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VOLUME 1 - ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2015

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### Childcare Shortfall

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### Recording Studio Sets High Bar

■ Matt Falk gets the details on Niverville's own Arcade Studios.

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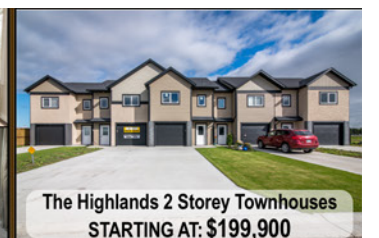
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[www.communitiesofniverville.com](http://www.communitiesofniverville.com)



# Multiplex Fundraising Plan Unveiled

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

On November 16, the Friends of the Plex, a local group responsible for planning the previously announced year-round sports multiplex and new arena, held a volunteer information session to recruit people to help with the fundraising effort.

There were approximately 25 people in attendance. In total, the group would like to engage 100 volunteers.

At the meeting, which took place

at John Henry's, the Friends of the Plex outlined their fundraising plan. 8 subcommittees will be formed to cover all possible fundraising sources, and to allow volunteers to choose the area that best fits their interest and expertise.

The subcommittees are Residential (within Niverville), Corporations and Business in Niverville, Corporations and Businesses Surrounding Niverville, Agricultural Industry around Niverville, Foundations, Federal and Provincial Governments, Municipal Government, and Special Events.

"Each of those committees will have a co-chair, and then we want to surround that with 10 to 12 people in each group," says Clarence Braun, a member of Friends of the Plex.

Braun says that each subcommittee will be tasked with coming up with their own fundraising goal. "Obviously we have some numbers that fit into each category in order for us to reach our total, but we're empowering each group to sit down and brainstorm in their particular area. So they're not being mandated from on top that this is the number

you need to hit."

Another volunteer recruitment meeting will be held on Saturday, January 9, at 10:00 a.m. at John Henry's. If you're interested in volunteering, the Friends of the Plex invite you to attend, as well as visit the links below.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ [www.nivervillemultiplex.ca](http://www.nivervillemultiplex.ca)

■ [www.facebook.com/nivervillemultiplex](https://www.facebook.com/nivervillemultiplex)

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Helping Hands volunteers Dale Toms, Mary Toms, and Irene Adams.

CHRISTINA ABOLADE

## Creating Holiday Cheer with Helping Hands

By Sylvia St. Cyr

✉ sstcyr@nivervillecitizen.com

As the holidays approach, some families in town need an extra hand with some of their day-to-day needs, like food. Never mind the idea of Christmas and everything that comes along with it.

That's where Helping Hands come in. Niverville's Helping Hands ministry was started up during the economic downswing of the mid-80s, when there were a large number of unemployed people in our community. It originally operated out of the Word of Life

church, but it's currently run out of the pantry at Niverville Community Fellowship.

While many of us gather around the table to a big meal with family at the holidays, Helping Hands makes this dream a reality for those in need, by providing Christmas hampers.

The hampers include everything needed for a complete holiday meal. Each family receives a turkey, stuffing, gravy mix, potatoes, cranberry sauce, and other food items. A few generous ladies in our community also bake homemade cookies. How about presents under the tree? They've

got it covered with gifts for the children, donated by the community.

Helping Hands is an active ministry all year round, not just during the holidays. When asked what time of the year is busiest, a local volunteer replied, "Fall, as not only do we have a food drive, but we are also very busy preparing a large number of Christmas hampers."

If you'd like to be a part of this ministry by giving, you can drop off food at any of the local churches, or Bigway Foods.

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# Done Salon Celebrates First Anniversary



Jessica Gable (junior esthetician), Kristin Friesen (senior esthetician, pedicurist), Karen Albaugh (owner, master stylist), Michelle Lee Friesen-Plett (master stylist), and Janet Rosnow (front-end advisor)

LAURIE ENDERS

## By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

December marks the first-year anniversary of one of Niverville's newest businesses, Done: Hair, Skin, and Nails. The owner, Karen Albaugh, opened the salon last year after a whirlwind series of events.

"I'm from Kenora, but I have family that lives here, and I would regularly visit them," Albaugh says. "And one year we came to get pedicures at this salon, before it was mine, and there was a sign on the door."

That sign announced that

the previous shop had closed its doors indefinitely. Albaugh hadn't gotten any notice to cancel their appointment, so they were taken by surprise. However, she saw the disappointment as an opportunity.

"Literally the next day I met with the building owners, and literally within a week I decided to drop my whole life and start a business," she says. "It wasn't planned. I was at a point in my career, the 20-year mark, where I thought, what do I do? So I had 6 weeks to close down my life and get here and get these doors open."

The 1,500-square-foot salon supports the use of chemical-free beauty products, and this is reflected in the many product lines they carry.

Albaugh employs a staff of 4 and sings their praises. "It's not often in this business that we get this many people with so much experience in the same room. So we have a lot to offer people."

One of those people is Michelle Lee Friesen-Plett, who has more than 25 years of experience as a hair stylist, including the previous shop in Done's location. When it closed

in 2014, Friesen-Plett got a call to meet with the new owner.

"I didn't really know her, but when she came in, she and I hit it off instantly," says Friesen-Plett. "Two hairdressers don't always get along as we do! It's been very refreshing. It's been a very positive experience. She's a great boss."

Combined, Albaugh and Friesen-Plett have more than 50 years of experience.

"Even though we're a little bit old school, we still keep up with the very modern styles," Friesen-Plett says. "Sometimes people do hairstyling so

long, they get stuck in a rut. But we don't. I learn from her, and she learns from me. We bounce ideas off each other and get each other's opinions on things."

Albaugh and her team are hosting a grand opening on Thursday, December 3, from 4:00–10:00 p.m. "We're doing wine, cheese, and chocolate," says Albaugh. "We're going to have live entertainment here, booking incentives, and prizes and draws throughout the night."

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IN BRIEF

# Hanover School Division Announces Surplus

By Brenda Sawatzky  
bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

On the heels of a recent school mill rate hike, the Hanover School Division (HSD) finance board recently announced a \$70,000 surplus closing out the 2014/15 school year. HSD currently carries an accumulated surplus of \$3.25 million, equalling 3.98 percent of its annual operating expenditures.

“The province has guidelines that allow for school divisions to maintain a surplus of up to 4 percent,” says Kevin Heide, secretary-treasurer of HSD, “in order to cover expenditures that are not covered by provincial funding.”

Heide says it’s common for school divisions throughout the province to carry surpluses, which act as reserves for the unexpected, like school bus replacements in the event of an accident. He states that the province does

not take into account surplus balances when determining their level of funding, instead using a formula based primarily on student counts and transportation needs.

“The year prior, we were [provincially] mandated to have a \$500,000 deficit on our budget because we had too much of a surplus,” says HSD’s vice chair Rick Peters.

The March 2015 announcement of a tax mill rate increase was seen as necessary due to rising education costs, infrastructure growth, and the hiring of additional teachers as a result of the province’s K-3 Class Size Initiative.

As to whether the accumulated surplus will result in a mill rate reduction next spring, Randy Dueck, superintendent of HSD, says, “The HSD Board makes this decision annually as a part of the comprehensive budget process. The final decision will be made in March.”

# Law Firm Marks 10 Years in Niverville

By Evan Braun  
editor@nivervillecitizen.com

2015 marks the tenth anniversary of the Smith Neufeld Jodoin (SNJ) law office in Niverville. Lawyer Ron Janzen has anchored the office since it first opened.

“My experience working in Niverville has been a blessing to me. I started with a firm located at the corner of Portage and Main in Winnipeg. That was much different. From downtown Winnipeg traffic to parking costs, and the general atmosphere, there was a much different feel,” says Janzen. “It’s hard to describe, but generally speaking, it feels comfortable working with people in this community.”

SNJ was active in Niverville several decades before the local branch opened in 2005. John Neufeld, one of the firm’s named partners, used to meet with clients once a

week at a space in the Niverville Credit Union. When the credit union expanded to its current size, branch manager George Sawatzky asked SNJ if they were interested in leasing a full-time office in the new building.

“Originally we thought that 2 lawyers might go to Niverville once each week, but on further discussion it was agreed that to provide the Niverville area with the best legal service it would be better to have one lawyer consistently attend that office,” Janzen says. “Within just a few weeks of [me] starting here, we hired an additional staff person, and my 2-day per week plan changed to coming full-time, 5 days each week. We’ve never looked back.”

In addition to Janzen, the branch has 2 full-time staff, as well as additional part-time help.



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**Kitchen Notes:**  
Change up this recipe by substituting a spicy or flavoured Bothwell Cheese variety such as Red Hot Chili Pepper Jack or Madagascar Green Peppercorn.

### INGREDIENTS

2 cups	Elbow pasta, uncooked	3 cups	Muenster, shredded
5 tbsp	Unsalted butter	1/4 tbsp	Panko crumbs
1 cup	Milk or cream		Salt and pepper (to taste)

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

In a large pot of boiling salted water, cook pasta just shy of al dente.

Dice 4 tbsp of the butter and place in a large mixing bowl. Add cooked pasta to the bowl and toss to coat.

Warm the milk or cream in a saucepan and add to bowl with pasta. Add the shredded cheese, stirring until it starts to melt. Mix in salt and pepper to taste. Pour mixture into a buttered 9x9 casserole dish.

Melt the remaining 1 tbsp of butter and mix with panko crumbs. Sprinkle evenly over pasta.

Bake until the sauce is bubbling and the topping is golden, about 15-20 minutes. Serve immediately.



# Holocaust Survivor Tells His Story

By Evan Braun

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On November 11, about 700 people packed into the banquet room at the Heritage Centre to mark Remembrance Day, and hear Holocaust survivor Jessie (Isaiah) Vorst speak of his experiences as a child in a German concentration camp.

"His story is difficult to hear, but immeasurably more difficult for him to tell," said Ian Wallace, who hosted the event. "In talking with him, I'm aware that the memories of those dark times do not dwell too far below the surface."

"I was only very young when I was exported to the Dutch concentration camp in the eastern part of the country, just off the border with Germany," Vorst said. Sometime later, he and his family were transported to the infamous Bergen-Belsen camp. "I lost my birth mother at that time. I don't remember too much about her

except that she was very lovely."

During its 2 horrifying years of operation, it is estimated that 120,000 prisoners passed through Bergen-Belsen—and 50,000 of them died there, including Anne Frank and her older sister, Margot.

Tens of thousands of prisoners flooded the camp near the end of the war, evacuated from other camps that had fallen to Allied troops. As a result, many prisoners were packed onto train cars, destined for gas chambers. "Where is the train going?" Vorst remembers asking. "Where does it end up? What do we do when we get off the train?"

"My family was lucky that we never made it to the gas chambers. We were actually rescued by the Soviet Air Force,

which bombed the locomotive of the train," Vorst said. "We arrived in Traritz, where we were then placed in a military camp and/or hospital, depending on our condition. And eventually we were returned to our native country, to the

Netherlands."

It has been estimated that a mere 5,000 of the 107,000 Jews deported from the Netherlands survived.

When Bergen-Belsen was liberated in April 1945, British soldiers found 60,000

prisoners, most starving to death. 13,000 corpses littered the ground, unburied.

Vorst remembers that the prisoners were given very little food. "In fact, the rations were minimal. The great majority of people who survived the concentration camps needed 4 or 5 or 6 years to fully recover their bodily ability. Many of them, also the mental capacity. Luckily, Canada and the United States, and also England once it recovered, shipped massive amounts of good food to the Netherlands."

He also remembers that he couldn't ride a bicycle or keep his balance after being sent home, and that it took many years to regain those skills.

During his years in the camp, Vorst recalls that his

father organized a school for children to learn the Jewish Bible, the Tanach. "I remember that we sat around and we were told the stories from the Old Testament, and it has never left me."

Coming to terms with those traumatic years has been a life-long struggle for Vorst. "It was difficult for me to comprehend it all," he said. "Being raised in a religious environment, I kept asking the question, 'God, why? Where were you, and why did you let this happen?' God never answered, and I think that's correct. Because indirectly God has taught me how to accept what turned out to be inevitable, and build a new life not just for myself, but for my community, my community being the Jewish community, the Dutch community, and as I say, in due course, the Canadian community."

Once in Canada, Vorst enjoyed a much happier life, marrying and having 3 sons.



Attendees pay respects following the ceremony

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# Fire Department Serves Perogies, Fundraises

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Niverville's Fire Department held their annual perogy dinner fundraiser on November 11, serving 500 people and raising \$6,400 before expenses.

"The event keeps getting bigger and bigger, and people were lined out the door before we even had served our first perogy," says Fire Chief Keith Bueckert.

The dinner, held at the Golden Friendship Centre, has become a popular event on the town's social calendar.

"We now have completed the air fill station project and now have turned our attention towards improving our farm accident rescue equipment," says Bueckert.



Niverville firefighters Merrick Sandulak, Tara Fehr, Steve Kehler, Eric Turenne, Greg Rempel, and Nick Teichmann.

CHRIS RIDEOUT

"We hope over the next few suppers to acquire funds for heavy lift airbags to lift farm and heavy equipment... also, equipment for grain bin and grain entrapment rescue. Very few departments we

know of have this capability in grain rescue, and we see this as a risk assessment for the area."

The department would like to extend its gratitude to the local businesses who

support this cause, including the Niverville Bigway and Chicken Chef, as well as the many volunteers at the Golden Friendship Centre.

"All the firefighters and EMS staff work hard to serve

this event and love every minute of it," Bueckert says. "Thank you to all that come out to support us. We take great pride in serving our community."

## IN BRIEF

### New Deal for Education Assistants

On November 5, a group of education assistants ratified a union agreement with the Hanover School Division to ensure annual wage increases, additional paid sick-leave days, and enhancements to education wage premiums.

Other advances include an improved formula for vacation pay and better eligibility criteria for bereavement, medical, and personal leave of absences.

The deal comes into effect retroactively to September 1, 2014, and will extend through August 31, 2019.

### 2015 Is Coming to an End

The Citizen wants to hear from you for our Year in Review page. What are your personal, business, community, or sports and rec highlights from 2015?

Email us by December 15 at [info@nivervillecitizen.com](mailto:info@nivervillecitizen.com)

The lawyers and staff of **SNJ** wish you a Merry Christmas and all the best in the New Year!



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## CITIZEN POLL

## THIS MONTH'S QUESTION:

**What do you feel should be the next step in addressing the shortfall of childcare space in Niverville?**

- ☐ Encourage more private home daycares to open up in town.
- ☐ Spearhead a community effort to attract a second commercial daycare.
- ☐ Lobby levels of government for grant money to use toward expanding the current daycare or the development of a new daycare.
- ☐ Have another opinion? Let us know what you think. Email your thoughts to [editor@nivervillecitizen.com](mailto:editor@nivervillecitizen.com)

## VOTE NOW AT

[www.nivervillecitizen.com](http://www.nivervillecitizen.com)

See last month's poll results on page 21

# Childcare: A Growing Concern



**BRENDA SAWATZKY**

✉ [bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com](mailto:bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com)

Monumental growth in Niverville over the last 20 years has added to the texture and vibrancy of our community. One need only look to the newest residential developments to recognize that Niverville has been a magnet for young families.

The increase in young families brings with it unique needs, such as quality daycare programs for working parents. Currently, Niverville is home to only 1 licensed daycare facility, Growing Minds. Though the facility is licensed for 127 child spaces, it falls substantially short in meeting the community's needs.

"We are finding access a challenge," states a local father. "[We have] been on the Growing Minds waiting list since we moved here in 2013." With one child in daycare in Winnipeg, another in Grade 1 in Niverville, and an infant who

requires daycare next summer, he faces a juggle familiar to a lot of families. "So do we move back to Winnipeg, or stay and have all our kids go to school in Winnipeg? But then they lose touch with kids in our neighbourhood."

His family is not alone. Other families have been waiting for more than 2 years on the waiting list, with no hope in sight.

"My only option was a home daycare," says a Niverville mother of an 18-month-old son who's been on the waiting list since before he was born. "Right now, [home daycare] is costing us \$600 to \$900 per month. To be honest, we have put having more of a family on hold due to lack of daycare openings and affordable options."

There is no easy way to tally the number of unlicensed home daycares in town. Unlike licensed centres, they are not required to register with the government. Licensed care workers and some parents caution against using unlicensed centres, citing

unsafe conditions, the undisclosed history of the provider, exposure to strangers who come and go from the home, and a lack of government subsidies. Unlicensed centres have no wage restrictions, at times charging in the range of \$40 to \$60 per day per child, taking full advantage of desperate parents.

The government applies strict regulations to licensed facilities, including educational mandates, safety protocols that may require home renovations, and menus that follow Canada's Food Guide. In return, they receive government support, affording better rates for parents.

"Being responsible to the children's parents is a pretty high order that I take very seriously," says an unlicensed daycare provider for the past 11 years in Niverville. "These are their children, their future. From the time [these children] are 1 until 5, they have me and I have them. It's a construct that mimics family, and we become each other's family for 10 hours

of the day."

She agrees that unlicensed daycare isn't for every parent, reminding them to do their homework and know what's important to them. "[In my home], siblings get to grow up together, all ages learning to play [and interact] instead of being divided by age and stage, as would occur in organized daycare."

Addressing the needs of parents with disabled children is a whole other ball of wax. While the government provides some support workers, a licensed daycare facility must apply for them. Equipped facilities are scattered across the province.

One local mother of 4 found such a daycare in Grunthal. "Since starting daycare 14 months ago, [my daughter] has gained the ability to sit independently and eat solid food. We continue to take her solely for the therapeutic benefits she receives."

Getting her daughter to daycare in Grunthal means juggling 3 other children, one

an infant, oftentimes by herself. This requires 2 hours of driving, 3 days a week. Now on maternity leave, she is concerned for next year when she'll be back to her teaching career and her disabled daughter will be in Kindergarten in Niverville. Finding before and after care for her daughter will be nearly impossible as she is so far down the list for Growing Minds.

Rhonda Kenning, executive director of Growing Minds Childcare Center, echoes the frustrations of parents. "There is a huge lack of licensed daycare in this community."

Part of the problem is a lack of usable space. Their own facility has been forced to operate in 3 separate locations, 1 at the Heritage Centre and 2 on Main Street. The government places very strict regulations on licensed daycare facilities, and many buildings may not be up to code without costly renovations.

Having already tapped into provincial grants and the Town of Niverville's generosity for costs incurred on the

existing facilities, Kenning feels that further capital grants for expansion may be beyond their reach.

"[The province] receives applications every time funding is made available and there are many communities vying for those dollars. Many smaller communities have come together to make their projects a reality through extensive fundraising campaigns and community generosity."

Kenning adds that the new playground at the Heritage Centre was renovated solely on local charitable donations. She admits, though, that Growing Minds is not planning to expand further and that it is time for new childcare centres to move into town.

"You can't offer 300 spaces and still provide quality care," she says. "Our priority has to be meeting the needs of the children and families that are currently using our services."

# Guardian

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# The Chamber Corner

**Merry Christmas  
& Happy Holidays**



The Board of Directors of the Niverville Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of the Chamber's members, would like to wish you and yours a very warm and festive season. We'd like to thank you for supporting the community's businesses. Your patronage helps keep the products and services of a diverse group of business people available locally.

We'd also like to acknowledge the tremendous number of volunteers who make Niverville such a great place to live, and without whom, there would be far fewer activities for us all to enjoy.

Last, but certainly not least, we'd like to recognize the co-operation the Chamber receives from Niverville Town Council and its staff in strengthening both the business and residential communities.

## Volunteer of the month

Mayor Myron Dyck on behalf of Town Council and Director Claude Leonard on behalf of the Niverville Chamber of Commerce were pleased to award the Volunteer Appreciation Award for November 2015 to Shirley Hoult.

Shirley is being recognized for her contributions on various committees and boards such as the Niverville Heritage Community Gardens, Junior Gardeners, Music in the Gardens, Niverville Chamber of Commerce, Communities in Bloom, Day Care Board, along with volunteering at the personal care home.



John, Bonnie & Tom Schmitke were the recipients of October's Volunteer of the Month Award. A photo was unavailable for last month's Citizen.

At this time, the Board of the Niverville Chamber of Commerce would like to recognize and thank **Hespeler's**, located in the

Heritage Centre, for providing gifts cards to Volunteer of the Month Award recipients during 2015.

## Welcome new chamber member

The Chamber welcomes new member Chris Friesen who is opening Average Joe's Fitness in the space previously occupied by Elite Fitness.

# Big Ag Merger to Take Effect in New Year



**By Evan Braun**

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Penner Farm Services, Horizon Livestock and Poultry Supply, and Paradigm Agri-Solutions have announced a merger, with the companies combining their operating assets as of January 1, 2016. All 3 businesses will continue to operate under their current names and support their existing product lines and services.

"I have dreamt of this combination for a long time and believe Horizon Livestock and Paradigm will be a great fit for Penner Farm Services," says Reg Penner, President of Penner Farm Services.

Harold Rempel, President of Horizon and Paradigm, agrees. "Penner Farm Services is a great complement to our

business, and positions us for growth."

Through the merger, both businesses expect to find greater operating efficiencies, offer broader and stronger product lines, and take advantage of opportunities for leveraged purchasing.

The businesses' 6 locations will continue to operate as usual. Penner Farm Services has locations in Blumenort and Brandon, whereas Horizon operates stores in Steinbach, Niverville, and Winnipeg. Paradigm has a store in Steinbach.

Penner Farm Services has long been involved in the construction of livestock buildings—hog, dairy, and poultry.

"What Penner Farm does is supply equipment, install equipment, and service equipment," says Penner. "So

we came out of construction. That's how we ended up in the business."

Horizon works primarily on the after-market side of the business, selling drugs, veterinary supplies, and parts to the hog and poultry industries. Paradigm is also a provider of drugs and veterinary supplies to pork producers.

"From our perspective, our strength is equipment, because that's what we've always done," says Penner. "They've been on the after-market supply side, more so than we are."

Penner says the 3 companies have all worked in these different sectors of the business, but they each have different strengths. "Together, we both gain something we didn't have."

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# NIVERVILLE

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



## IN BRIEF



Willia and Max Dowse with their shoebox donations.

RAY DOWSE

## Landmark Church Operates Christmas Shoebox Store

Every year since 2000, Landmark Christian Fellowship has hosted a Christmas shoebox store on behalf of Operation Christmas Child, an international organization that sends gift-laden shoeboxes to children living in third-world countries.

Throughout the year, church volunteers shop for deals on school supplies, hygiene items, toys, and other fun gifts, then price them and set up a store each November. Families then come in and build the shoeboxes together.

The experience is designed to engage local kids, who can also include personal notes and photos of themselves. To add to the impact, you can watch a video of children receiving the boxes.

In 2014, the Landmark store sent 1,400 shoeboxes. While the donors don't know where their shoebox will end up, countries include Uruguay, El Salvador, Guatemala, Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau, Venezuela, Iraq, Equatorial Guinea, Costa Rica, Guinea, Haiti, Nicaragua, Chile, Senegal, and Ukraine.

Although shoeboxes are delivered throughout the year to different parts of the world, collection week happens in mid-November.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.samaritanspurse.ca/operation-christmas-child

# Holiday Traditions

People from all over the world have made their homes here. This month, we've reached out to hear about their diverse holiday traditions, as well as some from right here in Canada.



## Mona Bilodeau

French Canadian

I have visions of our Christmas traditions of yesteryears. Being raised in a French Canadian family of 9 children, most of our Christmas traditions resemble many other families' traditions with a few deviations. Our household was cleaned from top to bottom and decorated with garland, snow-spray Christmas motifs on the windows, and hanging Christmas balls that we crafted from the Christmas cards we'd received the previous year.

Christmas Eve was always so exciting as a child as we anticipated the one present we would get to open following midnight mass—placed under our artificial Christmas tree, which had been carefully decorated by our father. The excitement was not only about opening up the present but also that we would get to stay up way past midnight. Because we were going to stay up so late, we had to sleep before church. Not only was it hard to go to bed and sleep at 8:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve, but we had to do it with curlers in our hair (not the soft foamy ones, but the bristly prickly ones).

As an adult, some of the traditions have been dropped, although I have kept a few—namely, the *pete de nun* my grandmother passed on from her mother. It's sort of like a doughnut, but the dough is made from mashed potatoes, sugar, flour, and baking soda. The quarter-inch thick dough is cut into squares and



Hogmanay celebrations in Scotland.

fried like a doughnut. Once cool to the touch, they are iced and rolled into coconut. My children and grandchildren enjoy having them at Christmas, just like we did as children nabbing a few from my grandmother's porch.



## Dr. Chris Burnett

Scotland

I grew up in the northeast of Scotland, and I recall that shops were open on Christmas Day. Only the bank was closed. It was a bank holiday, not a public holiday. Christ-

mas was marked by a candlelight service on Christmas Eve and a morning service that we attended after opening our presents. This also enabled us to buy the forgotten batteries for our new toys.

In Scotland, the big seasonal holiday is actually the last day of the year, called Hogmanay. This is a party that starts sometime on December 31 and, for some, will last well into the second day of the New Year. It involves visiting friends and neighbours, serving lots of food, and the occasional glass of whiskey. There is often dancing, which we call a ceilidh, where there is a band, but not pipes (not inside, anyway).

There are traditions such as "first footing," where you visit your neighbours after midnight, usually bearing a small gift. This visiting can take up the next 24 hours. Other communities hold bonfires in their town centres, and some of these traditions go back well over 2,000 years. These have now progressed to more modern traditions, such as the 100,000 people who turn up in the centre of Edinburgh to celebrate Hogmanay and welcome the New Year.

Even though we have now been in Canada for almost 20 years, this is the time of year we most miss our Scottish heritage and try in many ways to continue the traditions.



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### Mary Ann Salcedo

Philippines

I have lived in Niverville for 3 years but love the memories of my Christmas celebrations in the Philippines. Back home, Christmas is a wonderful community event. From December 10–24, there are programs at the park with lots of lights and decorations. Then, on Christmas Eve, the tradition in each individual home is to prepare food all day.

The main dish that means a lot to everyone is ham, which in Tagalog is *keso de bola*. There are also games and gift exchanges, and the tradition is to not start eating until we hear the countdown and the bell from the church, which rings at midnight to proclaim that it's Jesus's birthday. We call it Noche Buena. People go out into the streets and shout, "Happy Birthday, Jesus!" They find anything to use as drums, even if it's just a pot cover and a ladle. A real celebration!



### Garry Stratyckuk

Ukrainian Canadian

When I was growing up, we followed Ukrainian Christmas traditions. Because Ukrainian Christmas lands on January 7, which is also my birthday, it was always a double celebration.

We had a recipe book which listed them in the back, which my mom was part of having put together. I remember how so many of our traditions had to do with agriculture. I've included an excerpt below:

"In every Ukrainian home where national customs are

in practice, a sheaf of wheat, *diduch*, is as much a part of the decorations as is the Christmas tree. The sheaf of wheat is symbolic of the hope that next year's crop will be bountiful. The Christmas meal is meatless. It consists of 12 different dishes, symbolic of the 12 apostles who shared the Last Supper with Jesus Christ. All food is cooked in vegetable oil omitting all animal fat because Christmas is preceded by a period of fasting which ends at midnight. The first of the 12 dishes served is called *kutia*, whole wheat cooked for many hours and prepared with honey and ground poppy seeds."

I remember that was very good. As I entertain wonderful memories of my mother and grandmother's cooking, I think that it's too bad that we haven't kept up with more of these traditions.



### Xiaoxiao (Helen) Zhang

China

Every year, my girls and I go to church for the Christmas Eve evening service to celebrate the birthday of Jesus. We open gifts together on Christmas morning. We wear our sleepwear for the whole day at home. We enjoy the food, movies, and family time together when there is beautiful snow outside.

In my childhood, I didn't know about Christmas. My parents didn't celebrate Christmas at all. I had my first real Christmas after I came to Canada for studying in 2003. I went to buy some gifts for my homestay family, and I was so happy to open my gifts under the Christmas tree. I enjoyed the moment with everyone sitting around the dinner table

with that huge turkey.

This year, my parents will come to visit us from China. It will be the first Christmas with my whole family together. I am counting the days. I am planning the gifts for family and friends. I want to take my parents and my girls to my church's Christmas Eve evening service. I cannot wait to open gifts and enjoy food together with them.

I always tell my girls that I believe Christmas is not just about gifts and food. It is a day to share happiness with the people who love you so much, and who you love in return. With a hug, a small gift, and saying "Happy Christmas," enjoy your time with family and friends.



### Matilda Doerksen

Paraguay

As a child growing up in Paraguay, I remember on Christmas Eve each sibling always received gifts in individual bowls that were set up on our dining room table. Mom would prepare special treats—cookies, chocolates, marshmallows—all made from scratch. When I was a young teenager, my family began wrapping gifts instead of setting up bowls.

Our Christmas weather was hot and humid, up to 40 degrees Celsius, and I never experienced air-conditioning or refrigeration during my childhood years. Milk and butter were hung in the well to cool. Watermelon was enjoyed at Christmas along with beef dishes and the common root vegetable cassava (*mandioca*).

As a rule, family gatherings were held outside, often as a barbecue with meats, salads, and soda pop, which we never had as young children. The



Indian festival of light, Diwali.

most common drink in Paraguay was, and still is today, *tereré*. It is the most thirst-quenching social drink.

During my youth and young adult years, we always attended a Sunday School Christmas Eve program. After the program, the youth went caroling to a nearby colony. This went well into the morning hours of December 25. Then the youth were involved in the Christmas morning choir service at our church.

When we moved to Manitoba, the differences became obvious. We weren't much for decorating trees in Paraguay, the way people do here. But the most obvious difference for many years was the noticeable lack of Christmas bugs. If you're not from Paraguay, you wouldn't understand this. The sound of Christmas bugs was so ingrained as a major

part of the Christmas season in Paraguay. The noise they made, together with warm humid weather, signified the feeling of Christmas.



### Ray Raichura

India

I am East Indian and was raised as Hindu (the same background as Gandhi, the world-renowned leader of peace).

We celebrated Diwali, festival of light, during which good prevails over evil. The celebration lasted for 7 days. On Diwali, we would have a feast, all vegetarian. I did not eat meat until I came to Canada 47 years ago. Now, I celebrate the Christmas tradition with my family here.



### Eric and Claudette Cousineau

French Canadian

In our family, Christmas starts with going to mass on Christmas Eve where we hear beautiful hymns and see the pageant with local children dressed up in nativity scene costumes (sometimes a local family that's recently had a baby dress up as Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus). After the service, we go to my uncle and aunt's for the *réveillon* to visit with family and friends and eat to our hearts' content, including *sucre à la crème*!

When we get home, we have to get the milk and cookies ready for *Père Noël* and put carrots outside for his reindeer. On Christmas Day, we open gifts at home, have lunch, play outside, then go for supper at my parents' where we eat *tourtière*, meatballs and gravy, mashed potatoes, corn, etc. After supper, we open gifts, play cards, laugh, and have a lot of fun! Joyeux Noël!



### Joe Ashwell

New Zealand

Unlike in Canada, Christmas in New Zealand is hot and sunny. Kiwis always look forward to a good, sunny Christmas Day on the beach. Our family tradition was always a round of Christmas golf at Wiamakari golf course, our local hangout. And of course a roasted leg of lamb at Grandma's later on, followed by a hefty serving of New Zealand's favourite dessert, Pavlova. Mmmm!

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# Council Connections

As the Christmas Season approaches, the weeks ahead will find many of us gathering together to attend school, work, and family events. It is a time of year where the calendar can become quite busy. Perhaps because of this, December is generally a little quieter for Council; however November was a busy month with several highlights, including:

- In order to communicate more effectively with our residents, Council met with a company who provided marketing planning analysis. Highlights of the presentation included defining corporate goals, identifying target audience, positioning the community, brand assets and preferences, together with recommendations going forward. Council is looking to refresh its webpage, Facebook image and social media presence. You should be seeing some significant changes in this regard in the new year.
- On the construction side, bathrooms at the curling club have been renovated. A contract for hydra seeding of the Highlands Park was awarded. Work continues on the splash pad with possible project completion by the end of the month, weather permitting.
- The topic of French Immersion in Niverville schools has been discussed with Hanover School Division. Council is asking residents

if interested in seeing French Immersion offered in our schools, to organize themselves and bring forward their interest to the local school trustees and parent advisory councils.

- Council would like to thank the Remembrance Day Committee for another great Remembrance Day community service. Well done! The Association of Manitoba Municipalities held its annual conference in Brandon in November. The theme of the conference was "Creating Legendary Leadership". Several Councillors were able to attend.
- On November 14th I was married to Shari Braun (Penner). On a personal note, thank you to many who have wished us well as we began a new life chapter together. I know Shari is looking forward to meeting you and becoming part of our community.

And so as the hustle and bustle of the festive season ramps up, I hope you may find time where you can choose to slow down and appreciate those you love. May the love, peace, and joy of the Season be your experience.

Merry Christmas!

**Myron Dyck,**  
Mayor

## Licensing of Pets

*All dogs and cats over the age of six months must be licensed. Annual license fee is currently \$20.00 per pet, valid for 12 months from date of issue. Please note that dogs and cats are not permitted to run at large. In the event that an impounded dog or cat is found to be unlicensed at the time of capture, the license fee is \$100.00. The fee for first time impoundment is \$150.00, \$60.00 capture fee plus \$10.00 per each day within the pound (plus GST). Proof of rabies and distemper vaccination must be presented at the time of application before a license can be issued. Note that the breed of the dog must be documented on the vaccination papers presented for licensing. Licenses can be obtained from the Town office (86 Main Street) during regular office hours. Please visit the Town's website for the complete By-Law 691-10.*

## Moving in or out?

*If you are moving into Niverville or out, we need to hear from you! Please call the Town Office at 204-388-4600 ext. 110 or email [accounts@whereyoubelong.ca](mailto:accounts@whereyoubelong.ca) and provide the following information:*

- *Move in/out date*
- *Water meter reading (if connected to Town water)*
- *Name(s) to appear on the bill if different from the property owner*
- *Complete contact information (mailing address, service address, phone number and email address)*



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# Heritage Fundraising Gala Sets Sights on Expanded Clinic



EVAN  
BRAUN

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The Niverville Heritage Centre held their ninth annual gala on November 7, with about 275 guests attending the black-tie affair. This year's fundraising emphasis was expanding the primary healthcare clinic in Niverville, both in terms of physical space and the services offered.

"When we first got here, the population of this town was about 1,700," said Dr. Chris Burnett, who began the clinic in Niverville 11 years ago with his wife, Dr. Mairi Burnett. "It is now shy of 5,000 and we're expecting to get to 7,000-8,000 by the end of this decade."

The first version of their clinic occupied just 3 rooms where the Growing Minds daycare is now situated, on the first floor of the Heritage Centre. The Burnetts worked part-time. A few years later, they expanded to a 2,000-square-foot suite on the second floor, began working full-time hours, and recruited additional doctors to meet the growing need.

According to Gord Damon, board chair for Niverville Heritage Holdings, the fundraising goal over the next 5 years will be \$500,000 for the new clinic, just over \$60,000 of which was raised at the gala.

The new clinic will be housed on the main floor of the new Heritage Life Retirement Living Complex. The clinic will have about 5,000 square feet and all the services will be centralized, including a new lab for bloodwork.

"What we want to do is have a single door entry," Burnett said. "People can come in through the door, go to a single reception, and depending on what the need is, they then see the best clinician for them." Burnett clarified that the word clinician includes physicians,



Gala reception in the Heritage Centre atrium.

JOEY VILLANUEVA

nurse practitioners, primary care nurses, and physician assistants.

Among the key improvements are extended hours. Currently, the clinic opens at 8:30 a.m. and closes around 5:00 p.m. Though the changes will be gradual, Burnett predicts that within 5 years the clinic will be staffed from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., though not all clinicians will be on hand at all times. He said that the key to longer hours is to stagger the shifts.

Another big change is that clinicians will no longer have their own individual rooms. "From the point of view of staff coming in, there's no such thing as a person's room," Burnett said. The doctors will be mobile, seeing patients in the room that is best equipped to meet the patients' needs. "We don't have to have every room

stocked for everything, and there is cost savings in that."

The night's guest of honour was Dr. Michael Rachlis, a Winnipeg-born medical doctor and private consultant in health policy analysis. He has consulted with the federal government, as well as all 10 provincial governments. In addition to lecturing widely in Canada, he has made presentations to members of the United States House of Representatives and Senate.

"I think that even though it's kind of trite to compare our system to the American system," Rachlis said, "some people say that your health system is better than the American system. That's a little bit like going into a high jump competition against midjets. You'll win, but the bar is really low."

Among the differences

between the Canadian and American systems is overall cost and efficiency. Canada, like most other wealthy countries, spends approximately 11 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on healthcare, whereas the United States spends 18 percent, far more than any other nation. The Canadian system has some flaws that need to be addressed, but Canadians now live an average of 3 years longer than Americans, and our infant mortality rate is 30 percent lower.

The biggest problem in Canada, Rachlis explained, is that we place far too little emphasis on primary healthcare, and the result is that our hospital system is overwhelmed.

"We don't do a good job of keeping people out of hospital," Rachlis said. "When we compare ourselves against [other

wealthy countries], we have the longest waits for family doctors, the longest waits for specialists, and we're the highest users of emergency rooms. The only people in these surveys who show up with higher use of emergency rooms are Americans who don't have health insurance, and that's because that is the only place that an American without health insurance cannot be denied care."

Rachlis spoke at length about the virtues of comprehensive primary healthcare, especially the kind of care already available in Niverville and envisioned for the new clinic. "I'm really impressed with the Heritage Centre and how you've been growing it. I'm very impressed at the way that you see that health is not just hospitals."

Dr. Burnett added that building a hospital here is off the

table. "We're never going to have a hospital, and I'm going to go up here on a limb and say that we never want to have a hospital. There is no need to have a hospital in Niverville. We're surrounded here by 3 very good hospitals, which we have very easy access to."

Burnett explained that the goal of a clinic like Niverville's is to effectively deal with the simple things you don't want to spend hours waiting to treat at the emergency room. "What we've found is that when we look at afterhours [medical emergencies]... those are urgent and you need to be calling an ambulance. However, we find that if we can offer you an appointment the next day with your own provider, you can manage to get through the night."

"I think now that it's time to really amp up remedial activities," Rachlis said. This includes effectively treating chronic illness before acute exacerbations send people to emergency rooms. "Tommy Douglas [the founder of Canadian Medicare] all his life talked about the second stage of Medicare. He talked about how the first stage of Medicare was public payment through the old system, focused on doctors, hospitals, and treating people after they got sick. He said the second stage of Medicare would be a different health system designed to keep people healthy. And we're still struggling to implement that now."

According to Rachlis, Niverville is on the right track. "I would say that you folks are doing it in Niverville, that this Heritage Centre, and the amazing services that you're providing, particularly to the elderly in this community, this building is pure second-stage Medicare. You're doing an amazing job here."



# Wyatt Dowling

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NATALIE BATKIS

# Town Water Proposed for Main Street Businesses



NATALIE BATKIS

nbatkis@nivervillecitizen.com

The Town of Niverville has received a grant from the federal and provincial governments to improve water services to many businesses. With a combined value of around \$2 million, the grant will allow Niverville to bring town water to the businesses along Main Street from 6th Avenue to the railroad tracks.

Businesses along Main Street currently draw their water from wells. If the proposed project goes through, lines will be run down 5th

Avenue from the water treatment facility.

According to Mayor Myron Dyck, access to town water would lessen the likelihood of problems that are often associated with wells. "If you're on a well, you run the risk of being under a boil water advisory which would affect your staff or clients," he says. "If you couldn't use your well, it would put a strain on your business."

Dyck says many businesses won't even consider setting up shop along Main Street because of the lack of water services. "Some businesses will not come to Niverville until they have the essential utilities in place. They need access

to water, access to fire suppression, and access to proper sewer."

Each business that connects to town water would be subject to a connection fee. The town is currently working with engineers to come up with various payment options and, once that has been determined, they hope to hold a town hall meeting with businesses in the coming weeks.

Kenton Pilek, owner of Spectis Moulders Inc., says the one reason he would like access to town water is for fire suppression.

"I don't need water for processing, but town water would allow me to install a sprinkler system, which would also lower my

insurance costs," he says.

Pilek had been approached to hook up to town water in the past, but the cost was just too high. "One of the reasons we came to town in 1997 was because the town was talking about doing water and that we would have that option to have water for expansion," he explains. "When Fifth Avenue Estates came in, they offered me the option to join but it was far too much money."

Pilek says he will consider connecting to town water if the price is right.

"If it's a matter of a few thousand dollars—it's a no-brainer," he says. "I would continue to maintain my wells but I would hook up for sure."

## IN BRIEF

## Blood Drive Coming to Niverville

The Canadian Blood Services will be in Niverville on December 8 to set up a mobile blood donor clinic. If you're able to donate blood, please consider coming out to the Heritage Centre from 3:00–8:00 p.m.

According to Melanie Giesbrecht, the event director at the Niverville Heritage Centre, the blood drive typically comes to Niverville every second month.

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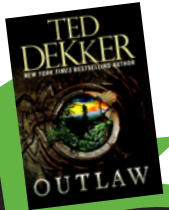
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## Community Builders: Honouring Service and Contribution

**Ferd Klassen, Town of Niverville Fire Chief (1996–2014)**

By Clarence Braun

Ferd Klassen was born in Paraguay and came to Canada with his parents and siblings when he was only 2 months old. His childhood years were spent playing hockey and shooting slingshots and pellet guns.

While in his teen years, along with his siblings he experienced a family breakup that could have devastated him. Ferd and his siblings were taken in by another family member and raised with 9 other children. Like many others who have experienced such challenges, he was faced with difficult choices in the ensuing years—choices that could have led to very different endings.

As a community, we can be grateful for the choices he did make.

My first recollections of Ferd are that he loved hanging out at the Niverville Autobody. Brothers George and Dave Dyck gave him his first opportunity to work, and he became the floor sweeper. Many years later, Ferd went on to purchase the autobody shop. Through the ensuing years, Ferd has purchased more land and expanded the business. He's added more staff over time, putting his focus on providing clients with quality workmanship and a strong service attitude.

At the age of 16, he went from hanging around the fire-fighters in Niverville to joining the department. He went on to serve a full 26 years with the Niverville Fire and Paramedic Service. For the last 18 years, he served as fire chief. He has described the emotional challenges that come with being there to help people who are going through the worst experiences of their lives. Seeing the images that accompany car wrecks, suicides, and the deadly ramifications of the fires he attended all take a toll. That toll isn't something that those of us in the community would necessarily ever know about. After attending to an emergency call where his employee



Ferd Klassen receiving certificate of appreciation at Fire/EMS appreciation night in May 2015.

GLASS FLOOR MEDIA

of 9 years passed away at the age of 28, he knew that it was time to wrap things up.

Ferd has served us well. I am thankful for men such as Ferd, who is a community builder in every sense of the word. I and the citizens of Niverville honour his service and contribution.

While conversing with Ferd, he expressed appreciation to his wife Carisa for her support these many years. He is so grateful for his 3 children, Lauren, Bailey, and Tessa. Relaxing these days involves spending time with his children, working around the yard, and attending Winnipeg Jets hockey games.

### WHAT IS A COMMUNITY BUILDER?

In the last 2 issues of The Citizen, I have chosen to honour those of the builder generation. Alex Fast and Jack Stott, both deceased, were part of a generation that lived through some very challenging times, including 2 world wars and a depression that lasted the better part of a decade.

I believe that we live in a time of diminished honour. By that, I mean that we show little regard and care for those we walk alongside every day. The

result is that most people have to die for us to reflect back on the contributions they made, and that is very sad.

So what is a community builder? Do they have to be seniors at the end of their lives? Is a community builder someone who has gained monetary success? Jesus said that the greatest among us are the servants of all. To me, that defines what a community builder really is: a servant. Someone who exhibits care for others that goes beyond self-interest. We need to ask ourselves: are we living for ourselves, or do we have a heart for others?

Yes, we need business to thrive and prosper. However, I am just as impacted when I meet people who have a passion for social causes. People need to experience what it's like to be loved, valued, and honoured. When they gain a sense of dignity and value for themselves, they can begin to feel hope.

In the coming months, I want to continue to honour the many community builders in this town. Some of them may not be considered prominent, but they are all making a difference by serving others.

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# Commentary

## The Dangers of Extremism

By Greg Fehr

I am not sure if there is a greater sadness than when our fellow man, our human brethren, seeks to kill another of our brethren. War is hell—and this statement can be expanded to include police actions or any other synonym for conflict our leaders can conjure. Like most, I am prepared to experience some sacrifice, some proverbial hell, if the end result is better.

And this is where the disagreement starts.

Very few of us would argue that the world envisioned by ISIS is a distorted and scary place, but let me clarify that “us,” by definition, does not mean the Christian Western world. The “us” is defined by the vast majority of all peoples, regardless of affiliations, beliefs, nationalities, or lack of any of the aforementioned.

When you take a good look at the statements made by people representing the diversity of the world, you can take hope, for no religion is inherently violent; people are or become violent. Sometimes they will leverage pieces of religious teachings or radical interpretations of these, but it is the people themselves who act. Within all religious teachings we can find justification for terrible acts by simply removing them from context or taking figurative examples as literal. Most often,



People in Belgrade lay flowers and light candles in front of Monument of Friendship with France and Serbia.

ADOBE STOCK

these differences result in simple partitions, such as denominations and sects within the teachings. But occasionally we see this manifest in acts of atrocity in the name of religion.

Extremists of any stripe are a danger, and their tool is the ignorant rantings of the ill-informed. They breed hate, creating polarization and fear which strengthens their mandate. Do not misunderstand; I think we all detest the idea of a country where Sharia law is forced upon the entire population.

We would also resent the idea of living under the auspices of extreme interpretations of Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, or Buddhism. How many of our farmers would appreciate giving up their fields to Shevi'it every 7 years under Judaism's halakha law?

Narrow and extreme thought begets hatred, or at times its evil cousins—indifference and intolerance. It is through mutual respect, tolerance, and moderation that our modern world, or at minimum our

great multicultural nation, has been built. I was pleased to hear MP Nina Grewal explain how as a Sikh, she was not only unoffended by Christian customs, but felt great comfort in the expression of freedom this extended for her to celebrate her own faith.

While agreeing to detest extremism, what is the best path to resolution? This is where it gets interesting, and if you think that agreement is easy, look no further than your own small circle on Facebook

to see the conflicting ideas. Take action... support our coalition and bomb their supply lines, cut their leadership through selective drone strikes. Take no action... don't even justify their stupidity with a response, don't fuel their recruitment with continued aggression.

Extremism is the collective and mature version of the playground bully. It thrives on the hatred and division it creates. It is strengthened by the fear of its victims. It plays on

the division and indifference of those in fear to continue to torment the remainder.

We learned in kindergarten that the bully could be beaten through the simple acts of standing up and saying “No,” and then killing them with kindness. Perhaps it is hard to see the application of the elementary school principles here, but I have been reminded many times that everything that is important in life I learned by the end of kindergarten. Based on this, we should not stand with those who preach aggression and retaliation only. Nor with those who sit by and ignore, focused on their own small world and ignore the problems “over there.”

No. We should stand with those who stand for justice. Justice of all sorts. Stand with the Christian churches who are raising money to rebuild the mosque in Peterborough. Stand with those in Yemen decrying the killing of innocent citizens. Stand with those in France, Syria, Iraq, and around the world who are focused on finding peace rather than “winning” a war. If our colonial conquests or global interferences have taught us anything, it is that wars are not won, and it is the innocents who pay the costs of losing.

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# The Joy of Christmas

By Jason Kehler

The Christmas season is upon us once again. For some, this time of year is met with anxiety as they try to find that "perfect gift" for someone. For others, the season is met with busyness as schedules get filled with school Christmas programs, family gatherings, office parties, and the like. For others still, this time of year is met with loneliness or grief as memories of lost loved ones come flooding back.

But there is something about Christmas that is more meaningful to the Christian than any of these things, and that is Jesus Christ.

For Christians, Christmas is about celebrating the birth of the Saviour. There is an old hymn whose opening line states, "Joy to the world, the Lord has come!" We celebrate Christmas not because it's a time for presents, or an excuse to attend another gathering or party. Regardless of whether someone is a Christian or not, we have Christmas because 2,000 years ago Jesus Christ was born into this world to



redeem people to God.

Having said that, there are a few practical ways to maintain focus on Jesus and the reason we celebrate Christmas this season.

First, lend a helping hand. There are many parachurch organizations that get busy during this season especially, and they can always use extra help. Places like Siloam

Mission, Union Gospel Mission, or even our local Helping Hands have an assortment of needs that can be met with just a few hours of volunteer time. But take it a step further. These places need help year-round as well, and one way to continue that focus throughout the year is to become a regular volunteer.

A second option is to give gifts to

organizations that provide opportunities for children around the world. Samaritan's Purse holds an annual drive to fill shoeboxes with toys and other necessities for children in third-world countries. There are organizations that collect toys to distribute to those children from less fortunate families, and all it takes is a little bit of research to find where those organizations are.

A third option is to minimize spending for gifts. A friend I spoke to a few years ago ensures that any amount of money being spent on gifts is also given to the church or parachurch organizations. For instance, if they spend \$100 on gifts, they also donate \$100 to some type of organization. One family I spoke with doesn't give presents at Christmas at all, but rather emphasizes birthdays to keep Jesus as the focus of Christmas.

It can be easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season, yet with a little bit of effort we can keep the focus where it is most important. And for that we can say, "Joy to the world!"

Got something  
to say?

The **Citizen** Niverville, Manitoba

Send your comments to:  
editor@nivervillecitizen.com

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**YES**—The existing infrastructure is enough for now.

**15%**

**NO**—Our schools are seriously overcrowded and more needs to be done.

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**INDIFFERENT**—This issue doesn't affect me.

**0%**



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# Sports & Recreation



Inside the MTS Centre.

## Winnipeg Jets Hit Turbulence



**TIM HIEBERT**

✉ thiebert@nivervillecitizen.com

Somehow the first quarter of the season has already passed and the Jets have certainly seen their share of ups and downs. The season started off with a successful 4-game road trip in the Eastern Conference, coming away with 3 regulation wins. Then came a 3-1 win vs. Calgary in their home opener to give them an impressive 4-1-0 record.

It was tough sledding after that, though, as they only managed another 4 wins in their next 14 games. Within that stretch was a 6-game losing streak, an embarrassing 7-0 loss in Nashville, and

very poor performances against Montreal, Minnesota, and Dallas. They finished their first 20 games with a 9-9-2 record, good for 20 points and a spot in 6th place in the Central Division.

If the Jets have any shot at the playoffs, they must finish no lower than 5th in their division. The Central Division is brutal once again and Winnipeg must find a way to finish ahead of Dallas, St. Louis, Minnesota, Nashville, or Chicago. Not an easy task. It seems likely that both Western wildcard teams will come from the Central, as the Pacific looks much weaker.

The Jets will need to continue to receive a strong performance from Blake Wheeler. Wheeler has been a notoriously slow-starter, but this year has been different. The speedy

forward has been a point-per-game producer with 21 points (8 goals, 13 assists) in the first 20 games. He's been among the NHL's top 10 scorers for most of the early season. Bryan Little has also been racking up points; he is second on the team with 18 points.

One of the biggest developments is the progress of Mark Scheifele. The 2nd-line centre finally looks the part of an NHL player after putting on some much-needed muscle over the summer. When we first saw Scheifele as an 18-year-old in 2011, he was a skinny kid who too easily got knocked off the puck and was falling down on the ice more often than not. At 22, Scheifele has filled out his 6'3" frame and is a force on the ice. With 7 goals in the first 20 games, he's on pace for his

first 25-goal season. His 12 points put him in a tie for 4th in team scoring while his +7 plus/minus trails only Toby Enstrom's +8.

There certainly are no injury excuses right now. The only player to join Grant Clitsome on the injured reserved list is Andrew Copp, who missed 4 games with an upper-body injury. Injuries are inevitable, but the teams that have the most success are often those that have the fewest injuries. Perhaps this will factor in as the season progresses.

November might be the hardest month on the Jets' schedule this year with only 4 home games and 10 road games. Things get a little easier in December with 7 home games and only 5 games on the road. Might be a good time to make up some lost ground.

### EVENT GUIDE

#### Public Skating

Fridays, 3:45-4:45 p.m.  
Saturdays, 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.  
Sundays, 11:00 a.m.-12:15 p.m.  
Helmets are required. Niverville Arena, FREE.

#### Sticks & Pucks

Fridays, 5:00-5:45 p.m.  
Sundays, 12:30-1:15 p.m.  
Helmets are required. Niverville Arena, FREE.

#### Bench League Hockey Drop-In

Tuesdays, 9:30-10:30 p.m.  
Niverville Arena, \$8 drop-in fee.

#### Adult Rec Hockey Drop-In

Thursdays, 9:30-10:30 p.m.  
Niverville Arena, \$10 drop-in fee.

#### Zumba, New Session

Tuesdays, December 8-March 8.  
South End of Arena, 7:30 p.m.  
\$102 (session cost) or \$10 (drop-in cost).

#### Canadian Red Cross Babysitting Course

Saturday, December 12, 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Ages 11+  
South End of Arena, \$50.

#### Fundamentals of Food Safety

December 13, 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.  
South End of Arena, \$117.

#### TUFF-N-UP Bootcamp

Mondays & Wednesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m.  
South End of Arena, \$15 drop-in fee.

#### Holiday Crafts & Activities

Tuesday, December 22.  
Niverville Arena, 2:00-3:30 p.m. FREE.  
Volunteers are needed.

#### Adult CanSkate-Beginner/Intermediate

Wednesdays 9:30-10:30 PM  
Starts January 6, Niverville Arena

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#### Send your event listing to:

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My co-ed soccer team.

CHANTAL PLETT

# For the Love of Sport

**fitville**

## By Chantel Gadiant

cgadiant@nivervillecitizen.com

For the majority of us, we've tried playing a sport or two. We may have played while in school or been on a community team. Or we may have just started playing in adulthood. There are so many different sports out there that anyone and everyone can participate.

Growing up as a child in rural Manitoba had its perks. I got to try out and play lots of different sports in school and in the community. I was encouraged as a child to try as many as I wanted, and not to specialize in one sport alone. I already knew I wasn't going to be

a star athlete at the Olympics; I was playing for the love of sport, being part of team, and having fun of course!

My favorite sports in high school were volleyball, soccer, and basketball. Then I moved on to university, and the sports stopped. They were completely gone from my life. Yeah, I went to exercise in the Gritty Grotto (the old gym in the basement of the Frank Kennedy Centre at the University of Manitoba), but it wasn't the same as playing on a team.

During my last year of university, I convinced some friends to start up an indoor co-ed soccer team. Boy, did it feel great to be

back on a team! It was such a rush to play soccer again, although I was nervous and anxious, having never played indoor soccer before. The field is a quarter of the size of an outdoor soccer field, and there are only 12 people total on the field rather than 22.

We're currently in our third season, with almost the same people we started with, give or take. It has been so much fun playing with a great group of friends, being part of a team, winning together, losing together, and going out for pizza after every game.

I also joined a women's outdoor soccer league this past summer in Winnipeg. I've never had so much

fun playing a competitive sport, with women ages 21 to 50. They were a great group of ladies to play with, and I look forward to playing with them again this coming summer.

Back to my point about sports: everyone and anyone can play. Sports team aren't just for children. You just have to look a little harder to find them as adults, or start up a team with friends. To me, it feels great to be part of a team. I feel welcomed, engaged, and wanted. Consider joining a sport with your spouse, friends, or children. Whether it's a regular occurrence or on a drop-in basis, you'll feel the benefits.

## IN BRIEF

# Holiday Public Skating

By Chantel Gadiant

cgadiant@nivervillecitizen.com

As winter is here and the holidays are right around the corner, don't forget to spend quality time with your family. The Niverville Arena will be hosting free public skating and Sticks & Pucks from December 21-31.

Also join Niverville Recreation on Tuesday, December 22 from 2:00-3:30 p.m. for an afternoon of holiday crafts and other activities. Volunteers are needed. If you're interested in helping out, please contact recreation@whereyoubelong.ca.

## HOLIDAY PUBLIC SKATING TIMES

- Monday, December 21: 2:00-4:45 p.m.
- Tuesday, December 22: 1:00-4:45 p.m.
- Wednesday, December 23: 2:00-4:45 p.m.
- Thursday, December 24: 9:00-11:00 a.m.
- Monday, December 28: 2:00-4:45 p.m.
- Tuesday, December 29: 2:00-4:45 p.m.
- Wednesday, December 30: 2:00-4:45 p.m.
- Thursday, December 31: 9:00-11:00 a.m.

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## 9 PROFILE



KRISTA SHIDEL

## Connor Shidel: Athlete of the Month

Connor is a newcomer to the hockey world. He developed his passion for hockey after his grandpa took him to his first Jets game last March. Connor then decided he would like to try hockey and joined Niverville's hockey program this past October. He has developed lots of skills, including his new love of goal-tending.

Connor is 9 years old and in Grade 4. His favourite subjects include math, science, and social studies. Connor has participated in numerous other community programs, such as baseball, curling, and art. He enjoys playing soccer at school and in our front yard, along with floor hockey and street hockey. Connor is also a creative and talented "architect." He loves creating new designs using Lego or Minecraft.

# Varsity Girls Headed to Provincials

By Carl Fast

The Niverville Varsity Girls are having an outstanding volleyball season. They are currently ranked 4th in 1A and are headed to Russell, Manitoba for Provincials from November 26-28.

The team has posted a record of 34-6 in matches played this year, including winning 4 of the 6 tournaments they entered and finishing 8-2 in their zone, which is highly competitive. They were able to beat Grunthal, their rival, at home this year. On November 13, they won their regional playdowns to advance to Provincials.

The team has 6 Grade 12 players on the team (Kyla Fast, Shelby Verrier, Sam Schmidt, Bryanne Tottle, Alexandra Friesen, and Jordyn Olafson),



Niverville's Varsity Girls team at the regional playdowns.

HEATHER FAST

4 students from Grade 11 (Megan Sawatzky, Cristal Falk, Danae Ruchkall, and Sarah Lindsey), and 1 player from Grade 9 (Julia Beer).

Jordyn Olafson and Kyla Fast were selected for the graduating all-star team, which is selected from all the A, AA, and AAA teams in Manitoba.

As a coach, I am extremely proud of what this group has accomplished this year and look forward to seeing them compete at Provincials.

## Clipper Ice Sports Hits Mid-Season

By Jason Hudson

We are now partway through the hockey season and our parent association, Eastman Hockey, is trying something a little different this year to keep things competitive. We will be seeing a realignment within each division after 6 games to ensure that the second part of the season is as competitive as possible for the Novice and Pee Wee divisions.

Our Bantam B team has started the year off strong, going 3-0 to date.

In the Squirt division, the kids are well into the new cross-ice format that is going to allow them to have more puck touches and improve essential skills that will help them for years to come. They have also held their scheduling meeting to set up games against other communities to give the kids some game exposure.

Niverville recently hosted an Atom level tournament that unfortunately did not see any of the CIS teams make it to the finals. It was a hard-fought weekend of hockey and a huge success despite the on-ice record.

Next up in the coming month, the Pee Wee division will host a tournament, and the Novice A team will hit the road for a tournament in Portage la Prairie the weekend of November 27.

Clipper Ice Sports (CIS) will launch its own website soon through a Steinbach sports equipment store that will allow everyone to order their very own Clipper gear.

Attendance has been great at most of the games, which is great to see. Hope to see you at the rink soon for some exciting hockey action.



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Niverville's ShopGym crew at the 2015 Imagine Run.

CRYSTAL STOTT

# CrossFit: More than Just a Gym

By Sylvia St. Cyr

sstcyr@nivervillecitizen.com

Many people have heard the word CrossFit but don't quite know what it means. So I'll start with the definition. CrossFit: constantly carried, high-intensity, functional movement.

Greg Glassman and Lauren Jenai founded CrossFit Inc. in 2000, with the original gym in Santa Cruz, California.

In 2010, Crystal Stott started doing CrossFit. There were only three people working out together. They called it ShopGym.

"I never imagined at the time that it would become what it has for us," says Stott, "but I definitely knew it was something special and that I needed to share it with other people."

Two years later, they moved to the current Niverville location, by the train tracks, and

offered an intro class that June. Today, CrossFit Niverville (CN) has 7 coaches and around 75 members—90 if you include the kids program.

A big misconception is that you have to already be in great shape to get into CrossFit.

"Everyone can do CrossFit," Stott says. "We have members in the broadest age ranges (3-70) and fitness levels. Every movement and workout can be scaled to your ability, and you will not hold people back or slow down the class. We all have to start off exactly like that: overweight and out of shape."

So what sets CrossFit apart from just joining a regular gym?

Irene Carriere has been coming to CN for 3 years. "I had had a gym membership for quite some time and always struggled with what to do when I got there," she says. "Doing CrossFit, you never have to worry about your own

programming."

Denise Poettker, a competitive ultimate frisbee player for 18 years, has been going to CrossFit for 2 years. "CN allows me to invest in myself by dealing with my daily stressors in a supportive environment. CN is more than just a gym, it's a community."

Bryan Gould competed in 4 CrossFit competitions this past year. What does he enjoy most? "It's the people and the friendships that you build there," Gould says. "I find it much more rewarding watching someone else achieve a personal record or a skill than anything I've ever done in the gym. The group dynamic also makes it easier to stay motivated and on track."

CN also offers the Silvers Class for those aged 55+. "This past year at CN has made a huge difference in my physical and mental well-being," says

Debbie Fewster, who has attended the class for over a year. "I will never regret joining this group of dedicated coaches and encouraging patrons."

"Everyone is accepted without judgment," Stott finishes, "and the incredible thing is that we can have a room full of people with different beliefs, jobs, athletic (or non-athletic) backgrounds, and lifestyles, but when we gather around the whiteboard, we are all here for the same purpose, and that connects us. It's really hard to find that nowadays."

On top of CrossFit, Niverville's location also offers a kids program, Muay Thai kickboxing, kettlebell, weightlifting, teen strength and conditioning, and Bootfit (a ladies-only class).

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

■ [www.crossfitniverville.com](http://www.crossfitniverville.com)

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# Entertainment

## Niverville's Dancing Queen Heading to Poland



SYLVIA  
ST. CYR

✉ sstcyr@nivervillecitizen.com

When you think back to being a 12-year-old, what comes to mind? Hanging out with friends, going to school, and riding your bike might be a few things. For one Niverville girl, it means travelling to Poland for an international dance competition.

Brynne Abgrall has been dancing since she was 4 years old, starting her dance career at Elite Dance Academy (now Prairie Soul Dance Company) in Niverville.

Now, at age 12, Abgrall's a full-time dance student at Shelley Shearer School of Dance in Winnipeg.

"I have been competing locally since I was 4 years old, and internationally since I was 10," says Abgrall.

These dance competitions have taken her all over North America, including Montreal, Las Vegas (twice), San Francisco, and most recently Calgary.



Brynne Abgrall performing.

MCMASTERS PHOTOGRAPHY

Abgrall's favourite style of dance is modern, although she also trains in ballet, jazz, lyrical, tap, and hip-hop. Being involved in all these different types of dance doesn't leave time for much else other than school.

"I train 15 and a half hours a week

for my regular [dance] classes, plus extra rehearsal times for my solos and small groups," Abgrall says. "Also, when I have rehearsals for Poland, I am dancing approximately another 12 hours on top of my regular classes."

Spending this much time and

dedication in dance, on top of her natural talent, lends to a very promising future in dance. "I would definitely want to continue dance after high school to hopefully dance professionally or choreograph/teach professionally."

Abgrall's next competition is in December, taking her all the way to Poland for the World Dance Championship for ballet, jazz, and modern dance. She will be representing Team Canada West. 23 other students make up Team Canada West, all travelling along with parent chaperones to the championship.

So how does she feel when she's dancing? "How I feel is something that I can't even describe. Being able to create movement to music is something so important to me, and being able to tell a story through dance is the best feeling in the world."

The team leaves December 5 and will be competing from December 7-12. If you would like to cheer Abgrall on by watching her compete, visit the International Dance Organizations website below. They will be live streaming the entire championships.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ [www.ido-dance.com](http://www.ido-dance.com)



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## EVENT GUIDE

**Small Town Saints**

November 28, December 12 | 9:00 p.m.  
Hesplers Tavern, Niverville. Free.

**A Christmas Carol, One-Man Show**

November 27 | 7:00 p.m.  
November 28 | 8:00 p.m.  
Jake Epp Library, Steinbach. \$10.

**Southeast Art & Sale Show**

November 28 | 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
Clearspring Mall, Steinbach

**Old Time Country Band**

December 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 | 7:00 p.m.  
Pat Porter Active Living Centre, Steinbach. \$1.

**High School Musical On Stage**

December 2–5 | 7:00 p.m.  
SRSS Theatre, Steinbach. \$15.

**Dessert Theatre**

December 3–4 | 6:00 p.m.  
Morris Multiplex. \$20.

**Festival Of Christmas Praise**

December 4–5 | 7:30 p.m.  
Providence University College, Otterburne. Free.

**WSO 2015 Holiday Tour**

December 8 | 7:30 p.m.  
Steinbach Mennonite Church. \$5–\$26.

**Painting On The Prairies**

December 8 | 7:00 p.m.  
Hespler's Cookhouse & Tavern, Niverville. \$35.

**NCI Grades 5–8: Christmas Extravaganza Variety Show Of Awesomeness!**

December 9 | 7:00 p.m.  
NCI Gym, Niverville. Silver Offering.

**The Color & Matt Falk**

December 9 | 7:00 p.m.  
Maranatha, Niverville. \$10.

**NES: Christmas Traditions Around The World**

December 16–17 | 1:30 p.m./7:00 p.m.  
NES Gym, Niverville. Free.

**Games Night**

December 16 | 6:00 p.m.  
Jake Epp Library, Steinbach. Free.

**Steinbach Christmas Market**

December 19 | 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
Mennonite Heritage Village, Steinbach. Free.

**Send your event listing to:**

mfalk@nivervillecitizen.com



Brady Dyck and Evan St. Cyr perform this summer at Heaps of Dreeps.

DALE PLETT

# Local Musicians Head to Nashville

**By Matt Falk**

mfalk@nivervillecitizen.com

Nashville, Tennessee is nicknamed Music City. It's the home of the Grand Ole Opry and the Country Music Hall of Fame. And recently, local musicians Evan St. Cyr and Brady Dyck travelled there to take their songs to the next level. Accompanying them on the trip was Gerry St. Cyr, part-owner of Arcade Studios.

"Almost anywhere you turn,

especially downtown, there's live music," says Dyck. "Basically every single bar has either a band or a player."

Dyck's latest album, *Backroads*, is on iTunes and his fans rave over the fact that he plays all the instruments on the tracks himself. This multitalented solo act may seem like a lone wolf, but nothing could be further from the truth. Evan, besides being Brady's friend, is also his producer, guitar player, and co-writer.

Brady, Evan, and Gerry went to Nashville to meet with Clay Mills, a Grammy-nominated writer with songs cut from bands like Little Big Town, Lady Antebellum, and Reba McEntire. "We brought some of our new songs to him and he gave us professional insight on our writing," says Dyck, "[and he] helped us rewrite some of it."

The point of all this is to help the duo in the writing/recording of a brand new Brady Dyck album. "What we learned [from Clay and

Nashville] was a big step to get this ball rolling," says Dyck.

These types of creative collaborations are essential in any art form. "We learned a lot," says Dyck. "We're very excited to record and get these new songs out to everybody."

The album will be recorded by Arcade Studios in Niverville. An EP is rumoured to be released some time in the spring of 2016.

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Arcade Studios main control room.

DUSTIN KRAHN

# State-of-the-Art Recording Studio Aims High

One of Niverville's best kept secrets, Arcade Studios has set the stage for a bright future in the music industry.



MATT FALK

mfalk@nivervillecitizen.com

Arcade Studios is a state-of-the-art digital music production facility located beside Slice of Life in Niverville, and it's accredited by Manitoba Film and Sound. Over the past 2 years, they've recorded an LP for the rock band Whiskey Talks and produced 13 singles. And that all happened while the facility was being built! Ambitious doesn't seem to do them justice.

The team behind Arcade Studios is Evan St. Cyr, Gerry St. Cyr, and Marshall Krahn. Evan and Gerry had been recording music together for over 5 years on their own, but as they grew they sought the help and expertise of Krahn, a long-time friend, producer, and graduate of Mid Ocean School of Media Arts. Krahn also interned at a private studio in Los Angeles. He instantly became an asset to the father/son team.

Shortly thereafter, they produced local artist Jordan St.

Cyr's first solo LP, "Anchors." "We are still, to this day, proud of that album," says Evan. "It brought Jordan a lot of success."

Soon the team set their sights even bigger, looking for a new location that would better suit their growing needs and aspirations. That's when Arcade Studios was founded.

The studio is beautifully designed and is much larger than it looks from the outside. Inside one finds an array of custom woodwork, from a 20-by-20-foot feature wall to handcrafted workstations, windows, doors, and flooring. The studio houses a large piano and drum room on the main floor and two vocal/guitar booths on the second floor, alongside a control room. All the rooms have large plexiglass windows so it feels like one big open space.

"We've put a lot of thought into creating a comfortable and creative environment, but that is only the start," says Krahn. "We are after the highest quality of recording and production, so we have also fully equipped the studio with

industry-standard gear."

At the heart of the studio is the Avid HDX system, running on supercharged Apple MacPro computers. Arcade also boasts an arsenal of top-of-the-line plugins, sample libraries, and a mic locker full of top-end microphones like Neumann, Akg, Royer, and Mojave.

This exclusive studio has no

desire to be an open house to just any artist. They're looking for people as passionate about music as they are. Their goal is simple: to be a part of making great music.

"That's been the goal since we sought this thing out," says Gerry St. Cyr, "to work with the best, learn, and get better."

They've been working hard for a long time and have no

plans on stopping. "We'd love nothing more than to build a team around us," says Evan. "We strive for quality at Arcade, and we believe in the hard-working artists, and getting them the results they deserve."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.arcadestudios.com

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## The Watchers Chronicle

By Evan Braun | Local Author

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Niverville, Manitoba  
**The Citizen**



# Author Sets Sights on Future

By Matt Falk

mfalk@nivervillecitizen.com

In Grade 1, Evan Braun won third place in a CBC writing contest, and the rest, as they say, is history. The story was called "The Magic Christmas Tree." It was about going to a tree farm in Beausejour with his father to pick out a tree, which then happened to have magic powers.

"Riveting stuff!" jokes Evan. He became set on writing after that and he's never looked back. "I never seriously considered doing anything else for a living."

After high school, Braun went on to Red River College and graduated with a Creative Communications diploma. At Red River, he learned the building blocks of good writing and built off that foundation in his career in fiction. "I highly recommend a journalism degree for anyone considering a future in writing," says Braun, "whether or not journalism is their endgame."

Growing up in Niverville shaped him in many ways. His fellow small town residents have been eager and willing to celebrate and support his talent. It's precisely that kind of



Local author Evan Braun.

WADE KEHLER, STUDIO 479

support that develops potential artists into professional artists. "There's something about being a big fish in a small pond that breeds confidence," says Braun.

Braun's breakout happened in 2012 when he published the first book in his trilogy. The Watchers Chronicle is made up of 3 books: *The Book of Creation*, *The City of Darkness*, and *The Law of Radiance*. His books were well-received and well-reviewed. The Winnipeg Free Press said, "There is an

important difference between someone like Dan Brown and Evan Braun: Braun writes with some literary sophistication."

The trilogy was first conceived in the mind of Braun's co-author Clint Byars, a good friend. When Byars shared the plot with Braun, he was hooked. "The initial goal wasn't to write a novel," says Braun, "but rather a screenplay." After some time passed, the team decided instead to craft the story into a novel.

Aside from being a novelist

with 3 books completed and more on the way, Braun also works as a book editor, working on anywhere from 20-30 books per year for clients across Canada and beyond. And he does it all from his home in Niverville.

He also works as the editor of this newspaper. I should point out, despite my persistence, that his humility and tact prevented me from writing this article about him for months.

You may wonder what the life of a writer and editor looks like. Braun usually wakes up at 11:00 in the morning and does the bulk of his work between 10:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. "It's a very productive and creative time for me," says Braun. "I really enjoy the peacefulness and lack of distractions."

With the success of his first 3 novels behind him, Braun is looking towards the future. His next 2 books, which are unrelated to the Watchers Chronicle, are more or less already written. "And there's a lot more where that came from," says Braun.

We sure hope so.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.thebookofcreation.net

## Elementary School Announces Christmas Program

By Matt Falk

mfalk@nivervillecitizen.com

The Niverville Elementary School will be holding their annual Christmas program on December 16-17 at the school's gymnasium, with 2 shows ea-

ch day: a matinee at 1:30 p.m. and an evening performance at 7:00 p.m. The show will feature students from Kindergarten, Grade 1, and Grade 2. Only half of each grade will be represented each respective day.

The title of the program is

"Christmas Traditions Around the World." The students will read poems and sing carols from different nations. An emphasis will be given to American, English, Welsh, Ukrainian, and German customs.

The event is open to the

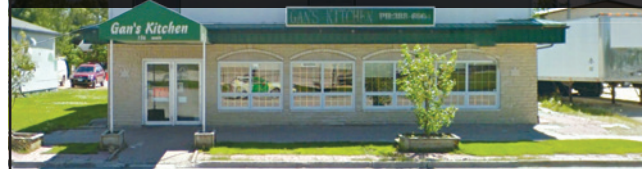
public. Principal of Niverville Elementary School Judy Hiebert says, "Everyone is welcome to attend."

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Briana Bloom, 14, poses with her sock puppet creations.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

## From Adversity Comes Artistry

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

It's been said that one can only see the stars when it gets dark enough. Briana Bloom is a testament to that. Briana looks like your average 14-year-old. She is demure and sweet. Sitting cross-legged in blue jeans across from me, we are surrounded by a gathering of button-eyed monkeys and other delightful creatures of her making.

Briana is also a spirited young entrepreneur. Guided by a strong artistic bent, she was inspired to create her sock monkey business during a time when fear and infirmity should have been her focus.

Her mother, Leanne, tells about the past year, as Briana struggled with weight loss, cramps, exhaustion, sore throats, and bleeding mouth ulcers. After a series of tests, Briana was diagnosed with paediatric Crohn's disease, a chronic inflammatory digestive tract condition with no cure.

The doctors reacted quickly,

administering a strong drug used in cancer treatment. Briana spent the next 4 months on the couch surrounded by IV poles and medical equipment. Due to the mouth ulcers and swollen throat, the family had to tube-feed her daily and her condition became an around-the-clock vigil. Already a slender girl, Briana had lost 20 pounds, bringing her weight well under 100.

As her condition improved, she sought ways to kill the monotony. Inspired by a sock monkey she'd seen at a craft sale, she had the family dig up orphaned socks and craft supplies from around the house. Though she'd never sewn anything, she researched patterns online and was soon stitching together squishy, loveable primates.

"It was something to do to keep my hands busy," Briana says. "I really didn't know where it was going to go."

As her collection grew, the monkeys became tokens of appreciation to her many

visitors and well-wishers. "I loved seeing how it could make people smile," she says, beaming. "Something so simple."

With some word of mouth, soon Briana was making sock monkeys to sell. Her dad, Chris, began taking orders at work, and before Briana knew it she was creating custom sock monkeys, baby owls, fluffy llamas, plush animals, and sock bunnies. She realized that she was the CEO of her very own business, now called Cute As A Button. \$1 dollar from every order is donated to the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada.

"Briana's name means 'strong one,'" says Leanne. "I can't think of a more perfect name for her. She walks the hard road with so much grace and humility. Through all of that, she just keeps giving. I'm so blessed."

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ [cuteasabuttonbybri.wordpress.com](http://cuteasabuttonbybri.wordpress.com)



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# Decorating for the Holidays

**By Kelsey Kosman**

Dollhouse Design

For most of us, Christmas is a special time of year accompanied by the sights, sounds, and smells of the season. Simply put, it is a wonderful time for sensory overload. I have to admit, though, that I sometimes find it quite overwhelming. Don't get me wrong: I love all of the celebrations and food, but my struggle comes from the fact that I am a self-described minimalist when it comes to design and décor.

My clients seek advice on staging and decorating all the time, and my catchphrase is often "less is more." I truly believe that a home with minimal clutter will help declutter the

brain. This principle is nearly impossible to achieve during the month of December, with all of the lights, metallic ribbon, and dancing Santa Claus figurines.

I find myself currently in a holiday-decorating slump. Having two small children has left me without the desire to put many decorations out. If I do, I know it will add more to my plate while having to worry about the kids breaking something and hurting themselves. Lately, however, while browsing the Christmas aisles, I've heard the pleas from the little people in my life. I think the time has finally come to throw my hands up and surrender. A bit.

While preparing for the

holidays, we can and should still apply the basic principles of decorating. It is important to think of your house as one—a series of spaces linked together by hallways and walls. Therefore, it makes sense to have a common theme and style. This doesn't mean that each design element has to be the same. Each piece should be displayed with the intention of complementing the other pieces, to strengthen the décor as a whole.

Colour is an easy way to create a theme. For example, you might pick 3 or 4 colours and use them in varying shades throughout the house.

Naturally, the Christmas tree becomes the focal point during this season. It inevitably

demand attention. Whatever colour scheme you've chosen, remember to incorporate it into the tree trimmings. Repetition is key to create a cohesive design, and helps with the smooth transition from one space to the next. By reintroducing a colour, pattern, or texture, you get a little closer to achieving a magazine-worthy space.

It may take a bit more convincing for me to buy that 6-foot light-up snowman that the kids want to display in our living room, but I'm willing, now more than ever, to add a bit more tinsel in our lives.

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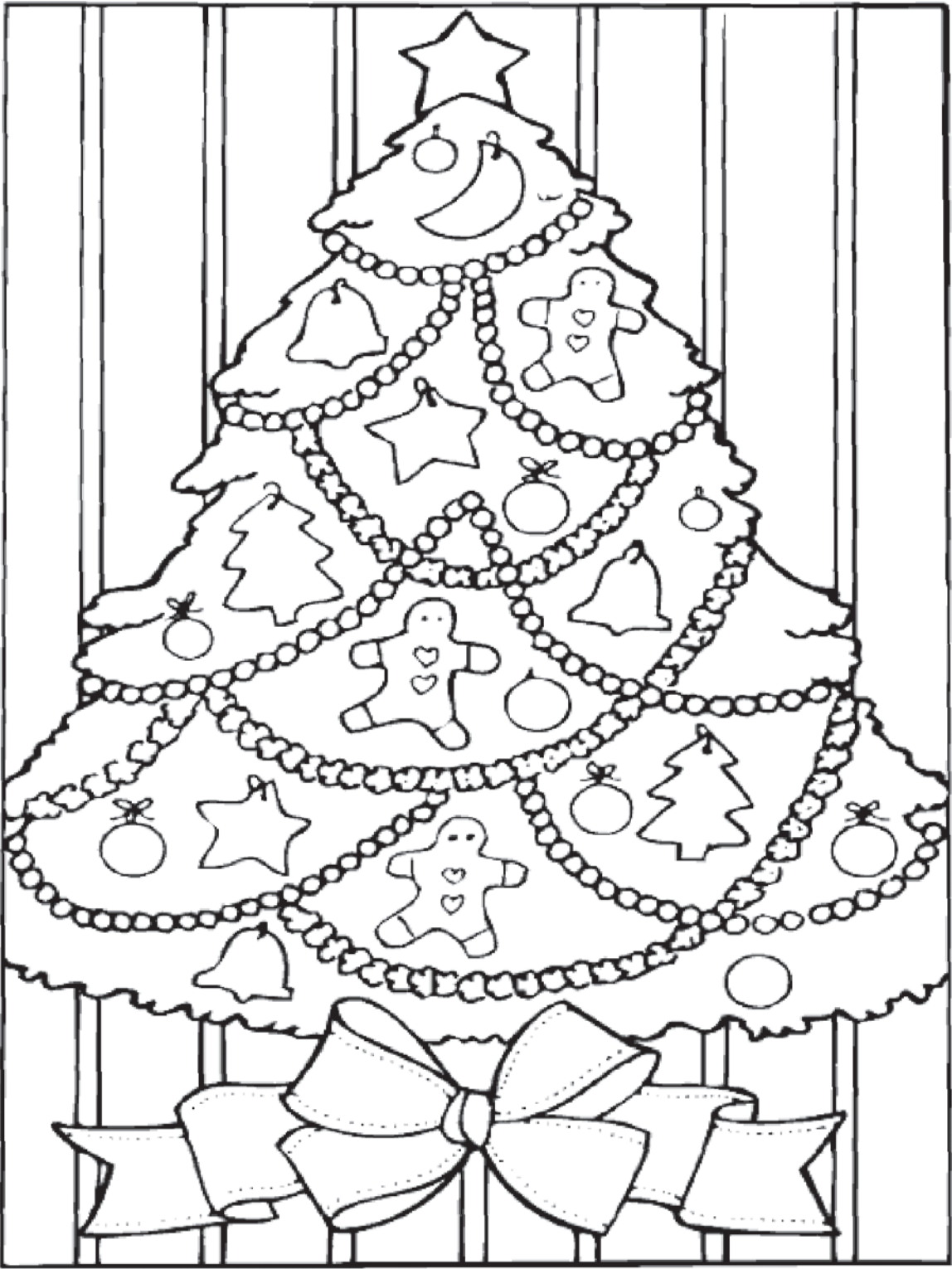
Colouring Contest

Kids twelve years of age and under are eligible to win a prize, to be provided by contest's sponsor. Drop off completed artwork at the sponsoring business by 5:00 p.m. on the 15th of the month. The winner will be notified on or before the 17th. Should the sponsor not hear back from the winner in a timely manner, a new winner will be selected. A photo of the winner will be posted in the following issue.

DROP OFF COMPLETED ENTRIES TO:

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DENTAL CENTRE

Located on the main floor of the Heritage Centre  
111 - 2nd Ave South



Name \_\_\_\_\_

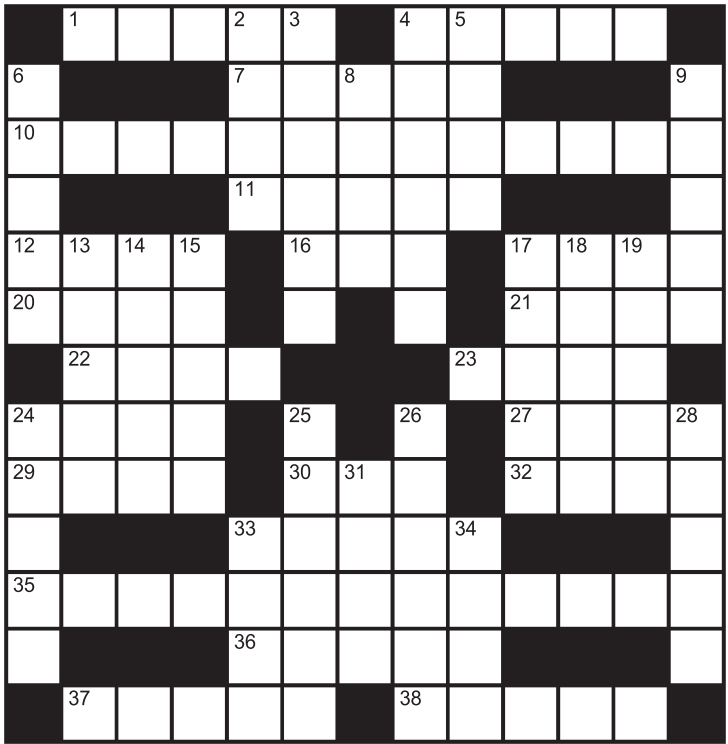
Age \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone number \_\_\_\_\_



Last Month's Winner  
Kira Friesen  
Age: 10

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



- Across**

  - 1. Extremely small
  - 4. Fruit
  - 7. Take pleasure in
  - 10. Officer ranking below a lieutenant
  - 11. Swellings
  - 12. Weapons
  - 16. Enemy
  - 17. Saturate
  - 20. First son of Adam and Eve
  - 21. Ponder intently
  - 22. Haul
  - 23. Snug
  - 24. Pillar
  - 27. Peruse
  - 29. Shortform of Elizabeth
  - 30. Little --, pop star
  - 32. Female given name
  - 33. Take away by force
  - 35. State in SE Australia
  - 36. Result
  - 37. Consecrate
  - 38. Nuisances
- Down**

  - 2. Restraint
  - 3. Something made only once
  - 4. Unlawfully distilled Irish whiskey
  - 5. Sight organs
  - 6. Son of Abraham
  - 8. Martial art
  - 9. Post
  - 13. Lines extending from the center of a circle
  - 14. Bogs
  - 15. Trap
  - 17. Fungal reproductive cell
  - 18. Seeped
  - 19. Of Nordic stock
  - 24. Long flat piece of timber
  - 25. Rebroadcasts
  - 26. Clean dishes
  - 28. Flower
  - 31. Examines carefully
  - 33. Worries
  - 34. Affectedly dainty

Answers to this month's puzzle can be found in the Classified section on page 35.

Are you an amateur (or professional) journalist?

We are looking for reporters from New Bothwell, Landmark, Île des Chênes, Ste. Agathe, St. Adolphe, and Otterburne to join our freelance news team.

Contact Evan Braun at:  
editor@nivervillecitizen.com





# BOOK YOUR CLASSIFIED AD TODAY! Email: [info@nivervillecitizen.com](mailto:info@nivervillecitizen.com)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Congratulations!

Congratulations to our mayor, Myron Dyck on his recent marriage to Sheri Braun. Wishing you both all the best!

### Correction

In the November 2015 article "Hockey Season Kicks into Gear," the Bantam Girls Hockey team was incorrectly identified as a AA team. They are actually an A1 team. We apologize for the error.

## SPACE FOR RENT/LEASE



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## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



The Niverville Olde Tyme Country Fair has several volunteer positions that need to be filled on our committee, including:

- **Secretary**
- **Main Stage Coordinator assistant(s)**
- **Children's Entertainment Coordinator assistant(s)**
- **In-house Photographer/Videographer**
- **Pursue and complete detailed grant applications**

Even if none of these positions sound like they would work for you, we openly welcome any fresh minds with new ideas and will find a fit for you somewhere utilizing your specific skill set.

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## JOB POSTINGS



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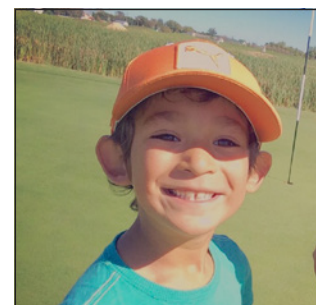
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## BIRTHDAYS

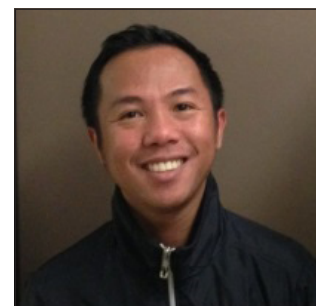


**Happy 60th Clare! You are a remarkable husband, father and papa, and you are loved.**



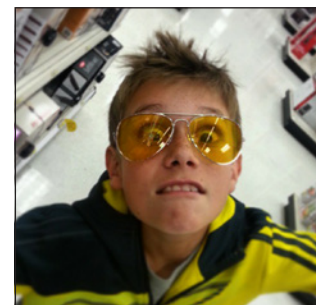
### Happy 7th Birthday Hudson!

Thank you for making us smile and laugh each day. We are so proud of you buddy! Love you lots! Love Mom, Dad and Taylor



### Happy birthday, Joey!

Niverville wouldn't be the same without you!



### "THE BEAN" is 12!

Have a great year Brendan! Love from Mom, Dad, & Maddie

## This Month's Crossword Puzzle Answers

1	M	I	C	R	O	5	P	E	A	C	H
6	I	7	E	N	J	O	Y	3			
10	S	U	B	L	I	E	U	T	E	N	A
11	N	O	D	E	S						
12	A	R	M	S	16	F	O	E	17	S	O
13											
14											
15											
16											
17											
18											
19											
20	C	A	I	N	F	N	21	P	O	R	E
22	D	R	A	G	23	C	O	Z	Y		
24	P	I	E	R	25	R	W	26	R	E	A
27	L	I	S	E	30	E	V	A	32	E	D
31	A	W	R	E	S	T					
33	N	E	W	S	O	U	T	H	W	A	L
34											
35											
36											
37	B	L	E	S	38	P	E	S	T	S	

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