cost the average homeowner

around \$200.

"We have everything in place right now that we can take care of our own water," Hiebert says. "Why are we going to pay somebody else when we already have our water for a reasonable cost?"

ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF MUNICIPAL WATER

The Citizen reached out to Jeff Bell, a hydrogeological engineer with Friesen Drillers.

Bell and his company were strategic in assisting council in finding another water source near New Bothwell in 2016.

At the time, the sand and saline content in the aquifer beneath Niverville was causing issues for the water treatment plant due to the sheer volume of water being processed through it. It was determined that a fresher, more viable source lay to the community's east.

"It might be just fine to pump lower volumes [as with residential wells], but when we are talking of pumping larger volumes for a town, we need to go where the aquifer offers the freshest water supply," Bell said at the time.

While water volume may not be the issue faced by well owners here, other problems lurk beneath the earth's surface that most well owners may be oblivious to.

Firstly, most of Niverville's wells and well service lines are made with galvanized steel, as opposed to the PVC pipe and brass connections used today. Prior to the 1990s, Bells says, there were few standards controlling well construction.

"You notice a lot of cars from the 1970s that rusted out very quickly," Bell says. "It was the quality of the steel that they built it with. And that was also the case with well casings from the 60s, 70s, and 80s."

While galvanization works relatively well as an anti-corrosion coating on steel, when the ends of the pipes are shouldered and threaded in order to attach a connection, the galvanization treatment is removed. This makes each hookup, or connection,



ARE YOU IN THE *market?*
I'm your local real estate expert!



204.914.2522

staceyheiderealtor@gmail.com

www.StaceyHeide.com

ROYAL LEPAGE
Prime Real Estate
INDEPENDENTLY OWNED AND OPERATED

All real estate services provided by Royce Finley Personal Real Estate Corporation
Not intended to solicit properties already listed.

highly susceptible to corrosion, and thus it's a conduit for bacteria to get into the well water.

Considering there are numerous hookups in order to service numerous households, and connections every 20 feet on each of the water lines, there are a considerable number of potential breach points in just one well system.

The top eight to ten feet of soil in any community also has a fairly active bacteria content, partly due to the septic lines running in the same ground space. This increases the exposure rate for water in these lines.

The second problem with private well systems, Bell says, is that they typically aren't serviced and maintained by the homeowners to a very high standard.

Water samples should be lab-tested annually, he says, and checked for contaminants beyond just bacteria.

Regular maintenance should also include sending a camera down the lines on occasion to inspect the integrity of the casing and hookups.

Such an inspection should especially occur when the well undergoes repairs and, at the same time, the hookups should be replaced with new ones.

This is a costly procedure, though, and most contractors don't even bother to recommend it.

When bacteria is detected through a water sample test, shock chlorination is typical.

"When you have a bacterial issue in a water well, they tell you to shock chlorinate the well," Bell says. "But the bacteria got into the system somehow. Shock chlorination is just a way to deal with the water that's currently in the well, not with what could eventually leak into the well. So when you get a positive bacterial hit, you need to actually mechanically determine, through visual inspection, where the breach in the system is so you know how the bacteria got into the system. Very few people do that."

Applying shock chlorination without repairing the breach, he says, is akin to getting a diagnosis of heart failure and having your medical doctor send you home with some Advil for the pain. It's a Band-Aid solution to a much bigger problem.

"Now when you put a large number of [poorly maintained wells] in an area, you're

definitely creating a situation of high risk," continues Bell. "If one connection to a water well starts to leak and you end up with bacteria, you can get it into the aquifer and you start affecting wells [all around] because you have water wells conceivably every 50 feet."

This, he says, is why the province and municipal governments would love to steer all communities, large or small, toward municipal water treatment systems.

With the high likelihood of a bacterial breach and the potentially rapid spread of the bacteria from one well to the next, it could become a municipal nightmare to try and determine the source of the breach and how to remediate such a problem before too many people get sick.

As for other Manitoba towns of Niverville's size dealing with similar private well concerns, Bell says that Oakbank and Lorette are two that come to mind.

THE COST OF HOOKING UP

The only cost that well owners are being asked to consider immediately is that of the water main line installation.

The main lines are the water grids that would pass by everyone's front yard, winding their way through the community and ending up at the water treatment plant.

Of course, for residents to receive water from the main line they will need to hook up to it at some point through the installation of a water service line that runs from the main to their home.

Town council says that homeowners can install the service line any time after the main line is installed, whether it be immediately or many years later.

Based on information released by the town office, the cost of the main line will be calculated by multiplying the frontage feet of a property by \$101.23 per foot of frontage.

Using the example of an average sized lot with a 77-foot frontage, this comes to a total cost of almost \$7,795.

This cost includes parts and the labour to install the main line, with a 50 percent discount applied based on available grant monies.

Property owners are welcome to pay the fee in full upfront or take advantage of the town's finance options, drawing it out over 10 years with interest added.

It should be noted that all

costs provided here are subject to change, depending on fluctuating contractor and part costs when the job is finally contracted.

Well owners who choose to decline main line installation at this time should be aware that provincial grant monies may not be available down the road, in effect doubling the cost of the installation later.

As to service line installation costs, the town is leaving each property owner to their own devices to get that done if they'd like to hook up to the main.

Well owners will be required to hire contractors that are approved by the town office.

The Citizen reached out to Kas Wiens of Southwood Ventures Inc, a directional drilling company based out of Grunthal, which has done a lot of similar work in Niverville.

According to Wiens, rough costs to install a service line from the main to the home with the inclusion of a curb-stop and some basic yard restoration would come to between \$10,500 and \$17,500.

Some determining factors, he says, would be yard depth, what side of the street the water main is on, where the mechanical room is located in the house, and where the current well water enters the house.

Next comes the installation of the water meter and check valve inside the home. This service is done by the town. Costs for the parts and installation come to around \$660 plus taxes.

During the process of infrastructure installation, the town sends out an inspector who may make two or three visits to the property. Each inspection costs \$50 plus taxes.

As well, the town charges a water treatment access fee to hook up to the municipal water supply. This comes to \$2,000 for a single-family home.

Finally, a \$2,000 deposit is required by the town, which is refundable to the homeowner if town property has been restored to an acceptable manner upon the job's completion.

If you live on Fifth Avenue or own property along Niverville's Main Street, the province may require that a sleeve be installed on your water connection at your own cost. The town was unable to provide information on what that cost would be.

After a property is hooked up, it would be remiss not to discuss the quarterly costs one would pay for municipal water going forward.

Each quarterly water bill includes a basic water service fee of \$7.37. After that, the costs are calculated based on consumption. The minimum water charge of \$33.54 covers the first 3,000 gallons of water used. After that, \$11.18 is charged for every 1,000 gallons over.

On average, for a four-person household, the water bill might range anywhere between \$65 and \$180 every three months, depending on consumption.

WHY MUNICIPAL TAXES CAN'T PAY FOR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

According to Eric King, CAO for the Town of Niverville, the Municipal Act, via the Public Utilities Board, prevents municipalities from using tax dollars to pay for anything related to water or sewer utilities.

Neither is the town authorized to provide municipal grant funding toward a utility. These projects must be financially carried by the water or sewer rate payers.

So the new \$5 million water treatment plant is being funded solely by those who receive treated water.

That is why well owners must be solely responsible to cover the costs of water infrastructure servicing their properties.

"So the province has granted \$3 million to the project. Now it is up to the affected property [owners] to cover the other 50 percent," says King. "The grant [being offered] is technically to the public utility—water, in this case—and even more specific to the project, so we cannot use it elsewhere."

In the end, King reminds local well owners that council is not attempting to put any undue pressure on them. They are here simply to supply the facts so well owners can make an informed decision on their own.

"If the public wishes to have council decline the grant from the province and maintain the status quo, then that is the direction council would proceed with," King says. "The town has provided the public with the pros and cons... that they believe best represents their interests, both now and into the future."



autopac | ACCREDITED
A Manitoba Public Insurance product



George Dyck
George Dyck & Son

311 highway | Box 433, Niverville, Manitoba R0A 1E0

PHONE: 204-388-4870
EMAIL: geodyck@hotmail.com

Quality & reliable service. Over 10,000 windshields installed.

Some Things are Best Left to the Professionals!



Suppliers and installers of complete insulation packages

performance-insulation.ca
204-408-3310

FREE ESTIMATES

- Attic Blow in
- Spray foam
- BIBS – High Performance Insulation System
- Wall insulation



MEET AND MASSAGE

AT NIVERVILLE FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC



Friday April 19, 2024
12:30-3PM

Walk in Event!
snacks and chair massages
free or donation to charity

Email Stacey to book a full massage
stacey.speers@gmail.com





Graydon

VETERINARY CORPORATION

Drs Venessa Graydon & Julia Joshi

PROUDLY SERVING THE AREA SINCE 2009

St. Pierre: 204-433-7956
Vita: 204-425-3264

www.graydonvet.com



New stories published daily!

The **Citizen**

www.nivervillecitizen.com



COMMUNITY NOTICE

ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Each year, CN is required to manage vegetation on its right-of-way. Managing this vegetation contributes to mitigating fire risks and enhances the efficiency of inspection of track infrastructure.

To ensure safe railway operations, the annual vegetation management program will be carried out on CN rail lines in the province of Manitoba. A certified applicator (Davey Tree Expert Company Ltd., 1-800-465-6367) will apply herbicides on and around the railway tracks (primarily along the 24-foot graveled area/ballast). Product requirements for setbacks in the vicinity of dwellings, aquatic environments and municipal water supplies will be met. The names of the products are Arsenal, Detail, Esplanade, Telar, Navius, Credit Xtreme, VP480, Vision Max, Overdrive, Clearview, Torpedo, Payload, Gateway and Hasten.

CN only uses herbicides that have been approved for use in Canada and in the province within which they are applied. The program will take place from May to October 2024.

Any person may, within 15 days from today, send a written submission regarding the control program or register their written objection to the use of pesticide next to their property to:

Manitoba Environment and Climate Change, Environmental Approvals Branch, Box 35, 14 Fultz Boulevard, Winnipeg MB R3Y 0L6

Visit www.cn.ca/vegetation for more information or to make an inquiry, contact the CN Public Inquiry Line at contact@cn.ca or 1-888-888-5909.

CN.CA

HSD Board Raises Education Taxes and Staffing Levels

By **Brenda Sawatzky**

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

The Hanover School Division's board of trustees has approved the 2024-25 budget and the overall situation is looking more optimistic than it was one year ago.

Due to a funding shortfall and tax freeze under the previous PC government, the HSD board felt it necessary to cut a variety of services and programming, as well as the equivalent of 10.5 full-time teaching staff.

This year, thanks to the promise of additional funding from the NDP government and a nominal increase in the education tax levy, the board says that 8.5 of those full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers will be reinstated.

As well, an additional 16.8 FTE teachers will be hired due to anticipated enrolment growth next fall.

Enrollment in September is

expected to increase by nearly 400 students, which equates to five percent of the overall student population.

The new budget was made possible, in part, by a 6.2 percent increase in provincial funding over last year. This accounts for an additional \$4,026,249 in the school division's coffers.

To supplement, the board is announcing an increase in the school mill rate, taking it from 11.99 to 12.74. This reflects an education tax levy increase of 6.25 percent.

To understand how that may reflect on a homeowner's property taxes this fall, the HSD board provides an example of a property assessed at \$285,000. At this assessment level, homeowners will experience an increase of \$50 on their tax bill after the 50 percent provincial government rebate has been received.

This year marks the first time since 2017 that school

divisions in Manitoba have been granted the authority to raise their own divisional mill rates to help meet budget demands.

For HSD, the tax hike will help answer the issues of enrollment increases, negotiated salary adjustments, and increases they've seen to some of their fixed costs, such as utilities.

The two revenue streams will provide the HSD board with a total revenue of just over \$132 million.

With \$12 million required to service debt in the division, this leaves the board with almost \$120 million in operating revenue to allocate.

"The Hanover School Division strives to provide the best education possible for all children in our care," an HSD press release states. "The 2024-25 school year budget reflects a mindful approach to the impact of local taxation while balancing the educational needs of school communities."



Red River

OFFICIAL NOTICE

86TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

of Red River Cooperative Ltd.

THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2024

VICTORIA INN

1808 Wellington Avenue, Centennial Room 8

Registration: 5:30-6:45pm

Meeting: 7:00-9:00pm

ATTEND • ASK • SHARE

EVERY MEMBER IS WELCOME!

All members registered are entered to win a prize draw.

Refreshments will be provided.



Tortuga Smokehouse and Whitetail Meadow Join Forces

By **Brenda Sawatzky**

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

If one thing can be said of the magnificent red barn that beckons from the corner of Highways 311 and 200, it's that exciting new things are always happening there.

In recent months, Whitetail Meadow has expanded its offerings to cater to a broader demographic. No longer just a wedding venue, the company now includes the Whitetail Café and Gift Shop.

The restaurant's menu is expanding to include the savoury award-winning barbecued meats that Tortuga Smokehouse has become known for: slow-roasted ribs, prime rib, pulled pork, brisket, and chicken—all made in house.

Niverville resident Adrian Bruce is the master chef and founder of Tortuga Smokehouse.

Bruce has been barbecuing on a competitive scale for the better part of ten years. Last year, he and his

team were dubbed grand champions at the Manitoba barbecue championship.

Bruce's company also offers catering services for events of any size. Last year, at one event alone, he and his team served more than 2,000 guests.

"We come from the competitive catering world," says Bruce. "The sit-down [dining] is still a space we have to grow into. But it'll be hardcore barbecue. No burgers and fries. You could not get any more genuine barbecue than what we'll serve at [Whitetail]."

Bruce's specialties go beyond fall-off-the-bone meats, though. Some of his popular side dishes include mac and cheese, baked beans, coleslaw, and Mexican corn.

The from-scratch model he applies to his meats also applies to his side dishes and meat rubs, as well as one of his more unique creations, the barbecue parfait.

Like it sounds, the parfait



Adrian Bruce and David Neufeld at Whitetail Meadow. **BRENDA SAWATZKY**

is a savoury layering of baked beans, brisket, mac and cheese, pulled pork, coleslaw, and barbecue sauce served in a 20-ounce cup. On the menu at the Whitetail Café grand opening in early March, it was a popular option.

David and Jen Neufeld are the proprietors of the Whitetail Café and Gift Shop.

David says they were pleased at the number of people who poured in on opening weekend, some to dine and others to browse the wide array of items in

the shop.

For the time being, the café and gift shop are open from Wednesday to Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Sundays from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

"What we're trying to do is tiptoe into the market and find where our place is going to be," says Neufeld. "Once we gauge demand, then maybe we'll expand our hours."

Neufeld, too, is a foodie who knows his way around a commercial kitchen. At present, the menu primarily

consists of homemade soups, artisanal sandwiches, and a variety of salads.

Beginning this spring, the Tortuga barbecue experience will be offered on weekends with the anticipation of expanding to weekdays if demand requires. The duo also anticipates offering barbecue dinners on special occasions like Mother's and Father's Day.

"This venue is just such a genuine fit [for us]," Bruce says. "The reason the relationship [with Whitetail] was appealing to me is that the Neufeld family, the ownership group, have [garnered] great respect within the community. But also, there's parallels in terms of standards of service, quality food, and presentation. That's very important to us, too."

Bruce, who was working alongside Neufeld in the kitchen on opening weekend, says he took the time to appreciate the guests who were coming and going from the café and gift shop

that day.

What intrigued him was the fact that, after their arrival, people were in no hurry to leave. The ambience is such that people are enticed to linger and enjoy each other's company.

For Neufeld, the idea to include Tortuga Smokehouse in the café partnership stemmed from the Black Earth barbecues and barbecue supply line that Whitetail is now a dealer in.

And since there are few restaurants in the region that specialize in southern-style barbecue, it gives diners from around the southeast one more reason to make the drive to Whitetail Meadow.

"We sell ourselves as a destination location," Neufeld says. "We want people to come in for an ice cream cone or a sandwich, maybe find an interesting book or a gift item. And maybe they'll walk our grounds. We've got 30 acres with miles of paths that cut through our woods here."



Affordable luxury bungalows nestled adjacent to the first hole of Niverville's exclusive Old Drovers Run golf course.



FAIRWAY
DRIVE

E S T A T E S

For more information or to book a viewing, visit

www.fairwaydriveestates.ca

or contact Nick Bergmann, RE/MAX One Group, 204-230-6762

SRSD Board Puts End to KAP and Initiates Fee for Enhanced Bussing

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

On Tuesday, February 27, Seine River School Division (SRSD) trustees voted in favour of eliminating the Kids at Play (KAP) program for Kindergarten age children as of June 30, 2024.

At the same time, SRSD's 2024-25 school year will no longer see division-funded bussing for Kindergarten to Grade Four students living within 0.8 to 1.6 kilometres of their school.

Instead families will be able to opt-in according to a fee-for-service model.

Both the KAP and short-haul bussing initiatives receive no provincial funding. As programs deemed worthy by the SRSD in years past, they've been offered to parents at no cost, paid for out of divisional coffers.

These final decisions weren't made lightly. Instead they resulted from hours of impassioned debate.

Amanda Senkowski, SRSD's chief financial officer, presented stats to the board regarding the short-haul bussing initiative.

Currently, there are 365 students in the division using the enhanced bussing service at no cost. They represent about 300 households in total.

Based on averages, Senkowski said that the approximate cost savings would come to \$148,000 if the program were defunded.

If the board should decide to implement a cost recovery program to compensate, a fee of \$410 per student would be prudent. Senkowski suggested that another avenue would be to simply charge parents an average cost of \$500 per household, regardless of the number of students in that home using the enhanced bus service.

Currently, she says there are only four other school divisions in the province that implement a fee-for-service model for enhanced bussing.

Even so, Senkowski recommended to offer this service only to families who can be picked up on the first bus run, thus eliminating second runs where the majority of excess costs are incurred.

"What we're seeing at schools is, because we're doing double runs, there's students that are getting to school quite a bit earlier than school startup," Senkowski said. "So we're also seeing an increase in some wages because we're having staff start earlier to make sure that these children are being supervised."

Board chairperson Wendy Bloomfield put forward a motion to provide a fee-for-service model of \$500 per household, or \$50 per month, to parents interested in using this service.

She compared this fee to that of the Louis Riel School Division, where households pay around \$700 for the same service.

"This would equate to a potential cost recovery revenue source for SRSD of \$150,000," Bloomfield said. "Whereas SRSD is currently facing significant financial challenges in a potential \$5 million deficit, we can no longer continue bussing students at no cost."

Trustee Robert Rivard provided a counterargument, suggesting that it's overly optimistic to project a 100 percent buy-in from parents. Realistically, he believed 50 percent would be more likely.

In the end, though, he said that keeping this service active for even half of the students may be enough to require a second bus run.

To eliminate the service altogether could be the most cost-effective tactic in the long run.

Two other trustees, Gary Nelson and Warren Reavely, spoke in support of Bloomfield's motion, suggesting that a one-year trial would provide better insight into the program's viability.

Put to a vote, the motion to provide fee-for-service short-haul bussing was approved.

Moving into discussion on the KAP program, Senkowski informed the board that the cost to run the program came to \$820,500, consisting primarily of salaries and benefits.

At present, the program runs as an adjunct to Kindergarten programming and benefits approximately 350 students in the division.

Bloomfield once again initiated a motion, this time to discontinue it indefinitely unless the provincial

government decides to provide full funding.

Trustee Marinus Van Osch jumped in, reviewing the reasons that he hoped the board would not entertain discussion on a fee-for-service option.

"The people that this was put into place for, years back, were the economically disadvantaged," Van Osch said. "They needed help. It started off with [just a few] schools and then it evolved into doing it across the division. I'm just going to say it because everyone else wants to avoid it. This is a great babysitting service. There's a whole lot of people who have come right out and said, 'Where am I going to find daycare?' That's not our responsibility."

To continue to employ educators for the KAP program, he continued, will result in fewer teachers available for Kindergarten to Grade Four, thus increasing class sizes.

Rivard agreed, suggesting that the province has indicated a desire to see SRSD's deficit dealt with within a three-year period and, in

order to do that, staffing cuts may be inevitable.

"The proposal that we talked about was to go to 325 teachers, and that would cause larger class sizes than what we should have," Rivard said. "To get to 333 teachers, which is a number that's still less than what we currently have in the division, it would be workable. The only way we can get to that is to cut the KAP program."

As for parents with kids entering Kindergarten next fall, Rivard said that now would be a good time to ensure that they let their daycare provider know they won't be opting out in fall.

Nelson interjected, suggesting a third option which he feels makes the most sense: to increase the property tax mill rate and fund the KAP program fully, just as before.

He argued that the KAP program has merit far beyond a babysitting service, as it has been recognized as a valuable jumpstart program for kids entering the school system.

In fact, he added, some parents have enrolled their children into

SRSD schools specifically because of the KAP program.

"The only viable way to continue this program is to do what we did in the first place," Nelson said. "We're going to go to our ratepayers to pay for it. And I have no issue with that. From the first day I ran as a school trustee, I said, 'If you're voting for me to lower your taxes, vote for somebody else.'"

In answer to the question of how the KAP program would affect the mill rate, Senkowski indicated that a 0.35 percent increase would be needed.

For Van Osch, KAP is only one of many factors that would invariably drive the mill rate higher in the near future.

"In my view, from what I'm reading in the papers nowadays, we will probably come in with one of the highest tax rates," Van Osch said. "I don't think that's acceptable. This financial fiasco is a result of past decisions. Now it's time to eat crow."

After calling for a vote to discontinue the KAP program, the motion was carried by the majority.

SRSD Board Casts Tight Vote on Education Tax Hike

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

For the Seine River School Division (SRSD), the question of whether to raise school taxes for the 2024-25 school year was never a question.

In the face of a nearly half-billion-dollar deficit, the big decision for this board is how much to raise them.

At a public meeting held on March 12, the board voted 5-4 in favour of a school mill rate increase of 6.38 percent in the first year and 7.6 percent in the second year.

For the average homeowner with a property assessed at \$350,000, this means an increase to their tax bill of \$120.96 in year one and \$153.06 in year two.

Thanks to a recent change in provincial government, school divisions across the province have been given autonomy once again

to adjust school mill rates to help them better meet their budgets.

For SRSD and other boards, this is a welcome change.

When asked about the alternatives to the proposed tax increase, Amanda Senkowski, the division's chief financial officer, laid them on the table.

The board could choose to make even deeper cuts to staff and programming in year one. Rolling these cutbacks into years two and three and increasing revenue streams would be another alternative. Finally, she said, the plan to eliminate the budget could be stretched out over more than three years.

According to trustee Marinus Van Osh, this proposed tax increase, while not massive, will be enough to bring the deficit down to zero in three years as long as it's accompanied by cuts to some programs and services.

"I just feel we need to get this over with," Van Osch said. "Do the cuts and start moving on on a more positive path in the upcoming couple of years. I don't want us to be looking at cuts in years two and three."

Another trustee, Gary Nelson, held firm in his position that the division could withstand a much greater tax increase, which would reduce the need to make severe cuts to the operational budget.

In order to make that feasible, Senkowski said, it would require a 6.82 percent increase in year one and 8.1 percent in year two.

Voting in favour of the education tax increase as originally proposed were trustees Marinus Van Osch, Robert Rivard, Christine Roskos, Lise Verrier, and Warren Reavely. Standing opposed were trustees Theresa Bergson, Wendy Bloomfield, Gary Nelson, and Vicky Kiansky.

Manitoba Makers Market

SATURDAY, MAY 11 | 10AM - 3PM

NIVERVILLE HERITAGE CENTRE | ADMISSION: MONETARY DONATION

PRESENTED BY:



NIVERVILLE HERITAGE CENTRE

A gathering place for the entire community

Exclusive show for handmade items

ENTERTAINMENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

APRIL 12, 2024

TICKETS
ON SALE NOW

BUY ONLINE | SAVE 50%

June 7 & 8, 2024

NIVERVILLE
FAIR

nivervillefair.com

IN BRIEF



The staff of ONE Insurance in Niverville.

MARNEY MEREL

Local Branches Rebrand in Insurance Merger

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

BSI Insurance has merged with ONE Insurance Group. The familiar BSI signs in Niverville, Ste. Agathe, and St. Pierre may be changing, but customers of these insurance providers need not take any steps to protect or change their policies.

Since the 1960s, BSI Insurance has served Manitobans by providing insurance, but they've also issued passport photos and marriage licences.

David Robin, the company's manager of marketing and communications, says that ONE Insurance understands that these services are essential for their clients and they are committed to making the transition process from BSI to ONE as seamless as possible.

They will not be closing any branches or letting go any employees.

"For BSI customers, the merger may bring some changes, but the focus remains on providing excellent service and support," says Robin. "While there may be adjustments in processes and systems, the commitment to meeting the insurance needs of clients remains unchanged. No branches are closing. Our branch network is one of our strongest assets. We are honoured to serve our customers where they live

and aim to continue to do so. We have deep roots in the communities we serve and we aim to keep those."

ONE Insurance has been active in Manitoba for 70 years. As of the merger with BSI, they now have 28 branches: four in Winnipeg and the rest in neighbouring communities. ONE Insurance Group is now the largest Manitoba-owned brokerage.

They also intend to continue the charitable arm of BSI, known as the Because We Care (BWC) Initiative.

"The commitment to giving back to communities remains a priority, reflecting the values of both companies," Robin says. "We plan to donate \$25,000 in 2024 to local initiatives through the BWC program."

Robin assures current and future customers that the merger won't change either company's dedication to serving Manitobans with integrity and expertise.

"Clients can expect continued personalized service and access to a comprehensive range of insurance options. The combined strengths of both companies create a robust platform for meeting the evolving needs of clients across the province."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The websites of BSI and ONE have merged and can now be found at www.oneinsurance.ca.



DEPOSITPHOTOS

A Review of Niverville's Open Fires and Fireworks Bylaws

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

In the coming weeks, as residents begin to get outside to enjoy their backyard spaces, Niverville's town council wants to make sure everyone is doing it safely.

Niverville's Fire Prevention and Emergency Service bylaws have been under review, especially those that involve open fires, fireworks, and the use of sky lanterns.

FIREWORKS

With warmer weather comes ideal conditions for outdoor celebrations of all kinds. For many, fireworks and sky lanterns (or Chinese lanterns) are a great way to mark an occasion.

Before you head to the store to stock up on Roman Candles, Skyrockets, and Aerial Repeaters, though, you'll want to know what the local restrictions are—that is, if you

hope to avoid a fine.

First and foremost, a fireworks display permit must be obtained from the town office in advance of their use. The permit applicant must be at least 18 years of age and will need to be the person who will be setting off the fireworks or the owner of the property on which the fireworks display will be set up.

Permits will be issued only to pyrotechnic professionals if the fireworks display is considered high hazard.

The town has the right to require proof of insurance before issuing a permit to either a resident or pyrotechnic expert. The insurance, if required, would need to be in an amount sufficient enough to provide reasonable coverage in the case of accidental harm resulting from the fireworks display.

Fireworks are strictly prohibited on or near any highway, street, or lane. For setup on public property, approval

must first be granted by the town office.

All fireworks displays must be set up in such a way as to ensure the safety of people and property. Efforts should be made to keep spectators at a safe distance and suitable fire extinguishers must be close at hand.

After the display, unused fireworks must be removed from the site and safely disposed of.

The use of sky lanterns is strictly prohibited in town limits.

OPEN FIRES AND FIREPITS

It's almost time to pull out the rakes and lawn equipment. If you're inclined to take a match to all that excess organic matter, town bylaws have something to say about that.

In Niverville, the burning of leaves, garden refuse, and hedge clippings on private property is permitted only twice per year, during the spring and fall seasons, and

only within an approved burn receptacle.

Controlled burning can take place between Monday and Saturday from 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. during those periods.

Firepits are mostly restricted to backyard use with the exception of the driveway if it's located at least ten feet from any combustible items. Portable firepits are not allowed for use in outbuildings or garages.

Firepits must be at least four inches high but extend no more than two feet above the surrounding grade. A supply of water or sand must be kept nearby to extinguish the fire before walking away.

Users are expected to be good neighbours, ensuring that any smoke resulting from the fire doesn't cause a nuisance in the neighbourhood or to traffic on nearby streets.

The use of burn barrels and burning of garbage is prohibited.



Niverville
Recreation & Wellness



The Spring Leisure Guide is Here!

Grab your copy in person at the CRRC or online at nivillerec.ca

New Development Focuses on Energy Efficiency

By Sara Beth Dacombe

sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

According to locally owned Prairie Sky Properties, Niverville's newest residential development is underway.

Called Fairway Drive Estates, owner Jeremy Braun says that the development will see the construction of 27 multifamily bungalows on Fairway Drive in Niverville.

Located at the west side of town, south of Highway 311, Fairway Drive Estates will back onto the Old Drovers Run golf course, offering panoramic views of the course and an assurance of no future construction behind the homes.

Braun notes that it is a strategic location close to dining establishments, quaint coffee shops, and walking trails. There's the added convenience of being a five-minute stroll from the CRRC.

According to Prairie Sky, building design on the units aims to achieve "affordable luxury bungalows, thoughtfully designed to embody modern elegance and constructed with the highest standards of craftsmanship."

The open-concept residences will span 1,320 square feet, featuring a generously sized master bedroom with ensuite and walk-in closet, a secondary bedroom, two bathrooms, a spacious two-car garage, large driveways, and meticulously landscaped, fenced-in yards. Each residence is complemented by a substantial covered back porch.

Starting at \$479,900, Braun says what is really unique about the project is that they've focused on energy efficiency in the design build.



A rendering of the new homes being developed at Fairway Drive Estates.

"We are building homes that are 30 percent better in terms of energy efficiency, modelled by Efficiency Manitoba," says Braun. "We're installing air source heat pumps in these homes. This pump essentially uses the existing outdoor air to heat and cool a home, which is far less costly to operate than a standard air conditioner."

It was important for Prairie Sky to rough in electrical hookups for future electric vehicles. Other energy-efficient features will include R60 attic insulation, R24 exterior wall insulation, tri-pane windows, and an ICF foundation.

Over the years, energy efficiency in residential home construction has become a crucial part of the vision for Prairie Sky Properties. The family-owned company began with Andrew Braun, who worked in the construction business in the early 1960s.

"They primarily specialized in the agriculture industry, building barns mostly, and secondarily they built homes," says Braun. "My dad eventually left construction and had other pursuits. He became a teacher, where he taught in Niverville for years. He then became a small business owner and eventually

started a building company with me back in the early 2000s. Later, in 2014, my oldest brother Colan joined us and we formed Prairie Sky Properties. Since then we've grown quite quickly."

While Andrew Braun has now retired, Prairie Sky has evolved to specialize in the construction of homes, condos, and some commercial ventures. But when they were just starting out, it didn't take long before the business found its niche building affordable living duplexes, four-plexes, and other multifamily projects in Niverville and St. Pierre. "We've now built approximately

150 residences over the past decade or so, and we have also built some commercial projects in Niverville."

When Braun took over the family business, he knew he would be calling Niverville home for a very long time.

"I was born in Niverville and moved very young to Winnipeg. [Then we] moved back to Niverville in my twenties, raised our kids here, and we want to continue to be involved in this growing community."

He realized he had found purpose in work when he knew they were building quality, energy-efficient homes that he himself would be proud to live in.

"We're a company that is committed to invest long-term in Niverville. Our family, including kids, live in this community and we want to continue to build quality homes that residents can trust."

Braun would love to see more families of all ages come to live in Niverville.

"While we feel this development could work for many age groups, so far it seems that the 55-plus crowd are showing the most interest," he says. "The community is really perfect for someone who is downsizing their current home and wants the amenities and peaceful lifestyle of living on a golf course."

Prairie Sky expects a show home in Fairway Drive Estates to be completed for the end of May 2024 and welcomes people to come visit and see this new project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.fairwaydriveestates.ca



KITCHEN SUITE SAVINGS EVENT
MARCH 28 - MAY 1, 2024

Buy any 2 qualifying kitchen appliances,

SAVE \$150*

Buy any 3+ qualifying kitchen appliances,

SAVE \$300*



See sales associate for details and list of qualifying models.

wiens
FURNITURE & APPLIANCES

132 MAIN STREET
NIVERVILLE, MANITOBA

PHONE: 204-388-4149
sales@wiensfurniture.ca

TOLL FREE: 888-33-WIENS
www.wiensfurniture.ca

Receive instant savings of \$150 (before taxes) when you purchase two (2) qualifying Whirlpool® Kitchen or Maytag® Kitchen appliances or instant savings of \$300 (before taxes) when you purchase three (3) or more qualifying Whirlpool® Kitchen or Maytag® Kitchen appliances. Multiple appliance purchase of a combination of qualifying Whirlpool® Kitchen or Maytag® Kitchen Appliances is also eligible to receive instant savings. Multiple purchases must be made at the same time from the same participating authorized Canadian Whirlpool® Kitchen or Maytag® dealer. Qualifying purchases must be made from March 28th - May 1st, 2024. Open to Canadian residents only. Offer cannot be combined with any other Whirlpool® Kitchen or Maytag® appliances offer. Offer is not available to second channel, dealers, builders or contractors. All models may not be available at all dealers. No substitute models qualify. Dealer prices may vary. Dealer alone has sole discretion to set retail prices. Offer excludes Under Counter Vents, Countertop Microwaves, discontinued and second channel models. *TM © 2024. Used under license in Canada. All rights reserved.

Nighthawks Earn Playoff Berth for Second Straight Season

By Ty Dilello

tdilello@nivervillecitizen.com

In the last month of their second season, the Niverville Nighthawks made a big push to secure the fourth and final playoff spot in the MJHL's East Division. This was a big accomplishment for the club, which is looking to make playoff hockey an annual tradition.

In the first round, however, the team ran into the first-place Steinbach Pistons—and couldn't break through.

FEBRUARY 27 (WINNIPEG BLUES, AWAY)

The Nighthawks won their second straight game after a big 5-2 victory over the Winnipeg Blues on the road.

After going down 1-0 early, Niverville's offence came alive late in the first period with goals from Ty Kennett and Josh Danis.

In the second period, the Blues got one back to tie the score.

Niverville then pulled away in the third period with a trio of goals as Brendan Bottem, Kaycee Coyle, and Michael Debrito each found the back of the net.

"Sticking with it and staying with the plan was important tonight," said head coach Dwight Hirst. "And also learning to not let teams deviate you from the game plan. We're also coming together as a group and not falling away from each other. Two short-handed goals and one power play goal helps as well!"

Hirst is thrilled that the Nighthawks are starting to come out of this slump and look like a better team as of late.

"I've been pleased with our last three games," he said. "The [previous] loss in Dauphin, we had the compete, and that carried into our last two wins. Again, I may sound like a broken record, but the neutral zone will control your game, and that's been our strength as of late."

MARCH 1 (WINNIPEG BLUES, AWAY)

The Nighthawks made it three wins in a row after a crucial 5-3 victory over the Winnipeg Blues. It was a fairly even game throughout, as the two teams played to a scoreless first period.

The floodgates opened in the second period as Niverville and Winnipeg traded a pair of goals to knot the game at two goals apiece.

In the third period, the teams



Raident LeGall in net for the Nighthawks.

YOUR PICTURES HERE

again traded goals to make it 3-3 with only a few minutes remaining.

Nighthawks' rookie Nathan Brown took the game over from there with a pair of goals, lifting Niverville to a 5-3 victory.

Alex Walicki, Bottom, and Bryce Warkentine had the other Nighthawks tallies on the evening while Raident LeGall stopped 28 shots in goal.

"It was good to see the balance we can have through a lineup in our scoring tonight," said Hirst. "It might have to be a different guy on different nights, but it's the recipe for winning. Confidence is a big thing to have at this time of the year, as having confidence in your game is crucial on this push to the playoffs."

The next evening, they would come up against perennial nemesis: the first-place Steinbach Pistons.

"We're looking forward to the game with Steinbach and continuing on what we have been building here in the last couple of weeks," said Hirst. "It's about recognizing your strengths as a team/player and learning to implement what's needed throughout the waves of a game."

MARCH 2 (STEINBACH PISTONS, AWAY)

The Nighthawks came back down to earth on Saturday evening on the road, losing 5-1 to the Pistons.

Despite the outcome, the Nighthawks were able to stick with Steinbach for much of the night. Steinbach scored a couple of late first period goals to lead 2-0, but Adam Vigfusson

got one back for Niverville midway through the second frame.

In the third period, Steinbach showed why they are the league's best team this season by pulling away with a trio of goals.

The Nighthawks can take some positives from managing to hang in with the league's best team for two periods, according to Hirst.

"We play a style that's best for us, as opposed to playing their game," he said. "We can find ways from there to adjust and compete in those situations. When you have a game plan to execute, it's crucial. We've got to stay the course. When you don't do what's planned or needed, then the outcome isn't going to be what you want."

In other Nighthawks news, Kaycee Coyle was recently named a second team all-star for the MJHL's 2023-24 season.

Brown and LeGall were named rookie team all-stars.

Brown was also named the MJHL's Rookie of the Month for February, as he notched 11 points in 10 games.

MARCH 5 (WAYWAYSEECAPPO WOLVERINES, AWAY)

The Nighthawks had their best win of the 2024 calendar year when they defeated the Waywayseecappo Wolverines by a 6-1 score on the road on Tuesday night.

The Nighthawks dominated this game from start to finish. They scored once in the first period, twice in the second period, and three times in the third period.

Michael Tanchak led the way

with a pair of goals, while Carter Spirig, Kennett, Warkentine, and Brett Tataryn had the other tallies for Niverville.

"It was the best team effort from puck drop to the final whistle since I've been here," said Hirst. "Playing below it in our end and playing above it in their end. We pushed the pace to give no space for them tonight and played a great team speed type of game. It's a great thing, as our success as a team is building and trending in the right direction with our habits and details. Habits always dictate your outcome."

The Nighthawks were looking forward to returning to the home rink following a long string of matches on the road.

"Friday night at home is the game that we have a chance to keep things moving in the right direction," said Hirst. "It's an exciting time of the year to get things going together as a team and keep coming together as we have in the last week and a half."

MARCH 8 (SELKIRK STEELERS, HOME)

The Nighthawks lost a tough one by a 1-0 score to the Selkirk Steelers on Friday night at the CRRC. It was a defensive struggle for both teams, with neither club able to capitalize on the contest's countless power plays.

The teams played to a scoreless first period before Selkirk got one past goaltender LeGall midway through the second frame.

Niverville couldn't score the rest of the way.

"It was a playoff-type game," said Hirst. "It was our own game that prevented us from getting on the scoreboard, but Selkirk acted like their season was on the line and we walked the line."

With their win, the Steelers moved to just one point back of the Nighthawks for the final playoff spot in the MJHL with just three regular season games remaining.

"To get our offence going again, we need to get to the hard areas of the ice and know that it's going to be tough in those areas," said Hirst.

MARCH 9 (WINNIPEG FREEZE, AWAY)

The Nighthawks earned a massive 6-1 win over the Winnipeg Freeze on Saturday evening to boost their playoff chances.

Niverville found its offence early in the game, scoring five minutes into the contest and never looking back. They hit the back of the net three times in the first period, twice in the second period, and once in the third period as they rolled to victory.

Bottem led the offensive charge for the Nighthawks with a hat trick, while Tanchak, Danis, and Debrito had the other goals.

"I felt good tonight," said Bottem. "It was nice to get on the scoreboard after a tough game last night."

"I liked our response and how quick we can have a response after a tough loss the night prior," added Hirst. "It was very important to get in the driver's seat early and dictate our game with some early goals."

The next game would really test the team's mettle, going up against the Virden Oil Capitals, a high-octane squad at the top of the West Division standings.

"I think we have been off to some better starts lately," said Bottem. "It's definitely nice not having to chase the game. We have to keep playing well the rest of the way because there is no room for error anymore."

MARCH 15 (VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS, AWAY)

The Nighthawks put together a massive performance on Friday evening on the road, winning 2-0 over Virden.

It was a tight-checking, low-scoring affair all night long for both clubs.

Tataryn opened the scoring just two minutes into the contest, and it would serve as the game-winner.

Bottem added another tally for the Nighthawks late in the second period.

Raident LeGall stopped 46 shots in

the Nighthawks' goal for the shutout. "We had a strong start to the game, did well on the faceoff dots tonight, and didn't break on the times we were under pressure," said Hirst.

He was quick to give credit to his netminder, who put in an outstanding performance.

"It was a first star quality night for Raiden and the best I've seen him play since I've been here," he said. "It was his compete and his composure that helped fuel the win tonight. When he plays like he did tonight, it's a fountain of confidence for our group. When you know you have a goalie that plays with that compete and confidence, it's a blank page for us."

The win put the Nighthawks in the driver's seat with just one game remaining on the regular season schedule. If Niverville could earn a single point in the upcoming contest against Swan Valley, they would clinch the playoffs.

"We control our destiny," said Hirst. "Worrying about what Selkirk does is not on our minds. We are not looking in the rearview mirror right now."

MARCH 16 (SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDEERS, HOME)

The Nighthawks earned their tickets to the postseason for the second straight year after a convincing 5-1 victory over the Swan Valley Stampedeers on the final night of the regular season.

With the win, the Nighthawks finished the campaign in fourth place in the MJHL's East Division with a record of 30-24-4.

Amidst this pressure, the Nighthawks didn't show any strain, dominating Swan Valley from start to finish. After the Stampedeers scored early, the Nighthawks got two back in the later stages of the first period.

In the second period, the Nighthawks exploded with a trio of goals to jump out to a 5-1 lead, and that turned out to be the final score following a scoreless third period.

Ethan Kelly led the charge for Niverville with a pair of goals, while the team's other goals came from Debrito, Walicki, and Coyle.

"I was very happy with the consistency of habits, recognizing what we do well, and not being worried about what the other team does in general," said Hirst. "It was a big victory for our team, and we'll celebrate this playoff berth tonight."

Hirst felt optimistic about the team's chances versus the Steinbach Pistons in the first round.

"The playoffs are a fresh start for our team," he said. "We finished the last nine games of the year with a 7-2 record. And in the last five games, we have 19 goals for and only four against, so we've started playoff hockey already. This week in practice we are just going to prepare, prepare, prepare.

Proper preparation prevents poor performance."

ROUND ONE VS. STEINBACH

So it was that the Nighthawks entered the MJHL playoffs as massive underdogs. Besting the Pistons was always going to be a tall order.

"Building momentum is on the point of building confidence, habits, and hard work," said Hirst. "We've been trending in that direction for the last few weeks here."

"It is definitely nice to have some momentum going into the playoffs," added Bottem. "We've really dialed in our defensive zone over the last couple of weeks by letting in very few goals, so it's nice to go into playoffs playing some of our best hockey."

The playoffs are the most exciting and rewarding time of the year for any team, and the fact that the Nighthawks had made the postseason in each of their first two MJHL seasons was an accomplishment in itself.

"You play all of the regular season to get to this point, so it's exciting," said Bottem. "Playoffs always bring out the best in everyone. Every play and every shift ramps up another notch during this time of the year. It's always fun."

"Steinbach are the regular season champions this year," said Hirst. "But everything starts fresh for everyone on Friday, and both teams recognize that. We've been preparing all week, and the last few weeks, for our opportunity this Friday."

Hirst recognized that for the Nighthawks to have any chance against Steinbach, they would need to rely on out-of-this-world goaltending from rookie LeGall, who had a strong campaign and boasted a 20-14-2 record with a 2.73 goals-against average and a .920 save percentage.

"Goaltending is key for any team that wants to contend," said Hirst. "But playing our game and not getting into the style that Steinbach wants to play is the real key."

"I think it starts by locking down the defensive zone," said Bottem. "If we keep the puck out of our net, that definitely helps us out. I would say special teams play a big factor as well. If we win the special teams battle, we have a good chance to win every game. If we can do those things, then I like our chances."

MARCH 22 (STEINBACH PISTONS, AWAY)

The Pistons got the best of the Nighthawks in game one of their best-of-seven series. Niverville was able to hang with Steinbach throughout much of the contest.

The Pistons opened the scoring late in the first period and then added another tally late in the second frame. The Nighthawks got one back when Bottem scored on the power play with one second left in the second period.

"It was just a late power play at

the end of the second period," said Bottem. "It was an odd man rush. The puck kind of just ended up on my stick, and I put it in."

Niverville tied the game early in the third period, with Kennett scoring. However, just when it seemed like the Nighthawks might win, the top-seeded Pistons pulled away with a trio of goals.

LeGall was under fire all night long but was solid. The beleaguered netminder stopped 42 shots in the loss.

"We continue to show that we can fight back in any situation, and that showed again tonight," said Hirst. We played shorthanded for six minutes of the 20 in the third period, and you can't do that when you're in a tight game. Our penalty kill was great tonight, but it just doesn't leave much time to gain momentum on the offensive side of the puck."

"I like the resiliency we showed, as to be able to come back from two goals is huge," added Bottem. "I would say we just made some little mistakes. We turned over some pucks and left their guys open. If we can limit those mistakes, we will be good."

MARCH 24 (STEINBACH PISTONS, HOME)

The Pistons continued to show why they are the top team in the MJHL this season. In game two, they notched another convincing 5-2 victory over the Nighthawks.

Steinbach jumped out with a goal just a couple minutes into the contest, but Kelly then replied with a goal of his own for Niverville to tie the score late in the first period.

The Pistons took the lead just a few seconds later. They then broke up with a trio of goals in the second period to lead 5-1.

Brown got one back for Niverville in the third period, but the rest of the comeback didn't come together.

"We had a good first period," said Hirst. "We need to hit the reset button after a goal and be conscious of

our positional awareness in those shifts after getting the equalizer at 1-1. Our second period was a lull for us, as we need to play a full 60 minutes in every game, let alone a playoff game. We've got to bring it for a full game and not be complacent."

Hirst was pleased with the thunderous playoff atmosphere created by the full house of Nighthawks fans at the CRRC.

"It's always nice to play in front of a full crowd," he said. "We have to give our fans a full 60 minutes to cheer on, though, as I thought we competed for 40 of the 60 tonight... To get back into the series, we just have to take things one period at a time. And worry about what we need to do on playing a complete game in all three zones for a full 60 minutes."

MARCH 26 (STEINBACH PISTONS, AWAY)

The Nighthawks would find themselves fighting for their playoff lives after a gut-wrenching 3-2 double overtime loss to the Pistons on Tuesday night.

After a scoreless first period, the Pistons scored to take a 1-0 lead early in the second frame. From there, the Nighthawks took over, scoring a pair of goals from Debrito and Luke MacKenzie to take a 2-1 lead heading into the final period.

Steinbach's pressure eventually got to Niverville. They scored the game-tying goal with ten minutes remaining to send the contest into overtime.

Overtime provided numerous scoring chances for both teams, but the goaltenders stood tall.

Sadly, just two minutes into the second overtime period, the Nighthawks took a costly penalty and the Pistons scored on the ensuing power play.

LeGall stopped 43 shots for the Nighthawks in the loss.

"It's tough when you play a great game and come out on the wrong side of it," said Hirst. "But in the

playoffs, it's a short-term memory type of mentality. We're back at it on Thursday night at home with a boisterous crowd waiting for us. We're looking forward to it."

MARCH 28 (STEINBACH PISTONS, HOME)

With game four, the Nighthawks were eliminated from the MJHL postseason. It was another 3-2 loss, this time at the CRRC.

With their backs up against the wall, the Nighthawks came out firing. Bottem got the home club on the board with a goal just 30 seconds into the contest.

From there, Steinbach started to control the play, as they have for the entire series. The Pistons scored twice in the second half of the first period to jump out to a 2-1 lead.

Niverville got one back early in the second period when Debrito tied the game. Steinbach then scored midway through the second frame to retake the lead.

Although Niverville pushed to tie the game again, they couldn't muster another goal. The third period was scoreless and the Pistons held on to sweep the Nighthawks in four straight games.

Keegan Gordon stopped 33 shots for the Nighthawks in the loss.

"Depth and consistency was the difference this season, as they have it and we don't," said Hirst. "They've built a program that has been developed from within and we are a young franchise building in that direction."

The interim coach said that he'd enjoyed his time in Niverville greatly and hoped to stay on as coach for next season.

"It's been a great opportunity to meet a great group of players, trainers, equipment managers, management, and arena staff," he said. "Staying on as coach is a decision that the board of directors will make in the coming weeks. But I would love the opportunity to build upon our changes and the culture we built here in the last six weeks."

Nighthawks Team Awards

By Ty Dilello

✉ tdilello@nivervillecitizen.com

The 2023-24 Nighthawks Team Awards were presented on Saturday, March 16 at the club's last regular season home game.

First, the team's departing 20-year-olds were recognized: Alex Walicki, Michael Debrito, Colin Whaley, Josh Danis, Brendan Bottom, Michael Tanchak (assistant captain), and Brett Tataryn (captain).

The year's best defenceman award went to Kaycee Coyle (assistant captain), whereas the best forward was pegged as Michael Debrito.

The most outstanding first-year player (sponsored by Eskimo Point Lumber Supply) turned out to be a tie between Raiden LeGall and Nathan Brown.

The Fan Favourite Award (sponsored by Lansard Bros Roofing Ltd.) was Ty Kennett.

The Coaches' Choice Award was

Colin Whaley.

The Humanitarian Award (sponsored by the Kleyson family) was Carter Spirig.

The Three Stars Award (sponsored by Pillar Wealth Management) went to Raiden LeGall.

The year's Most Valuable Player (sponsored by Clarence and Ruth Braun) was Kaycee Coyle.

The Volunteer of the Year (sponsored by the Kleyson family) was Barry Nacci, who works in the area of food and beverage.



THANK YOU

**2024/2025 SEASON TICKETS
NOW AVAILABLE**

**SCAN HERE
TO PURCHASE
TICKETS**





THANK YOU 2023/2024 SPONSORS!



If you are interested in sponsoring the 2024/2025 season please email michael.salonius@mjhnighthawks.ca for more info



VOLUNTEERS OF THE MONTH



John & Liesa



Cal

SPONSORED BY



Family Restaurant & Lounge



Ron & Pearl



Kevin Dunn
Nighthawks Announcer

Sports & Recreation

Local Athlete Wins at Special Olympics

By Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

Niverville resident Terrylinn Johnson won four medals in speedskating at the Special Olympics Canada Winter Games held in Calgary on February 27–March 2. This is only the latest of Johnson's accomplishments in her long history of competitive athletics, spanning back to the 1990s.

Her hard work and dedication landed her gold medals in both the 500- and 1,000-metre races, silver in the 333-metre, and bronze in the 777-metre.

Johnson has also competed in cross-country skiing and figure skating. When winter sports aren't in season, she has branched out to explore summer sports, such as track and field.

FINDING COMMUNITY

Johnson moved to town one year ago to be closer to the ice at the CRRC so she could take advantage of the available ice time. She had previously lived in Steinbach, and when the Eastman Speed Skating Club moved to Niverville she realized she would have to make some adjustments to access the ice.

"With the whole club moving here, I wasn't able to always go Winnipeg with my supports," says Johnson. "It was either go to Winnipeg or I wasn't able to practice all the time. So I moved here."

After the move, she has been able to practice twice or more per week during public skate times, doing laps around the edge of the ice.

She also receives regular coaching once per week at the Susan Auch Oval in Winnipeg.

Johnson wasn't born with a disability, but was later diagnosed with a learning disability. She also has some mobility issues.

She doesn't currently drive, but with some help she's able to live independently and train regularly.

"I've lived on my own for 43 years this fall," says Johnson. "I first moved



Terrylinn Johnson.

✉ SARA BETH DACOMBE

to Steinbach in '81. I didn't really know anybody and went to work and came home and fell asleep. I had supports to help me learn to cook and how to do laundry and stuff like that. Then there were some people who would come take me out for coffee and do different things."

Johnson says that she enjoys being independent and has always had the ability to go out. Knowing where to go for activities has sometimes been the challenge, however.

Now that she has gotten to know her new community, she regularly enjoys dining at Chicken Chef and participating in activities at the Golden Friendship Centre.

Terrylinn's community of friends greatly enjoy hearing about her passion for sports and her infectious enthusiasm.

"Life has changed tremendously for Terrylinn now that she has moved to Niverville, as she continues to meet

new people and connect through sport, coffee at local restaurants, bingo nights at the Friendship Centre, and all the friends she has met there," says local friend and former support worker Dana Johnston. "She has a great group of friends who have shown her support in her life and with her Olympic journey. Terrylinn feels safe, a part of her community, and at home in Niverville."

Kendra Walker provides hairdressing services for Terrylinn and the two have since become good friends.

"Terrylinn has a genuine, kind heart and is always making everyone around her laugh, especially when it comes to her witty comments at bingo night on Tuesday here in town," says Walker. "I think what makes Terrylinn the athlete she is today is her perseverance to always give it her all out there. She never gives up, no matter what! I think we can all learn something from Terrylinn—and that

is to follow your heart and don't let anything get in your way."

Johnson has been speedskating for more than ten years. She says that one of her strengths is that a coach only needs to explain things once for her to remember it.

Another strength is that she doesn't mind the cold.

"What does bother me is the dark," she says. "I hate walking in the winter because of that."

CHALLENGES IN SPORT

Johnson's career in cross-country skiing and figure skating took her to other Special Olympics events, most notably to the 2001 events held in Alaska.

"I loved skiing," she said. "Then I went to figure skating. I lived in Winnipeg, and after a couple of years cross country skiing I went to figure skating."

When it became a challenge to

find coaching for her level, she went through an inactive period.

Now that she is closer to an arena, she can pursue the sport she loves most. Even so, receiving dedicated coaching and ice time remains a challenge.

"Thank God for the [CRRC] staff here to let me skate, and to let me skate with the public skate and even the sticks and pucks time," says Johnson. "Thanks to them, I can skate four times a week."

When she started speedskating, she realized that the Special Olympics organization only trained athletes for short track. She wanted them to support athletes in long track as well.

Johnson would also like to see Manitoba invest further in speedskating and construct a long track for athletes who don't want to leave the province in order to access special facilities that currently only exist in Alberta, British Columbia, or Quebec.

She hopes to expand her training to compete in summer events like track and field as well, specializing in the long jump. The specialization may require additional coaching, which can be hard to secure.

Johnson is also interested in competitive swimming and would like to see Niverville invest in a community pool.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Johnson has set her sights on competing in speedskating at the 2025 Special Olympics World Games in Italy.

With all her energy and commitment to both athleticism and Special Olympics, Johnson would like to see people become more supportive in the movement.

"Athletes with disabilities, we are human. We're no different from you," says Johnson. "In fact, some of us can be smarter than you. I'll put it this way: you treat [others] the way you want to be treated. If you treat them like dirt, they're going to treat you like dirt."



CHRISTOPHER HOFER
YOUR LOCAL REAL ESTATE AGENT

CALL ME TODAY FOR A FREE MARKET EVALUATION!



204-807-5701

chrishoferrealtor@gmail.com

www.christopherhofer.ca



Chantel Todd receives her award from Courtney Bangert-Murray, president of Recreation Manitoba. **WARREN BRITTON**

Niverville Rec Director Wins Prestigious Award

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

In early March, Chantel Todd, recreation director for the town of Niverville, was honoured with the Prairie Crocus Award, the most prestigious award given by Recreation Manitoba.

The award is given to those who have made significant contributions to recreation and leisure services.

"When I first started ten years ago, it was just me," Todd says. "But we've grown over the years, slowly adding staff to our recreation department. And now we have a beautiful recreation centre... and we're over 30 staff."

Todd has played an integral role in growing the amenities at parks throughout the community, as well as working on the programming side.

She was nominated for the Prairie Crocus Award by coworkers.

Todd gives a lot of credit to Niverville's town council for reliably advocating for recreation. She also cites the

decision many years ago to create Hespeler Park.

She attended the University of Manitoba with the intention of getting a degree in kinesiology and becoming a physiotherapist.

While there, however, she learned that the same faculty also offered classes in recreation management.

"I just fell in love with municipal recreation," Todd says. "It's not something you expect somebody to say they fell in love with, but I did."

In her last year of studies, Todd began working for the recreation department in the RM of Ritchot as part of her fieldwork requirement.

One month before receiving her bachelor's degree in Recreation Management and Community Development, she was hired to work in Niverville.

Since that time, she has purchased a home in the town, gotten married, and had two children. She says that her kids now think of the CRRC as a second home.

"I love this community. I

like working recreation and continuing to expand what we can offer here. And I think we're doing a pretty good job! We seem to have more new ideas of workshops and programs all the time. I think I'll be living in Niverville and growing my family here for a while. I don't plan on leaving."

Todd says that she was so honoured to learn that she had even been nominated for the Prairie Crocus Award.

Her message to members of the community is to get involved wherever possible, whether it's joining a team, volunteering, coaching, or doing anything else to make a contribution. The goal, she says, is to see as much community engagement as possible.

"If someone has a passion or is an instructor of some sort, just reach out to us at Niverville Rec and we can try and get something up and running," she says. "We have a lot of things that people can try right here at the CRRC. I just encourage everyone to get active, get out, and get to trying new things."

329 Bronstone Drive
Niverville, MB
ROA 1E0



1-204-388-4600
feedback@whereyoubelong.ca
www.whereyoubelong.ca

Public Notice of Public Hearing 2024 Financial Plan

Public notice is hereby given pursuant to subsection 162(2) of The Municipal Act that the Council of the Town of Niverville intends to present its financial plan for the fiscal year 2024 at a public hearing at the Niverville Community Resource and Recreation Centre, 501 Centre Street, on the 16th day of April, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. Council will hear any person who would like to make a presentation, ask questions or register an objection to the financial plan as proposed.

A copy of the financial plan is available for review and may be examined by any person during the regular office hours at the Town Office, located at 329 Bronstone Drive, Niverville, or online here:

<https://www.whereyoubelong.ca/town-services/financial-services/>

Eric King, CPA, CGA
Chief Administrative Officer

NIVERVILLE **autobody**
Collision & Glass

**COLLISION REPAIR
AUTO GLASS REPAIR & REPLACEMENT**

direct repair

Ferd Klassen

Phone: 204.388.4657

Fax: 204.388.4394

Email: info@nivervilleautobody.ca



www.nivervilleautobody.ca

autopac
A Manitoba Public Insurance product

ACCREDITED

Storage Bros



Brand New Storage Units Available Immediately at
299 MAIN STREET, NIVERVILLE

- CLIMATE CONTROLLED UNITS •
- NON-CLIMATE CONTROLLED UNITS •
- FULLY FENCED COMPOUND •
- 24/7 CAMERA SURVEILLANCE •

Storage Units also available at
396 VOYAGEUR RD, STE. AGATHE

(204) 250-8261

STORAGEBROS.CA



SPORT MANITOBA

CRRC Event Connects Young Women with Sports

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

On March 8, the CRRC in Niverville, in association with Sport Manitoba, hosted its first Bison Transport Girls Multi-Sport Event.

Teresa Mistelbacher, the CRRC's supervisor of camps and recreation programming, explains that the program introduces young females to a variety of sports through half-day try-a-sport-type events.

The morning program was meant for girls aged 7 to 10 and the afternoon was for ages 10 to 12.

Mistelbacher says she was thrilled with the number of young women who came out to participate, noting that the morning session had a full slate of 40 participants and the afternoon almost as many.

Mistelbacher herself chose the four showcased sports based on what activities she hears about in her day-to-day

work.

After selecting the sports, she worked directly with Sport Manitoba to make sure they had representatives at the event well-versed in each one.

"We did wrestling and used our local instructor, as well as someone from Wrestling Manitoba, to host that event," Mistelbacher says. "We had volleyball, so we worked with Volleyball Manitoba to have coaches for that. We had basketball, and we also had softball represented."

Mistelbacher chose softball due to the excellent baseball and softball programs in the local area.

Volleyball and basketball were chosen due to their popularity around Niverville.

"As far as wrestling goes, I actually had heard from Sport Manitoba that some of their mixed martial arts programs were very popular with females," she adds. "They said they've had really great success

with things like judo in other areas, and I know we have a really great wrestling program here, as well as kickboxing and jiu-jitsu. I wanted to make sure we had some representation of mixed martial arts here at our event. I heard lots of girls on their way out saying, 'Wrestling was my favourite!'"

The participants were given time at each of the four sports stations so they could get a chance to learn a little bit about them, try the sports, and get some guidance from coaches and volunteers.

The event is supported by funding from Bison Transport and is intended to allow girls to try these sports as well as go home with a T-shirt commemorating the day.

Mistelbacher says that based on the success of this day, she's hoping the CRRC will host it again.

"We do a free come-try-it series every September to kind of celebrate our programs, but

this was the first time we've done a dedicated day just for girls and with hand-selected sports. I think that this will become an ongoing thing. I've already been in talks with Sport Manitoba about providing this on an in-service day for the next school year as well."

For this inaugural event, Mistelbacher and her team focused on what they could do in the CRRC's fieldhouse, but she says they are open next time to trying all sorts of different activities throughout the facility, as well as at Hespeler Park.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find out more about upcoming events at the CRRC, look for Niverville Rec's 2024 Spring Leisure Guide. Paper copies are available at the CRRC or the Niverville Town Office. The guide can also be found online at www.nivervillerec.ca.



Your Healthy Lifestyle Starts Here.

Schedule your consultation today!

Offering customized wellness plans to help you take charge of your health.

nivervillefamilychiro.com

Ph: (204) 388-6195

CHURCH OF THE ROCK™ NIVERVILLE

Join us on Sundays at 10:25AM

NIVERVILLE HERITAGE CENTRE, 100C HERITAGE TRAIL

See what our church family is all about!

KNOW GOD LIVE FREE FIND PURPOSE

HEAVY TRUCK, TRAILER & EQUIPMENT SALES



Box 458
Niverville, MB.
ROA 1E0

PHONE: 1-204-388-4509

FAX: 1-204-388-6283

EMAIL: nandatrucking@hotmail.com

REPAIRS & PARTS ON ALL MAKES & MODELS

Accessible Sport Expo Comes to Niverville

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

On Saturday, March 30, the CRRC in Niverville hosted an Accessible Sport Expo. The event was put together by Accessible Sport Connections (ASC), a non-profit that works to provide those with disabilities opportunities to participate in sports and recreational activities that are adapted to their needs.

Jared Funk, a volunteer with ASC, explains what the organization can do.

“For those who want to try any adaptive recreation activities, we can direct them to the right place,” says Funk. “Say that you want to try horse riding. We know a person who trains horses [and can deal] with disabilities. And the same applies to archery, baseball, soccer, or almost every sport or recreational activity.”

Last year, ASC held their first Accessibility Expo at the University of Manitoba. This year, Funk suggested Niverville as an ideal location for their first rural expo, since the CRRC has so much room and is very accessible.

Funk stressed that this event was for everyone and anyone. Those with physical limitations, like wheelchair users, may come to mind first—but that’s just one of the many groups who could find this expo helpful. Children and adults of any age with nearly any limitation could find something they enjoy. Whether seniors with reduced walking abilities, folks on the autism spectrum, those with low vision or are hard of hearing, or people with cognitive differences, all were welcome.

The expo showcased 32 different activities. There were also therapy animals and a quiet room for those who needed a place to regulate.

Funk has had a passion for sport his entire life. At 18 years old, he was in a car accident that landed him in a wheelchair. He says that after his accident he thought his athletic years were over.

“I played all kinds of sports beforehand, so I was initially bummed because I couldn’t play sports again. That was my mindset, because that’s



Braelynn Bodman of Niverville.

✉ MAYLIA BODMAN

what we kind of think as soon as you have a disability, that all these options are limited to you now. But when I was in the hospital, I was introduced to wheelchair rugby, which is a very aggressive wheelchair sport. It’s full contact. And, long story short, I was able to get back on a team.”

Funk says that playing wheelchair rugby helped him to become physically stronger after his accident.

Just as importantly, it helped his social and mental health as well.

Eventually Funk took his rugby skills to the Paralympics—three times.

Braelynn Bodman is an eight-year-old wheelchair user in Niverville. Her mother Maylia is thrilled to have a chance to attend this expo in their hometown.

“[Braelynn] is at an age where she is starting to hear from friends at school and daycare about the sports and other activities they participate in after school and on weekends, and she would like to take part in something also,” says Maylia. “For a child that uses a wheelchair, it can be quite difficult for parents to simply find something that is accessible, and any activities here are often held in

Winnipeg. It is not always easy or convenient to travel into the city to try one accessible sport that may not end up working out well for the child’s needs or abilities. So attending an expo where there are several different things to see or try, and having it right within town, is very exciting.”

She also points out that holding an event like this sends a message to her daughter, and any other citizens with disabilities, that they are valued members of the community who deserve to have opportunities for recreation as well.

Braelynn has recently become involved in Volt Hockey, which has been brought to Winnipeg by Variety Manitoba.

Volt is played in a specially designed electric sport chair that is operated by a joystick.

Variety representatives were at the Accessibility Expo to promote Volt Hockey and showcase the many ways it can be adapted to those with a variety of different abilities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more, visit
www.ascmanitoba.ca

How long should I wait before I see the Physiotherapist?

This is one of the most common questions we hear because it can be so confusing to know when to seek help for your pain. The answer we give is, “Well, it depends”.

For example; for most strains and sprains it’s best to see us 48-72 hours post-injury, for rotator cuff repair we recommend three weeks, post-cortisone shot we suggest ten days. After knee or hip replacement surgery it’s best to come in around 10-12 days post-op. These are general rules of thumb but each injury and each patient is unique.

Another question we hear frequently is if there is a need to wait to see physiotherapy until the most acute pain is gone. Physiotherapists are leaders in pain relief and have many techniques to help control and decrease your pain so it is not necessary to wait until the pain is gone.

We will be there to assist you on your road to recovery.



NIVERVILLE
PHYSIOTHERAPY
& SPORTS INJURY CLINIC

Call Niverville Physiotherapy at 204-388-5217
or visit us at our new location #3-31 Main St.

OAKLEY OPTICAL EYECARE CENTRE

FAMILY OWNED AND OPERATED SINCE 1952



CALL TO BOOK YOUR NEXT EYE EXAM

WE BILL DIRECTLY TO MOST INSURANCE PROVIDERS



VIEW OUR NEWEST STYLES

📷 📱 @OAKLEYOPTICALEYECARE

CONTACT US

1-1574 REGENT AVE W
130-1570 KENASTON BLVD
110-3025 PORTAGE AVE

204.654.3937
204.489.2146
204.831.5409



Arts & Entertainment

Niverville Composer Shortlisted for Short Film Score Contest

By Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

Niverville musician Evan St. Cyr was recently named a finalist in the Cue Tube “Score Relief” contest for creating an original musical score for short film.

The annual online contest gives up-and-coming composers and sound designers the opportunity to create music using provided short films that have been specifically created for the contest. Musicians can then use the films to pitch and apply for composing jobs.

“I heard about it by complete fluke,” says St. Cyr, who works full-time installing flooring and does music production on the side. “I have many compositions in my ‘reel’ of work, but not much to an actual film. So I was looking for some video online I could use to compose some music for. I had no luck until I changed my search and scrolled down like ten results. And in a tab of one of them was a Q&A on Quora. The answer was just laid out directly to my question: ‘If you want films you can compose to, you should check out Cue Tube.’”

The online platform was exactly what St. Cyr was looking for.

As a particular bonus, the contest is put on in partnership with the Northern Film Orchestra and In Place of War charity for a good cause.

“I was pretty pumped to find a community out there that supports composers without the access to films and, well, Hollywood. The problem was that I was late to enter. I figured I’d download the short and see if it was something I would even want to take on, considering how busy life already was.”

The entry deadline was the end of January—and it was already January 22 when St. Cyr came across it.

Animated film entrants were to work with a short film titled *Wing It!* At approximately four minutes long, it features a cat who builds a spaceship and a dog who inadvertently launches it before it’s ready. Together the two characters find a way to safely land the craft, despite some hilarious antics.

“I watched it with my wife in silence of music and I thought, ‘There



Evan St. Cyr in his home studio.

✉ SARA BETH DACOMBE

can’t be anything more daunting than potentially ruining this beautiful short animation. What could I possibly offer this amazing cartoon? And especially in the three evenings I could potentially spare to do it in. Well, what the hell, I thought? Even if I don’t make the deadline, it’s good practice!”

Knowing how much work it would take to put together music and sound effects for the film, St. Cyr doubted he could put together original music in time, but he started working.

He says that directors or music supervisors use what’s called a “spotting sheet” and “temp score” to create a plan with timings that outline what music to place where in the film. The plan also indicates the emotion, pace, character motif, and vibe, among other things.

“Also in the spotting sheet is some comparisons they’d like it to touch upon,” says St. Cyr. “In this spotting sheet, they wanted the style in the form of a comedic *Looney Tunes* or *Tom and Jerry* kind of classic vibe. Also because the winner has their compositions recorded by a chamber orchestra, I had to compose in a matter in which they could perform.”

This meant St. Cyr was composing for a 30-piece orchestra with parts for strings, woodwind, and brass.

Even with the complicated orchestra compilation, St. Cyr was determined to put his own spin on the sound.

“I added a lot to it,” laughs St. Cyr. “You’ll notice when the rocket is crashing, there are a lot of hybrid elements to enhance the beckoning

sound of descending doom. I think it was bold considering it wasn’t completely organic, but I didn’t care. I wanted a Zimmer moment!”

It was hard work, but he enjoyed being in the creative zone, noting that it often feels like it takes more energy to simply begin the project than finish it.

“Honestly, the hardest part is to start. Once I start on something, I’m gone. Once something is on the page that I like, I’m gone in the zone.”

Given that his work was awarded a finalist place, St. Cyr agrees that the risk may have paid off, but he had no expectations about entering this competition other than having fun.

“If anything, I thought if I made the deadline, maybe I could know at least what they thought or could tell me where I’m at in this avenue of my music,” he says. “I hadn’t scored to anything like this before—and *Tom and Jerry* cartoons are way out of my style and league, for that matter.”

Since the Cue Tube contest attracts top-level composers from elite schools, St. Cyr expected he might place last.

He says that he might have been able to do an even better job if he’d had more time.

“To wake up and receive the letter that I was shortlisted blew me away,” he says. “I liked what I did with some of the score, but I didn’t have the time to perfect it or let it sit so I could revise it from a seat back, which sometimes we can do to a fault.”

The winners and four runners-up were announced on March 20. Although St. Cyr did not win, he says

that he was blessed to be a finalist so that he can potentially build on the opportunity in the future.

St. Cyr has lived in Niverville his entire life. Music is in his blood and previously he ran a professional music production company called Arcade Studios before facing a number of health challenges.

“Unfortunately, we had to shut down that studio, as I became very ill with Lyme disease. It’s been a seven-year battle with it, and four years in I just couldn’t keep the doors open anymore. Every project was becoming too stressful,” says St. Cyr. “Lyme disease sucks. That’s the plainest way I can say it. It’s been a battle every day for all these years and I’m still battling it.”

St. Cyr says that he managed to get back to functioning at around 80 percent with the help of God, prayer, the love of family, and adhering to a carnivore diet.

Despite the trials of the illness, St. Cyr isn’t sure he would go back in time and change anything. He says he has learned how to choose love despite suffering, likening the process of healing to the same experience of making music.

“The instrument by which we access the art is the extension or expression of us. If you don’t know who you’re conveying, you don’t know what you’re trying to convey and the audience can’t access it. So in essence, if you get good at knowing you, you’ll be great at your craft to everyone else.”

And so St. Cyr continues to create. He has been working with a few

bands to release new music, as well as working on his own solo album, called *Hope in the Madness*.

The first single, “Note to Self,” should be released in early April.

“[It] is literally a note to myself of things not to do and things to maybe start doing,” says St. Cyr. “My hope is that it relates to those who are doubtful of themselves and the future and maybe it can help to elevate them a bit going forward.”

St. Cyr feels he has only reached the milestones he has because of the support of his wife and three daughters, along with the greater community. He can’t see himself ever leaving Niverville.

“It’s apparently a hard place to leave. A lot who do come back,” says the artist. “There’s something about it here. We’ve got a good sense of community and we’re not closed off to new ideas either. I like what Niverville was to me growing up and I like what it is to me now. I’d say you can’t ask for much better than that when you describe something as home.”

Thanks to the advancement of online hiring and music distribution, it’s easier than ever for music producers and composers to work away from major entertainment centres, like Nashville or Hollywood.

“Scoring music to picture is the dream. It’s my heart of hearts musically. Nothing calls to me more than hearing a great score,” he says. “Music is no doubt my playground. It’s caused me much pain, but it’s also brought me much joy... As far as the pinnacle goes, though, nothing would bring me more utterly excruciating total panic mode anxiety than working on a feature film. Well, that or playing guitar for a stadium. One of the two!”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To view all winners and learn more about Cue Tube, see @TheCueTube on YouTube. www.youtube.com/c/thecuetube

To view St. Cyr’s entry, see @evanjamescyrc on YouTube. www.youtube.com/@evanjamescyrc

Lyme Disease and Musicianship St. Cyr invites anyone interested in learning more about his music or life with Lyme Disease to reach out Facebook or Instagram.



Local artist Melissa Jean.

C/O MELISSA JEAN

Celebrating Nature: Local Artist Brings World to Life on Canvas

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavinn@nivervillecitizen.com

Local artist Melissa Jean was born right here in southeastern Manitoba, but her work is currently on display in galleries across Canada, not to mention hanging in the homes of art lovers around the world.

Jean was born to Neil and Audrey Rempel of Niverville. Growing up, she and her family moved around a lot, but they returned to Niverville when Jean was a teenager.

That's where Jean met her husband, Bill Klippenstein, and eventually the pair moved to Kenora, Ontario to raise their children.

After 20 years in Kenora, Jean and Klippenstein moved back to Niverville in 2023. Since then, Jean has converted the lower floor of their bilevel home into an art studio.

Jean also has a new studio opening in Kenora later this year. This studio will allow her to be part of a larger, more public art space.

Born Melissa Jean Rempel, her middle name comes from her grandmother. And it was her grandmother, Jean Neufeld, who first introduced her to oil painting when she was 14 years old. Jean immediately fell in love with art and has been painting since that day.

"When I sign my name now, I sign it 'Melissa Jean,' to honour my grandmother and everything she did to get me started," says Jean. "It just felt more meaningful to put her name on the paintings. That was a very deliberate thing."

Jean says that painting is a natural byproduct of loving what she sees all around her.

As a teenager, she lost the vision in her left eye. Losing her depth perception was a devastating loss for a young artist—but in some ways, she says, it changed her for the better.

"[Losing my vision] made me change the way I saw the world around me," she says. "I looked for clues in light and shadow to determine how far away things were. It made me hyperaware of my surroundings and incredibly grateful that I still had one good eye to see. I don't take one sunset for granted and I am thankful for each day I am alive and here to witness the beautiful world we live in."

For many years, painting was a hobby for Jean as she jumped around from job to job.

But as she grew in skill, her hobby became a career. In 2011, she was able to quit her job and become a professional artist.

Jean was quickly able to get her work into a few galleries. Now her art is showcased in eight galleries across Canada. A large part of Jean's job is supplying art to these galleries, but since the COVID-19 pandemic she has also been selling more and more out of her studio.

Although Jean worked for many years with oil paints, she has been using acrylics for the last ten years. Her passion is landscapes and capturing the beauty and serenity she feels when being in nature. She's especially in love with the Lake of the Woods and finds a great deal of her inspiration there.

"I'm really drawn to nature. I like wild nature without structure and I like to imagine what it's like without humans, basically. I love painting on the lakes because often you don't even hear or see anyone. I'm just by myself, and I hear the birds. And it's just so serene. It just feeds me. Like, one painting on the lake could feed 10 or 12 paintings of inspiration."

Jean is known for her commissioned paintings of other people's favourite spots as well. She is often asked to paint the view from a customer's cabin.

"Part of my job is meeting people and really getting to know what they love," says Jean. "Most of the time, there's a bit of a connection to the lake and it just means a lot to them. So that's kind of special to be a part of that."

Jean describes part of her process for painting someone else's most cherished spot.

"Often when I'm painting, there's a word that sticks out in my mind. For example, *calm*. And I'll just continue with that vibe throughout the painting and kind of keep that word rolling around in my brain while I'm doing it. And I get those words from these conversations I have with people when they're talking about their custom painting... So I pick up on these little cues and come up with an idea."

Like with any job, creating art can have its challenges. Jean says that she will occasionally jump into the creation of a painting with such excitement that she soon realizes she hasn't paid enough attention to the composition of the piece.

Years of experience have taught her what to do next.

"When that happens and I don't have a good start from the beginning, I just literally burn the painting and start again. I'll build a big fire and throw the painting in, even if I've worked on it for a month! If the composition doesn't feel right, if it doesn't feel right to me, then I don't want it in the world. You know, it's very healing, because [the painting] turns from an object into the air and it can come back to me in a different form and I can start again."

Jean's two children seem to have inherited the artistic gift from their mother.

Her son Jackson is in a band and will be performing at this year's Niverville Olde Tyme Country Fair.

Her younger child, RJ, created the cover art for Jackson's new album and is currently attending a visual art program at university.

Last year, Jean presented a painting to Bryan Baeumler, host of *Bryan's All In* on HGTV.

On April 14, Jean will be featured on an episode of the show talking about her work.

On April 6, Jean, along with the Niverville Chamber of Commerce, will host an Open Studio event for those who are interested in viewing her artwork. The event will run from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. at her home studio at 67 Claremont Drive in Niverville. There will be a draw to win a print of one of Jean's pieces.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.melissajeart.com

Year round service
Servicing Southeast Manitoba
24 hour Emergency Services
Residential and Commercial

call or text
204-388-4201



MUNICIPALITÉ
RITCHOY
MUNICIPALITY

Country Skies. City Ties.
Sous le ciel de la campagne.

Serving Winnipeg & the Rural SouthEast

**Fleuriste
Flowers**

431-977-0777
www.xoflowers.biz

204-408-8855 | info@averagejoesfitness.ca
10 Cedar Drive, Niverville

SIGN UP TODAY
averagejoesfitness.clickfunnels.com/signup-checkout

CONTRACT PAINTING SERVICES

204-955-5991
joe.contractpainting@gmail.com

• INTERIOR • EXTERIOR • PAINTING •
• DRYWALL REPAIR • DECKS & FENCES •

Richard Kirwan
204.392.5665
richard@mightyducts.ca
www.mightyducts.ca

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL DUCT CLEANING

**LITTLE
FLOWER
SHOP**

Blooms That Touch
The Heart
Local Florist

204-388-4108
www.littleflowershop.ca

Justin Patenaude
204.955.0092
info@oakislanddesigns.com

Website design • Logo design • Shopify
Content & SEO • Website management

www.oakislanddesigns.com



SCS
Steinbach Christian School

Opportunity Begins Here

Apply for Fall 2024

**TAKE OUR
SURVEY**



**NEW PROGRAMS
STARTING FALL 2024**

- Business Development Pathway
- Medical & Engineering Pathway
- English & Humanities Pathway
- Visual & Performing Arts Pathway

Next School Tour: April 15

(204) 326.3537

info@steinbachchristian.ca