

# The Citizen

Niverville, Manitoba

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VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2016

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Mayor Myron Dyck addresses community members about Main Street water proposal.

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# Hemp Merger Creates Opportunities for Growth

Manitoba Harvest has acquired Hemp Oil Canada, bringing together two of the world's leading hemp food processors.

By Eric Peterson

Hemp Oil Canada's striking new processing facility in Ste. Agathe is quickly becoming a local landmark and source of curiosity for many. But as it turns out, the move to their shiny new digs off Highway 75 is just one of the big changes taking place.

Last year, Winnipeg's Manitoba Harvest acquired HOC in a deal bringing together two of the world's leading hemp food processing companies, both based here in Manitoba.

Shaun Crew, President and founder of Hemp Oil Canada, claims the deal was a natural fit.

"It gives both parties room to continue to grow," notes Crew. "It just made a lot of sense strategically."

Kelly Saunderson, Manager of Corporate and Public Affairs for Manitoba Harvest, says the two companies had always been friendly competitors and that the coming together of the two hemp giants provides "a new synergy."

"It's business as usual for both companies," notes

Saunderson. She adds that both firms are hemp-exclusive. "All we're ever going to do is make hemp products. Together we can be more cohesive partners, making it easier for everyone to try hemp foods."

The deal really does make sense from a number of perspectives. Both companies have been forerunners in the hemp food business since hemp was relegalized by the federal government in 1998. Hemp Oil Canada is a dominant force in the hemp ingredient field while

Manitoba Harvest is an industry leader with their brand name food items, including the popular Hemp Hearts line of products.

As the years have passed, both Crew and Saunderson have noted a change in how the public perceives their products. Gone are the days when many people associated hemp with their vaguely hippy brother-in-law. Now, more and more of us see hemp-based food products as part of a healthier lifestyle.

Crew marvels at how far the industry and his company have come from the early days. "There was no market, no products, and no processing," he says. Now it's a completely different story. "It's here to stay. It's really taken on a life of its own."

Saunderson sums up hemp's growing appeal. "It tastes great, is easy to use, and good for you."

Although research shows hemp food products can currently be found in only about three percent of Canadian



MANITOBA HARVEST

homes and less than one percent of American households, those figures represent a gigantic leap from a decade ago, and momentum is building. The Canadian Health Food Association has just put hemp on its list of top five health food trends for 2016, while hemp foods have garnered some positive publicity recently from big-time media like Canada AM and *The Washington Post*.

At the forefront of it all,

you'll find two Manitoba companies working together to help hemp reach its potential—including the guys from Ste. Agathe with the cool-looking new 35,000-square-foot building that has so many people talking.

"It's really the realization of the vision we had 18 years ago when we started this," says Crew. "It's kind of a dream come true that we built this industry to the point you could justify putting up this facility."

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

The advertising deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the 15th of each month. The paper will be distributed the last week of every month.

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

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# Adventure Power Products Gets New Store in Île-des-Chênes



Adventure Power Products' new location in Île-des-Chênes.

DEREK ROTH



Adventure Power Products in Île-des-Chênes is currently building a new, bigger store right beside its old location on Quest Boulevard.

The new location will be over 10,000 square feet and include a 6,000-square-foot showroom. Their previous space was 6,200 square feet, which was shared with another business, so this is a big upgrade.

"We promote Adventure to

be a one-stop shop for power products and power sports," says Derek Roth, one of the owners. "To be able to walk into one location and shop the full line of Kawasaki products, Suzuki products, Cub Cadet, Stihl, Legend boats and pontoons, Mercury Outboards, and Branson tractors makes us unique."

Adventure actually started out of Roth's parents' backyard in 2007. Roth, Frank Cicco, and Ron Skrobutan have owned Adventure Power Products since it moved to Île-des-Chênes back in 2009.

"We started Adventure

with the idea that if you could offer people a diverse mix of products, items they need like mowers, snow blowers, trimmers, belts, etc., and also offer the fun side, such as ATVs, motorcycles, boats, sleds, and all the accessories and clothing that go with it, and truly earn that customer's business, confidence, and respect, then they would keep coming back. We have continued to grow every year with that philosophy," Roth says.

Spring and fall are their busiest times, since people are often anticipating the upcoming riding seasons.

"I would say our off-road products, ATVs, and side by sides [are our best-selling products]," says Roth. "But we are launching a new full line of street bikes for Kawasaki, Suzuki, and Royal Enfield this year, so we expect a battle for our bestsellers! Legend boats and pontoons will also be a new addition to the Adventure lineup, and despite the frigid temps we are already seeing a lot of interest from customers."

As with any vehicle, it will eventually need to be repaired. Sports vehicles like bikes, boats, and ATVs are no different. Adventure offers a full

service repair facility to all their customers.

"Our first commitment is to understand all people that visit our store are extraordinary customers and they deserve an experience to match that description," Roth says.

Cobblestone Homes are the builders of the new store, which is anticipated to be ready by the end of March.

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# Providence Unveils Bachelor of Science

**Evan Braun**

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

At a ceremonial ground-breaking event on January 14, Providence University College made some big announcements regarding its facility and slate of programs next fall. In addition to the previously unveiled Bachelor of Business Administration, a Bachelor of Science degree will be available.

To accommodate these two new programs, Providence has begun a substantial renovation of a 7,000-square-foot space previously utilized by the theatre department. The same space was also home to the school's dining hall before the opening of the Reimer Student Life Centre.

The new space will include two new classrooms, with a total capacity for 75 students, 24 laboratory workstations, four faculty offices, and two networked seminar rooms. A 3,500-square-foot exterior

courtyard will also be accessible from the new facility, which is estimated to be complete in May.

"Growing our offerings in business and science are key steps along the journey into our vision," says Cameron McKenzie, Academic Dean. "And it's our hope that this programming will create pathways for Providence graduates to enter into the careers that are shaping the life and future of society."

McKenzie called this a once in a generation opportunity to move Providence into the next chapter of its story.

Gordon Giesbrecht, Chair of the Providence Board of Governors, is passionate about science—and specifically about encouraging the study of science in a faith context.

"What is the value of study science in a faith environment? Over the last 20 or 30 years, I have been asked many times how you can be a scientist and be a Christian," says

Giesbrecht. "I have a sign up in my lab that's been there for over 20 years, and it says that science is the discovery of God's world."

Giesbrecht is well known for his work in the field of physiology, studying specifically the ways in which extreme environments impact the body.

"Christianity does not require the suspension of logic or the scientific process or rigor. In fact, I say that Christianity actually demands that we value the scientific process. Science and Christianity are not mutually exclusive ideas," Giesbrecht says. "I also tell people, and this is an important point, that though everything in the Bible is yet to be proven, there have not been any scientific discoveries or evidence that has disproven anything in the Bible."

The Bachelor of Science will include training in biology and chemistry, preparing students to pursue further studies in nursing and physiotherapy.



From Left: Kelvin Goertzen (MLA for Steinbach), Gregg Plett (Three Way Builders), Cliff Graydon (MLA for Emerson), Ted Falk (MP for Provencher), Gordon Giesbrecht (Providence Board Chair), Chase Harms (Student Council President), Jeremy Funk (Assistant Professor of Business Administration), David Johnson (Providence President), Dennis Hiebert (Professor of Sociology and Department Head of Arts & Sciences), Natasha Loge (Business student), and Cameron McKenzie (Academic Dean of Providence University College).

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# Town Council Meets with Community Members to Discuss Water Proposal



**NATALIE  
BATKIS**

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On January 18, Niverville Town Council held a meeting with business owners and residents to discuss the scope of the Main Street/Fifth Avenue Water Main Project. Approximately 50 people attended the meeting, which was hosted by Chamber of Commerce President Melvin Buhler. Mayor Myron Dyck and Bill Brandt, a consulting engineer from WSP Engineering, led the discussion.

The cost of the \$2 million water project will be split three ways: the federal and the provincial government are contributing two-thirds of the project under the Building Canada Fund grant, the town is contributing \$100,000, and the remaining \$600,000 will be covered by property owners based on the length of the waterline fronting their properties.

The amount each property owner will pay is based on a per-foot frontage fee, approximately \$53.44 per foot. This fee does not include the cost of the meter and hooking up to individual plumbing systems. Town Council has given property owners two payment options: they can either pay a lump sum within 30 days of the project completion or pay it over a 20-year term.

Days prior to the town hall meeting, business owners and residents in the project zone received letters outlining the costs they are expected to pay once the project is completed. For many, this had been the first time they heard anything about the proposed project.



Attendees take their seats for water proposal meeting.

■ NATALIE BATKIS

"In the big picture, I think it's great for the community as a whole. And it's unfortunate that the letter that came out came across so sternly and bluntly," says Ferd Klassen, owner of Niverville Autobody. "It left you with the misconception that this is a done deal. My opinion is that council isn't as transparent as they promised they would be this last election."

During the meeting, a few points of discussion came as a surprise to council members. Brandt confirmed that frontage fees will cover the cost of the pipes running from the main lines into properties. The town initially thought the fees only covered the

cost of the main lines. It also seemed as though Town Council had not given proper consideration to the development of a policy that would require property owners to connect to the service.

The confusion on council's part was somewhat disconcerting to some attending the meeting.

"They could have been better prepared. It seemed that we stumped them when we asked the question asking if the fee included the hookup. It was a simple question they should have been prepared for," Klassen says. "They were caught off-guard which diminishes their credibility."

The town's plan is to start construction this summer. The grant received from the provincial and federal governments must be used before March 2017 and cannot be directed toward other infrastructure projects.

"The reason we are trying to get this moving is that we want to be able to put this project to tender and capture this construction season," Dyck says. "The funds say this project must be done by March 2017 so there is a little urgency to this."

Klassen does agree that this may be the right time to move forward on the project. "There could come a point

in time where the province forces us to do it and, if there isn't government money available, we're 100 percent on the hook. Can you imagine the burden on people's tax bills then? This is a very fair deal."

According to Brandt, Niverville is the largest community in Manitoba without a universal potable water service. The Town of Niverville wants to change that.

"Council has set forward a ten-year master plan to be able to provide the service of water to the entire community," Dyck says. "We are going to continue to lobby all levels of government for funding."

In the end, Klassen says that having access to town water will make his property more valuable should he ever decide to sell and he says it's an important investment in the community.

"I wouldn't mind seeing more commercial businesses coming to town. Do I want to see someone setting up competition for me? No, but inevitably it will happen," Klassen says. "We are one of the last communities of our size to have town water. Why do you think a lot of commercial businesses that are looking to relocate pass Niverville by? There's no water."

As for future correspondence from Town Council, Klassen would like to see improved communication.

"I would hope there would be more transparency and better communication. To send a letter ten days before a meeting is just not enough," Klassen says. "I'm glad to hear they are considering having more meetings in the future. I believe they should sit down with the businesses and residents directly involved and deal with it that way."



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## CITIZEN POLL

## THIS MONTH'S QUESTION:

**Who should be responsible to pay the \$500,000 balance to bring town water to Main Street?**

- ☐ A) Those who get access to town water should pay the full amount.
- ☐ B) The town should split the tab with the impacted landowners.
- ☐ C) The town should pay the entire amount as part of their commitment to business development.
- ☐ D) The \$500,000 should be allocated to all residents and businesses, as we all benefit from Main Street development.

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## LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

**What kind of police services should Niverville pursue as its population climbs past 5,000?**

- An independent police service.  
**33%**
- Contract services to the RCMP.  
**29%**
- Joint regional services with nearby communities.  
**29%**
- Contract another town's police service.  
**9%**

## YOUR COMMENTS:

"There is a network of youth in rural communities that harbours harmful behaviour and enables criminal activity. A joint regional service would enable police to recognize and address this larger 'picture', hopefully maintain a database, [and] coordinate tracking of problems."

"More presence would be great, but so would more than 7 people coming out to the organization meeting of the Citizens on Patrol. This would allow us to have our own presence, not just on weekends or in the summer, to deter the petty theft that is ongoing."

# Can Water Treatment Facility Handle Increased Consumption?

By Natalie Batkis

✉ nbatkis@nivervillecitizen.com

In the December edition of The Citizen, we discussed how the Town of Niverville is going to make town water available to the businesses along Main Street that run from Sixth Avenue to the railroad tracks on the west side of town. A reader asked how the additional usage would affect consumption levels and if the water treatment facility could handle the extra usage.

According to Niverville Mayor Myron Dyck, the water treatment plant on Fifth Avenue is more than capable of handling the additional usage.

"Yes, we can handle the extra consumption. The impact of

adding the business district to the system is minimal and easily handled by the current system," he says. "The water treatment plant has two wells on system with others available with plenty of water in the aquifer. It all just comes down to a mindset of conservation. We have a good water system and Council is looking at how do we make what we have better."

According to the mayor, when consumption levels are higher, the filters that separate the sediment from the water work harder. The wear and tear on the filters requires them to be replaced more frequently, which can become costly at a price of \$80,000.

In past summers, residents have been asked to reduce consumption

by watering lawns on even or odd days according to their civic address. The town has also made free, untreated water available at the public works buildings for those who wish to use it for filling pools. Residents are required to arrange for their own pickup and delivery of this water.

"When there is excess use, the pumps have to work harder and what we're finding is that there is a huge impact on the filters," says Dyck. "These filters are meant to last a number of years, but we wear them out more quickly when we are processing more water. That's why we have set those limitations on consumption in the past."

The town believes it's essential for the business district to have

access to town water to provide proper fire suppression and to allow Niverville's business district to grow. The businesses along Main Street currently draw their water from wells.

"If Niverville has wells on its business district and other communities have proper water for fire suppression and potable water, businesses are going to go to that community rather than come to Niverville," Dyck explains.

Town Council recently hired a hydrologist and an engineer to do an analysis of Niverville's water treatment plant, the aquifer, and wells. According to the mayor, those findings will impact how the town utilizes the water treatment facility in the future.

# The Toast of the Town

By Jan Kendall St. Cyr

Toastmasters, originally formed more than 90 years ago, exists to help people of all stripes—professionals, college students, stay-at-home moms, retirees, etc.—overcome their fear of public speaking. What may not be so well known is that there's a chapter right here in Niverville.

The Crow Wing Toastmasters Club was established five years ago when Sylvia Nilsson-Barkman, current Toastmasters District Director, asked fellow member Holly Rafferty to start a club in Niverville.

Rafferty, working in the palliative care field, had joined Toastmasters desiring to be more comfortable giving reports to various committees. "This helped me greatly with organization, public speaking, and with the impromptu interviews I was asked to give to the press," Rafferty says. "I had been a member in Steinbach for six years when we talked about starting the Niverville chapter."

Henry Friesen, a local accountant, also became a member, making his office available as a meeting place. Already an accomplished public speaker, Friesen's

greater interests were in offering encouragement to others and helping them improve their speaking skills through the evaluation process—a process Friesen says he is still learning from today.

"It's all the little things that really make the difference," Friesen says. "Staying within a particular theme, collecting your thoughts, paying attention. The importance of listening and thinking!"

The constructive evaluation process is the heart of the Toastmasters program. With each speech given, an evaluator points out its strengths and suggests improvements.

"This invaluable feedback is what we call Grow Points," Friesen adds.

Toastmasters International, a non-profit educational organization which began in the early 1920s, continues to help people around the world. Local meetings take place on Monday evenings, at 7:30 p.m. at the Niverville Heritage Centre.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ www.crowwing.toastmasters.org



# Ben Sawatzky

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## Local Gym Under New Ownership

By **Sylvia St. Cyr**

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The gym that used to be Elite Fitness is under new ownership. It's now called Average Joe's Fitness and it's owned and operated by Chris Friesen, who officially took over on November 16 last year.

"I have a small gym outside of Steinbach that I have taught self-defense classes, fitness classes, and done personal training out of for the last three years," says Friesen. "I was the manager of an Anytime Fitness location prior to purchasing the gym in Niverville as well."

Friesen also teaches mobile self-defense seminars to high schools, corporate groups, and women's groups.

"Average Joe's offers a clean, 24/7 fitness center, with all the equipment necessary to get into great shape," says Friesen.

"I also offer free guidance and training programs with every membership to help people understand how the human body is supposed to move, and how strength training and physical fitness can help them in their everyday lives."

For those determined to get results, Average Joe's also offers personal training packages.

"While I do offer them to people who are wanting that extra push, they are not the focus of what I believe a gym should be," Friesen shares. "I believe that caring for people and developing relationships with them not based on how you can profit off of them is a vital part of a healthy gym environment."

As of right now, Friesen is the only employee, but he hopes to add more staff, including personal trainers, in the near future. The gym

will also soon offer practical self-defense classes, as well as various types of fitness classes and boot camps.

"My passion for fitness, strength training, and practical self-defense has been an obsession with me for the last 25 years. I eat, sleep, and breathe those things. Average Joe's Fitness is a place where I can share those gifts that I have been given with as many people as possible, and hopefully better their lives in some way."

If you are interested in joining but want to check it out first, Average Joe's has drop-ins during regularly staffed hours.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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

## RRSP or TFSA: Which Is Right for You?

By **Sandy Charette**

Niverville Credit Union

RRSPs (Registered Retirement Savings Plans) and TFSAs (Tax-Free Savings Accounts) both offer tax advantages to help you reach your retirement or savings goals. Reducing taxable income (with RRSPs) and accumulating tax-sheltered compound returns over the long term (both RRSPs and TFSAs) can be a powerful combination. A good strategy is to contribute to both as much as possible, if you can afford it.

If you choose one or the other, it's important to understand how they differ.

RRSPs are intended for retirement, and you need to earn income to contribute. When you contribute to an RRSP, you deduct your contribution from

the income you report on your tax return. If you have a small tax bill each year, RRSPs may not make sense for you. When you decide to withdraw money from your RRSP, the amount withdrawn gets added to your income in the year the money is taken out. However, all the growth made inside the RRSP compounds tax-free. RRSP contributions work great if you are withdrawing at a similar or lower marginal tax rate compared to the contribution. If you are withdrawing at a higher tax rate at retirement, an RRSP is probably not a good choice.

TFSAs were created as a way to encourage Canadians to invest and save without paying taxes on interest gained. Your savings can be used for any type of savings goal, which may be more attractive to young

savers who want to have an accessible emergency fund or save up for a large purchase like a car or vacation. With a TFSA, you cannot deduct your contribution on your tax return and do not have any taxable implications on withdrawal. There are annual limits on how much you contribute, and if you don't use up that room, it can get carried forward to subsequent years.

With both plans, you can name your spouse as a beneficiary, and the money will roll over to them upon your death. With a TFSA, only the increase in the value of the TFSA since the date of death is taxed in the year the beneficiary receives it.

Speak with an investment specialist to see which one (or both) is the right choice for you.



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# Automated Waste Collection Service Coming to Niverville

By Natalie Batkis

✉ nbatkis@nivervillecitizen.com

In the spring of 2016, the Town of Niverville will be changing the method by which residents dispose of their household waste.

Niverville will be moving to an automated waste collection service using carts which will be provided to each household for free. If residents lose their carts or require additional carts, they will need to purchase new ones from the town office at a price that has yet to be determined.

Currently, residents are allowed to dispose of one bag (31 by 24 inches) or one container (37 gallons) of household waste each week. If residents have additional garbage, they must purchase surcharge stickers for \$1 per additional bag or container at the town office or at Niverville Bigway. Grass clippings, leaves, and branches are required to be



The Bristol Hauling site north of Niverville.

✉ NATALIE BATKIS

dropped off at the community compost site located north of the curling rink on Arena Road.

There is no limit on the amount of recycling that residents can dispose of through their blue bins.

The town currently contracts Bristol Hauling for waste removal and that relationship will continue. As with any services Niverville contracts out, there will be another RFP (request for proposal) process for waste removal services in the future, at which time the town will

re-evaluate its options.

As Mayor Myron Dyck explains, the new carts are significantly larger than the bins residents currently use. "The carts are 64 U.S. gallons in size. The current bylaw is for 37 gallons, so this isn't quite double but it will replace the surcharge stickers for additional bags."

If residents don't have enough room in their garbage carts, they will have to bring their extra household waste to a designated waste transfer site (see sidebar).

The extra garbage could have an effect on residents' future tax bills.

"We pay fees to the landfill based on tonnage. That's what we are charged," Dyck explains. "That fee is then distributed on the property tax statement as a separate line item for waste. We want to continue to encourage our residents to recycle, because recycling doesn't cost our community anything so we don't have to raise the garbage levy."

Each cart will be labeled with the address of that residence to prevent carts from getting lost. Mayor Dyck notes that the carts are property of the town and therefore they should stay with the residence they are assigned to.

"The carts stay with the home," says Dyck. "When people move, they should not take the carts. The Town of Niverville owns the carts."

The town will notify residents as the change approaches. It is scheduled for April/May 2016.

## IN BRIEF

### Where Should Nivervillers Dump their Garbage?

By Natalie Batkis

There has been some confusion as to which waste transfer sites residents of Niverville should be using when disposing of extra garbage. Niverville residents are permitted to bring their garbage to the RM of Ritchot disposal site on Bernat Road or to the Bristol Hauling site located on Sixth Avenue, just north of town.

When the Town of Niverville put a one-bag limit on residential garbage in 2014, the Ritchot waste transfer compound, which is managed by MidCanada, saw a significant increase in the amount of residential traffic coming from Niverville. While the facility could handle the waste, the increase in vehicular traffic became a problem, making it difficult for commercial vehicles to get in and out of the compound.

At the time, residents of Niverville were paying the same fee as the residents of Ritchot.

According to Stephen McCabe, manager of MidCanada, the Ritchot disposal site has changed its rates for non-residents. Niverville residents are still permitted to use the site, but they are no longer given the same \$2 residential flat rate that the citizens of Ritchot are charged. Niverville residents are now charged according to the weight of the waste they bring in.

# Tips for Navigating the Tax Return Maze

By Henry Friesen

It's a brand new year, but don't think of 2015 as history until you've filed your 2015 income tax return. Whether your tax return is a necessary evil or an opportunity, paying attention to detail could reward you with benefits you didn't know about.

Fortunately, Canada Revenue Agency's website provides a lot of good information. Unfortunately, the list of

credits, deductions, and rebates gets longer every year. This has created a lot more work for tax preparers. During the busy months of March and April, they may not take the time to give their clients a "tax education." Whether you do your own tax return or not, doing your homework could reward you with the best "wages" you'll make all year.

An easy place to start is the bilingual tax guide that our local MP has put in all our mailboxes for the last couple

of years. It lists 31 ways to save taxes, and that's just a start. New items for 2015 include a refundable fitness credit for children. Unlike previous years, you'll get money back even if your income is too low to pay federal taxes.

The Universal Child Care Benefit now includes children over age six. These payments are taxable to the lower-income spouse (or a child, if you are a single parent). As a result, your tax refund may be lower this year

than previously, but you're still better off than you were in 2014.

There is not enough space in this article to provide a complete list of things to look out for, but here are a few ideas.

1. If you have medical expenses, the Refundable Medical Expense Supplement could apply even if you didn't earn enough income to be taxable.

2. When considering how much an RRSP contribution would put back in your

pockets, be sure to consider its impact on the quarterly GST credit, child tax benefits, etc. For families with modest incomes and lots of children, this could double the total benefit.

3. Manitoba offers a tuition tax rebate worth up to \$15,000, over a minimum of six years, to taxable graduates. It is based on the postsecondary tuition you reported after 2003 (even if some of it relates to a program of studies you did not graduate from). Students can claim five percent of tuition paid each

year as an advance tuition tax rebate.

4. If you are taxable, donations will save you 46 percent of the amount donated (the first \$200 are less). If you keep those receipts, you can afford to be twice as generous!

While you are looking for your 2015 receipts, why not set up a system to collect 2016 receipts at the same time? Your accountant will thank you.

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# The Heritage

## Part One: How Did We Get from There to Here?



**BRENDA SAWATZKY**

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

The Heritage Centre is an ill-defined name for the expansive and all-encompassing enterprise that it's become.

It proudly stands on nearly ten acres of land between Heritage Trail and Second Avenue South.

Its amenities include a province-renowned event centre, timber-frame atrium, medical clinic, dental centre, hair salon, daycare, seniors housing at all levels, and upscale licensed restaurant. The newest addition will be the retirement life lease wing.

What makes this campus especially unique is that all of these amenities are connected,

making it possible to get to each facility without ever leaving the building. At the heart of the campus lies the Niverville Community Garden, where old and young alike apply their green thumbs under the canopy of a blue Manitobasky.

It sounds idyllic, and perhaps it is. Currently, it seems to be the only facility of its kind in Canada.

Though the end result of this undertaking is self-evident, many don't know the means by which it came to be. The history of the campus, from inception to present completion, reveals a complex mishmash of ownership, management, and ideas. It would be fair to say that the Heritage Centre has evolved in ways that even the early trail-blazers never imagined.

In the 1990s, the chicken plant and hatchery on the site closed. Henry Suderman, a developer and community visionary, purchased the plant. He believed that our community was in need of a common place to come together. Thus the Heritage Club banquet hall was born. The balance of the building and grounds were intended for recreation.

In the late 90s, Gord Daman, then a town councillor, discovered a unique facility in Edina, Minnesota while vacationing with his family. The location included a hotel, seniors assisted living, a banquet hall, and recreation areas. Daman, a long-time proponent of seniors housing, returned to Edina with Suderman, then-mayor Clare Braun, and a collection of councillors and community members to scope out the possibilities for the Heritage Club.

They returned, buoyed by the dream of creating a community-owned "gathering place" where seniors could live with medical assistance and the rest of us could gather for recreation and

community events, all under one roof.

Council hired a consultant to poll a large cross-section of the community for feedback on which aspects were important. Those polled included the Niverville Chamber of Commerce, churches, ice sports, schools, seniors, and young families. Responses indicated a strong desire for an "ageing in place" centre to keep our seniors—parents and grandparents—at home in the community they loved. Other items that rose to the top of the list were an indoor swimming pool and a regulation-size gymnasium.

Residents were introduced to an elaborately drawn-up plan and donations poured in. It was a proposal the community could sink its teeth into, and it would belong to all of us. The town purchased the Heritage Club in 2000 with donated funds. An agreement was made with Suderman to include a racquetball court.

Since fundraising would be done in stages, the facility needed to be built in phases.

In order to expedite construction of phase one of the seniors facilities, council sought financing. A challenge to the plan was found in the provincially legislated borrowing limits for town councils.

At about this same time, it was discovered that Niverville would require a new lagoon and a potentially costly decommissioning of the old one. Financing was spread too thin.

Upon professional advice, Niverville Heritage Holdings Inc. (NHHI) was formed. This not-for-profit organization became the bearer of the Heritage Centre assets, and the formality by which the town could proceed. Under law, such an entity could obtain financing outside of council's restrictions.

The NHHI board consisted of three members from each of the Chamber of Commerce, the Niverville Recreation Commission, and the Niverville Health and Community Foundation. Their positions filled the minimum shareholder seats as required by provincial law. Their mandate was to merely hold and make payments on a mortgage.

Furthering the legal safety net meant forming another not-for-profit entity called Niverville Heritage Centre Management Company (NHCMC), a board consisting of town council and community members whose purpose was to manage Heritage Centre funds and make decisions on its behalf.

Checks and balances were put in place to ensure that the Heritage Centre would remain community-owned. The board members of both organizations were volunteers, receiving no pay or kickback. All decisions made by both had to be unanimously agreed upon.

The assisted living, supportive housing, and atrium were completed in 2007. The assisted living complex was aptly named the Niverville Credit Union Manor, in response to the special interest rates offered by the financial institution. Within two years, they were followed by a medical clinic (run by Drs. Chris and Mairi Burnett), community gardens, and a daycare facility.

During these years, council performed its due diligence in researching the feasibility



The Niverville Heritage Centre.

DUSTIN KRAHN

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# Centre

## + MORE TO COME

*In future editions of The Citizen, Brenda Sawatzky will continue to explore the ongoing story of the Niverville Heritage Centre.*

and costs of the recreational aspects of the Heritage Centre. Since there was already talk of Hanover awarding a new school to Niverville, council determined that a multi-million-dollar gymnasium should be the responsibility of the provincial government and the school division.

Extensive research was also done on an indoor pool and racquetball courts, questioning communities that had built them. The findings were conclusive. Neither of these ventures could be self-sustaining revenue generators and would require significant tax dollars to run. Given council's mandate to avoid increased taxation for Heritage Centre facilities, the recreation aspects of the centre were tabled. Suderman was compensated, as per his request should council default on his initiatives.

In 2009, space was provided for a licensed daycare facility. Residents and council together believed that adding a child dynamic would enhance life for seniors, many of whom feel cut-off from the outside world. NHHI financed a portion of building the daycare, which

were reimbursed in full as the daycare grew.

Still missing from the ageing-in-place model was a personal care home (PCH). This goal faced low odds with limited provincial funding and strict rulings regarding geographical placement.

A stroke of fortune came in 2011 when the privately owned St. Adolphe PCH was forced to close. An agreement was struck with Manitoba Health, allowing NHHI to purchase the antiquated PCH and move its residents to a brand-new facility in Niverville, thus virtually completing the amenities-for-seniors circle. The life lease will bridge the final gap.

A third not-for-profit entity was created, Niverville Heritage PCH Inc., allowing Manitoba Health to link with NHHI and serve as the required governmental overseers of the facility.

Questions have surfaced over the years regarding methods, modes of operation, and the intentions of council and the organizations they operate under.

"I have always had an appreciation for the seniors

facilities put together by NHHI," says Clare Braun, now a local realtor. "This is something my wife and I have supported. I do think certain misunderstandings occurred which may have been related to the lack of consultation with the community."

Though lack of transparency and conflict of interest has been much speculated on, Daman, who has held many positions during the process as councillor, mayor, and NHHI board member, says they've done their utmost to ensure openness and to keep the community's best interests at heart.

"I am the first to admit we have made mistakes along the way," says Daman. "However, we have tried to learn from them and respond in a way that allows us to deliver our services better and more sensitively."

Daman openly admits that there was no schooling or guidelines to prepare council regarding ways to create a community-owned facility such as we have, outside of the school of hard knocks. It was a long, winding, frustrating road to an end that the town can be very proud of.



2016 – 2017 SCHOOL YEAR

## HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION

# KINDERGARTEN & GRADE 1 REGISTRATION

Registration for Kindergarten and Grade 1 (Fall 2016) will take place **February 8 - 12, 2016**, between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

### TO REGISTER, CALL OR VISIT YOUR DESIGNATED SCHOOL

Blumenort.....	204-326-1757	Niverville Elementary.....	204-388-4861
Bothwell.....	204-388-4422	South Oaks, Grunthal.....	204-434-6165
Kleefeld .....	204-377-4751	Elmdale, Steinbach.....	204-326-3325
Landmark Elementary .....	204-355-4663	Southwood, Steinbach.....	204-326-3518
Mitchell Elementary .....	204-326-6622	Woodlawn, Steinbach.....	204-326-6110

Kindergarten and Grade 1 students are required to attend the school within the catchment area in which they reside. To confirm your designated catchment, please view catchment maps online at [www.hsd.ca](http://www.hsd.ca), or contact the school nearest to your place of residence. Residents in rural areas should contact the HSD Transportation Department at 204-320-2347 to verify their school.

**Kindergarten:** Children must be 5 years of age on or before December 31, 2016.

**Grade 1:** Children must be 6 years of age on or before December 31, 2016.

Children presently enrolled in HSD Kindergarten classes do not need to be re-registered for Grade 1.

### Anmeldung der Kindergarten und Ersten Klasse: 2016 – 2017 Schuljahr

Die Anmeldung der Kindergarten und Ersten Klasse (Herbst 2016) wird am 8.-12. Februar, 2016 zwischen 9:00 und 16:00 Uhr stattfinden. Um ihr Kind anzumelden, rufen Sie bitte die entsprechende Schule an oder kommen persönlich vorbei. Schüler des Kindergartens oder der 1. Klasse, müssen in der Schule, die in ihrem designierten Einzugsbereich liegt, registriert werden. Um Ihren Einzugsbereich zu bestätigen, schauen Sie sich bitte die Schul-einzugsbereichkarte im Internet unter [www.hsd.ca](http://www.hsd.ca) an oder rufen Sie die zu Ihrem Wohnsitz nächstliegende Schule an. Bewohner, die ausserhalb der Stadt wohnen, werden gebeten die HSD Transportation Abteilung unter 204-320-2347 anzurufen um herauszu-finden welche Schule für ihren Einzugsbereich bestimmt ist.

**Kindergarten:** Das Kind muss am oder vor dem 31. Dezember, 2016 5 Jahre alt sein.

**1.Klasse:** Das Kind muss am oder vor dem 31. Dezember, 2016 6 Jahre alt sein.

Kinder, die zur Zeit im Kindergarten in der Hanover School Division angemeldet sind, müssen nicht wieder für die 1.Klasse angemeldet werden.



HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION

[www.hsd.ca](http://www.hsd.ca)



# MCC Thrift Store Makes Local, International Impact

By Jacqueline Chartrand

Anyone who needs a parking space near Fifth Avenue and Main on a Tuesday morning around 9:45 must be resigned to a lengthy walk. As many as 40 people can sometimes be seen lined up at the doors of Niverville's MCC Thrift Shop, waiting for the store to open. Because it is closed on Mondays for restocking, customers often anticipate new bargains.

The Niverville store is one of 16 in Manitoba, and 108 in Canada and the U.S. In 2015, it raised \$375,800 in revenue, of which \$201,000 went as funding to the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) for aid projects around the world. MCC's outreach to the needy in disaster areas and poverty-stricken countries is well documented on their Canadian website. Besides meeting basic human needs, their ministry includes work toward sustainable development, peace, and justice. The local thrift shop accounted for 23 percent of funding raised in Manitoba for MCC this past year.

Five women, all from local churches who wanted to assist Mennonite communities suffering in Russia, founded the thrift shop over 40 years ago. The population of Niverville was about 900 at that time. The store has had to move four times to accommodate that growth and now serves customers who travel from communities near and far,



The MCC Thrift Shop on a busy Saturday afternoon.

JOEY VILLANUEVA

including the U.S.

Manager Gerald Loeppky says that the thrift shop is a business hub in the community that meets needs at many levels. Some of the volunteers are descendants of the original Russian-born recipients of aid and have been giving back to the community for decades. Many from Winnipeg travel here for the sense of community in this clean, spacious, and well-lit store. Starting as donors, they then become volunteers and customers. Local churches take turns providing volunteer cashiers.

For many customers, the

thrift shop provides an opportunity to socialize and benefit others. Noel and Jeannette Delaurier have made Tuesdays in Niverville a special time in their week.

"It's our Walmart!" Jeannette laughs, and then adds, more seriously, "It has been such a blessing in our lives. Sure, we could shop at designer stores elsewhere, but here we know our purchases help others."

When asked if it bothered him that people who are relatively well off also shop there, Loeppky replies, "Absolutely not. Most often they are our largest donors of quality products

that make this store possible. They also want their purchases to benefit others."

A former furniture store owner, Loeppky confides that the second best thing about his work is how it helps others. "People drive the business and building relationships is key. In business, the primary focus has to be profit. Here, in this store, people are the main point of our business and that has been a transforming experience for me. We price according to guidelines from MCC. By repurposing gently used items, we reduce waste. Three percent of our revenues,

about \$12,000, is given back to the community through financial support of programs and organizations such as Helping Hands, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, the Niverville Personal Care Home, the Niverville Health Foundation, and sponsorship of the Imagine Health Run."

He is particularly proud of the store's relationship with Niverville Collegiate Institute. The store provides work experience opportunities and an annual \$500 volunteerism scholarship for graduates. Volunteer hours count toward a high school credit for

volunteerism.

About once a month, Crystal Springs Hutterite Colony fills a five-ton truck with clothing items that then get shipped to Liberia. Often certain clothing items are directed to Siloam Mission in Winnipeg or to other MCC thrift shops in Manitoba that have specific needs. Store purchases are limited to greeting cards and material for the thousand blankets a year that are assembled by volunteers to be used in disaster areas. Donations are moved through the store within six weeks, many repaired and cleaned by talented volunteers. Bags of rags are sold for use in garages and farm shops. Collectibles are most often sold through silent auction.

When asked if there was a downside to his work, Loeppky says, "No, just some specific challenges. We try to keep a handle on what we call backroom pricing to ensure fairness for our volunteers as well as our customers. Also, one of our largest expenses is disposal, about \$7,000 a year, and that could be significantly lowered if people would not use our facility as a garbage disposal. The \$20 cost to dispose of an unusable recliner and stained mattress means one less family can be helped by MCC's Global Family program."

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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

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## Community Builders:

# The Man Who Lived There Was Always Generous

Norman Arthur Wittick: April 21, 1904–April 2, 1997

By Clare Braun

Norman was born on April 21, 1904 as the third oldest of seven siblings. Home was the family farm one mile west and one mile south of Niverville on Wallace Road. He lived there with his brother Eric, and both chose the life of bachelors. As I recall, he was an unassuming man who was gentle in demeanour and had a very thoughtful approach to life.

As I was preparing to write this tribute, I was reminded of my experiences with him as a young child. Oftentimes we had opportunities to do fundraising for the school and minor hockey. I can still recall wanting to get to 35 First Street North (where Norman lived in retirement) before anybody else, because the man who lived there was always generous. That stuck in my mind. As I researched some of the stories of his life, it became evident that his generosity benefitted the entire community.

In order for small communities on the cold prairies to thrive, it took men like Norman to give back more than they took. In going through our town's history book, *Niverville: A History*, I realized that Norman was active in many spheres of community life.

For one, he was an active member for many years on the



Norman Wittick

NIVERVILLE CREDIT UNION

Niverville Community Club.

When the rafters needed to be constructed for the curling club, located at the northwest corner of Second Avenue and Second Street South, Norman and Eric built the jig for the rafters. Volunteers showed up to participate in a community work bee.

When Niverville needed to pool capital to attract some medical services in the early 1960s, Norman was a founding director and financial contributor to a group called the Niverville Promoters Society. The building that presently houses Niakwa Pizza was built by this organization, and it initially included a doctor's office. Subsequently, they were able to secure Canada Post as a tenant. The Promoters Society also purchased and held land for future seniors housing.

Norman served for many

years on the Chamber of Commerce. Aside from being a director, he was variously President and Vice-President, and he spent two terms as treasurer.

In 1949, local businessman Hyman Bronstone and Henry L. Friesen called a meeting with the intention of starting a local credit union. The organizational meeting was held on March 21 of that year and Norman was a charter member. He was elected as a part of the first board and went on to serve as its second president for 25 years, from 1950 to 1975.

After various stops and starts, the history book itself finally came into being as Norman funded the costs of publishing it personally. Not only did he provide the money, according to the book's collaborator, Fred Kaita, he spent years and many hours obtaining detailed data and information from the

Provincial Archives and Land Titles Office.

Norman retired from the farm in 1964. He and Eric purchased land in Niverville and then proceeded to do something they both loved: building houses. They lived in Niverville until 1973, at which time they purchased a home in St. Vital. Norman spent the remainder of his life there.

While living in Winnipeg, Norman made what is probably his most significant investment in Niverville. He determined to invest a considerable sum of money to begin the Niverville Health Foundation, possibly because he had been saddened that there was no seniors housing in place for him to move into after his retirement. Since the time of the Foundation's inception, that seed money has generated hundreds of thousands of dollars to benefit the community.

Today if you go to the Niverville Heritage Centre, you will find the Norman Wittick Memorial Gardens. It was dedicated in his honour. May his memory live on in the hearts of succeeding generations. May we all live with the awareness that the greatest thing we can offer our community is the willingness to serve for the benefit of others.



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# Niverville: A Role Model in Sustainability and Innovation



Sweden has been called the most sustainable country in the world while countries like Norway, Australia, and Germany rank very high on the global innovation scale. Somewhere in the midst of all this high-achieving greatness sits our small town in the middle of Canada.

In 2014, Niverville received the Manitoba Excellence in Sustainability Award, granted by the Government of Manitoba for the natural cleanup of our sewage lagoon. This is the very same level of government that, just ten years earlier, said it couldn't be done.

This may not sound like any great accomplishment in global terms, but if you ask Town Council, it is a monumental feat they are incredibly proud of. And so they should be. A natural, sustainable project of this type had never been done in North America. It saved Niverville taxpayers more than \$1 million, and it was a success.

In 2005, Town Council was faced with a dilemma. The initial lagoon, located southwest of Hespeler Park, was no longer adequate to meet the demand of a growing community. Originally built in the 1970s, it had reached its saturation point. The lagoon could no longer replenish itself and there was evidence of contaminants leaching into the surrounding soil.

As per provincial legislation, council had only one option: remove the sludge at the base of the lagoon. They could either transfer it to a landfill



Lagoon in August 2014.

■ NATIVE PLANT SOLUTIONS

suitable for toxic waste, of which there are few, or transfer it to agricultural land, which limits a farmer's use of the land and poses a risk to grazing cattle. The cost: over \$2 million.

Council was also concerned about the environmental cost in terms of the carbon footprint caused by hauling 53,000 tonnes of waste a considerable distance. The remaining acreage on which the lagoon sat would then not be suitable for development.

An idea was hatched, partly through concerned community members and partly through council research.

Phytoremediation is a fancy term for the natural detoxifying power of plants. Certain plants, such as cattails and some grasses, have the capacity to remove contaminants from soil and water sources. The unique physiology of wetland plants and their relationship with microorganisms combine to transform common pollutants into harmless by-products or essential nutrients.

Council brought this solution to

the provincial government. But it was unconventional, and the province wouldn't hear of it.

"You want to do what's right, and you know what's right," says Jim Buys, Chief Administrative Officer for the Town of Niverville, "but all the doors are slammed in your face."

Still believing they had a viable, environmentally friendly strategy, council partnered with Ducks Unlimited, a wetland conservation organization, and Native Plant Solutions (NPS), specialists in environmental sciences.

Niverville made a second proposal to the provincial government, this time with the aid of conservation experts and representatives from the University of Manitoba's soil science division. Around a table of highbrow intellectuals, council appealed their case. The province approved the plan, to be carried out as an experimental study on sustainable wastewater solutions.

NPS took on the role of project manager. They commissioned the

town to excavate the lagoon and form the contaminated sludge into embankments onto which cattails and switch grass were transplanted from nearby land. They created a manmade wetland.

Town Council and NPS partnered with researchers and U of M graduate students to conduct a series of greenhouse experiments and field trials. Over the next few years, samples were taken from the cattails, grasses, sludge, and water. Harvesting the plants was found to hasten the remediation process and remove the contaminants that had been absorbed by the plants. Since these plants renew quickly, there was no need to seed again. It truly was an all-natural solution.

In fall of 2012, Niverville received a grant from the Lake Winnipeg Basin Stewardship Fund. At the same time, Hank Dueck, former science teacher at NCI, was invited to participate in the project along with his Grade 10 class to further the educational aspect on a local level.

"It is rare that students have an opportunity to see a sustainable solution to a large problem like this develop in their own communities," says Dueck. "There was a definite sense of pride among our students to know that their community was taking action in a meaningful and practical way."

The project brought land reclamation specialists and soil science experts from across Canada to Niverville to witness it firsthand.

At the end of 2015, based on the positive outcome, the province declared a section of the lagoon free of environmental concerns. Niverville Mayor Myron Dyck says the next phase is to incorporate the lagoon into Hespeler Park and create a wetland site with an interpretive centre and walking paths.

"Niverville has done something here that is absolutely astounding," says Buys. "It took something as ugly as a sewage lagoon and turned it into something beautiful."

In the end, a project that was slated to cost the town over \$2 million came in at just over \$750,000. The continuing story is the effect this project will have on other communities, Canada as a whole, and beyond.

Mayor Dyck praises previous mayor Greg Fehr, council members, Jim Buys, and the community members who first initiated this project and had the tenacity to carry it out. He also welcomes other "community champions" to come forward with their ideas so we can continue to build an innovative and sustainable community into the future.

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# The Science of Cattails

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Cattails, also known as bulrushes, are native to North America. Wetlands, and often-times ditches, are prolific with them. Though once considered an annoying weed, we've discovered their usefulness as Mother Nature's filter, such as in the recently decommissioned lagoon site.

But their usefulness goes far beyond that.

Cattails can be a food source with high nutritional value. They can be processed into paper, jute (used for rope), and textiles, and the flower stock has been used as insulation in clothing and buildings. Virtually every part of the plant has merit.

More recent is the discovery of cattails as an excellent source of biofuel. In his book *Alcohol Can Be A Gas!*, David Blume says, "While cleaning up

sewage better than any known crop, cattails can produce several high-quality byproducts, one of them being [fuel] alcohol. Cattail productivity in sewage liquid is incredible. Its nutrient uptake and biomass production is several times higher than corn."

Its high-starch content (higher than potatoes) and other unique characteristics make it perfect for distilling, giving it a distinct edge as a safe, environmental alternative to fossil fuels.

According to Blume's research, if 1,000 miles of roadside ditches in each county in the U.S. were converted for the harvesting of cattails for fuel alcohol, it would produce 40 percent of the nation's fuel requirement. At the same time, cattails would detoxify road run-off water that now flows into waterways.

Niverville resident Al

Sawatzky has long conducted research into alternative fuel sources. "Our decommissioned lagoon alone has the potential to produce well over 100,000 gallons of fuel alcohol per year. It's clean energy that our town can use."

He goes on to add that, outside of harvesting and processing, it's a completely free resource that is self-renewing. Such an option could create local jobs and grow our economy while running our municipal vehicles.

"It's not difficult to convert cars to run on fuel alcohol," says Sawatzky. "With flex fuel vehicles, no conversions are needed at all."

It's clear that the impact cattails have had on our community could be far from over. With a town council interested in innovation and sustainability, even greater things could be in store.

## Multiplex Fundraising Committee Seeks Volunteers

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The Friends of the Plex, a group of volunteers working to realize a year-round recreation multiplex in Niverville, is continuing its drive to recruit volunteers to assist in the fundraising efforts.

Another volunteer information session is being held on Saturday, February 20, at 9:00 a.m. at the Heritage Centre. Those interested in

volunteering can visit the below website for more information.

The Town of Niverville has engaged Stantec, an architectural firm with an office in Winnipeg, to provide a feasibility study on the multiplex. According to the Friends of the Plex, this study will look at how the project will be implemented and operated, and make recommendations for improvement. The study

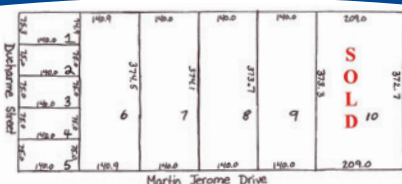
is required in order to pursue federal and provincial governmental funding.

At its January planning meeting, Town Council has discussed the creation of a borrowing by-law required to contribute the \$5 million they pledged in the fall.

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

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Jack and Margaret Stott.

MARGARET STOTT

## A Sweet Valentine's Memory

By Margaret Stott

Valentine's Day brings so many sweet memories to my mind.

John Henry (Jack) Stott and I were dating prior to the onset of World War II. In 1943, at the young age of 19, Jack joined the Air Force to serve his country and his folks' homeland (England). The uncertainty of this traumatic global event led us to put our relationship on hold.

Jack trained in various locations throughout Canada. He graduated as a flying officer in July 1944 and soon thereafter was deployed to active service overseas.

We had agreed to keep in touch by the standard mode

back then, nearly a lost art these days: writing heartfelt, honest letters.

He would always write, "Wait for me!"

Once the war's end was clearly in sight, Jack went to a jewellery store in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka, and purchased a beautiful amethyst ring straddled by a diamond on each side. He faithfully carried this ring in his officer's hat until he finally returned home in 1946.

On my next birthday—Valentine's Day, February 14, 1947—Jack presented me with that very special, well-travelled ring and we eagerly discussed our plans to be married later that year!

Fast-forward to the 1980s.

Perhaps it was my sixtieth birthday, I'm not too sure. Jack and I were at an Air Force reunion event in Winnipeg. All of a sudden, "Cupid" appeared in full costume and he was looking for "Margaret," with bow and arrow in hand!

"Where is Margaret?" he asked. "Where is the birthday girl?"

As it turned out, our kids had secretly hired Scheme a Dream to enhance my night out. Cupid eventually found me and shot me with his love arrow.

This commotion certainly did cause a lot of hoopla that night... but it was the best Valentine's birthday I ever had!



# Signed, Sealed, Delivered

## The Lost Art of Letter-Writing

By Jan Kendall St. Cyr

We live in a technology-driven world where emails, tweets, and text messages are lauded as the natural evolution of communication.

Accessibility and time are the key factors making electronic communication so popular.

I, too, love that I can text my kids anytime from anywhere and almost immediately receive a message

back assuring me that all is well. These forms of communication cost next to nothing, are easy to write, and are auto-corrected. Our thoughts, feelings, and emotions are simplified through the use of acronyms,

abbreviations, and emoticons.

We've done away with stamps and stationary and trips to the post office. We've "upgraded." But by overriding this time-honored tradition, we are in danger of losing the deeply enriching and fulfilling process of composing, sending, and receiving a handwritten letter.

The process of writing letters does take some time. We must first connect with the thoughts, feelings, and experiences we wish to convey and then transfer them onto paper. Gathering our thoughts is a cathartic process that aids in our psychological and emotional wellbeing. The unique and imperfect scrawl of our handwriting is our thumbprint.

During times of war, the

importance of letter-writing was second only to food. The deep emotional power these letters contained was heightened by the fear of loss. Letters to servicemen and women were crucial to their wellbeing. This connection to home and loved ones gave them the strength and courage to endure.

The most ardent of love letters emerged due to a couple's separation, whether by war or when social etiquette forbade a public meeting or display of affection. Absence, then, truly did make the heart grow fonder, spurring the writers to compose their most heartfelt sentiments.

Through the years, handwritten letters have been carefully collected, documented, and archived. They have kept

their historic value. Whether preserved inside a museum or tucked away in a shoebox, these fingerprints tell unique stories that stir one's memories, emotions, curiosity, and imagination.

I have kept many of my mother's handwritten letters, cards, and recipes. I still marvel at her beautiful penmanship. I often run my fingers over her words. These handwritten pages have given me the gift of a deeper connection to her although she has been gone for many years.

Indulging in this artform gives us all a creative way to express our deeper feelings. Through application, we preserve this meaningful tradition for generations to come.

## The Origins of Valentine's Day

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Where did Valentine's Day come from anyway?

The answer is a bit complex, and very much depends on what you mean by the question. If you want to know the origins of a day in mid-February dedicated to romance, you should look no further back in time than Geoffrey Chaucer (1343–1400), who is often cited as the first person to write about the holiday as a celebration of love. In a poem entitled *The Parliament of Fowls*, a flock of birds gathers to debate politics, nature, and erotic desire. At its end, Chaucer praises St. Valentine for "providing promise that, even in the depths of winter, summer is not all that far off." (A poignant reminder, as I gaze outside my window on this very frosty winter morning.)

Another early influence was none other than Shakespeare, whose writings sometimes seem to have influenced every facet of modern life. In *Hamlet* (Act 4, Scene 5), Ophelia waxes poetic:

*Tomorrow is St. Valentine's Day  
And early in the morning  
I'm a girl below your window  
Waiting to be your Valentine.  
Then he got up and put on his clothes  
And opened the door to his room.  
He let in the girl, and when she left  
She wasn't a virgin anymore.*

So Chaucer and Shakespeare provide the earliest evidence of a connection between Valentine's Day and love.

But that is not the end of the question, because the feast day of St. Valentine existed a very long time before either of these Middle Ages auteurs put quill to parchment. Romantic it was not, however.



Geoffrey Chaucer.

GETTY IMAGES

Contrary to common belief, there is not a single St. Valentine that we recognize on February 14. Rather, there are two: Valentine of Rome and Valentine of Terni, both Christian clergymen who were martyred at the hands of Roman emperors. Popular legends have embellished upon the truth, and nowadays the story is told that Valentine of Rome, on the eve of his martyrdom, wrote the first "valentine" to the daughter of his jailer—and he signed it "Your Valentine."

This almost certainly didn't happen, but it does help to reconcile our modern notions of a romantic holiday with the Catholic Church's commemoration of two martyrs' bloody deaths.

Indeed, there is a third way to peg the origins of Valentine's Day. In the winter of 1913, for the first time ever, Hallmark unleashed hordes of valentines cards upon unsuspecting Americans everywhere. One could argue, perhaps a bit cynically, that this is the truest origin of our multibillion-dollar commercial holiday.

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## IN BRIEF



Greg Fehr accepts his award from Jim McMillan.

COMMUNITY FUTURES MANITOBA, TRIPLE R

## Greg Fehr Receives Volunteerism Award

On January 14, Greg Fehr was given the Award for Excellence in Volunteerism at a ceremony at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights in Winnipeg.

Fehr represented the Town of Niverville on the Community Futures board from November 1, 2005 until July 1, 2015, resigning to accommodate its policy of nine-year term limits. He also served as mayor of Niverville until 2014, a time of significant growth that saw the expansion of the Heritage Centre, many new

housing developments, and a golf course.

In 2008, Fehr was nominated as Vice-Chairperson, and then was elected as Chairperson in 2010 to represent our region (Triple R) at the board level of Community Futures Manitoba, a grassroots program designed to strengthen rural economies by enabling entrepreneurship and assisting in community economic development. In 2012, Fehr served as Chairperson of the Community Futures Manitoba board.

# Bothwell Cheese Shop Getting Big Renovation

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The Bothwell Cheese factory in New Bothwell is set to make major renovations to their cheese shop in the next couple of months.

"The current design and décor is very dated, and the new design will be more shopper-friendly and representative of our brand with a rustic, artisanal feel," says Megan Deaust, Marketing Manager.

The project will involve completely starting from scratch. "Floors, walls, coolers—everything is being redone. We are moving the counter, adding a freezer for frozen food items, and increasing the variety of other Manitoba-made food products we sell. Since our shop is attached



The current, somewhat dated cheese shop.

BOTHWELL CHEESE

to our production facility, it is actually a very complicated project to ensure the renovation is properly contained."

The renovations are slated to begin February 1, with the completion date pegged at March 7.

During this period, the

cheese shop will be closed. However, an increased selection of cheese products will be sold at the nearby New B's Café. These will be sold at the current cheese shop prices.

Bothwell's onsite cheese shop sells every variety of

cheese produced at the factory. "Fresh white curds are available Monday afternoons, fresh coloured curds are available Tuesday afternoons, and our fresh blocks of cheddar are available Thursday afternoons," says Deaust. "We occasionally have cheese trim available for purchase at a very competitive price, which are different-sized pieces that are produced when we cut our blocks." She adds, "We don't like to waste!"

Bothwell Cheese products are highly regarded within the industry. At the British Empire Cheese Show last year, Bothwell's Marble Cheddar and Monterey Jack varieties took first place honours.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.bothwellcheese.com

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Adrienne Happychuk, Dylan Asmundson, Cory Ellis, and Dylan Butler at bingo fundraiser.

■ BRITTANY ENGBRECHT

## High School Students Throw Fundraiser for Nickel Family

By Dylan Asmundson

The family of Neil and Ann Nickel suffered a tragedy this fall when Neil flew to Bolivia to visit family. While there, he fell critically ill and required emergency surgery. On top of that, he also suffered a stroke.

Ann, the recently retired librarian at the high school, flew with her two daughters to be with him. Once his health stabilized, he was air-ambulanced back to Canada.

But the costs for all this were daunting.

As a way to help out, Dylan Asmundson and two close friends, Cory Ellis and Dylan

Butler, decided to host a bingo fundraiser to help raise funds for the Nickel family.

"We decided to raise money for this because for as long as we have been in high school, Mrs. Nickel was always there to help us in any way she could," says Asmundson, "whether it was to help us with any questions during tests, somehow always having pens for us, and putting up with our overdue library books."

The fundraiser, held at NCI on Thursday, January 14, was a success. Around \$3,500 was raised.

"It blew our minds how supportive everyone was," says

Asmundson. "We would like to thank our teachers, our school secretaries, every business who supported or donated, and everyone who came out. And of course everyone who volunteered. None of this could have happened without any of you."

### UPDATE

*Unfortunately, The Citizen has since learned that Neil Nickel has passed away, succumbing to an infection in hospital. Our thoughts are with the Nickel family at this difficult time.*

## Old Drovers Run Pre-Selling Memberships

Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

When the Old Drovers Run golf course opens this spring, there will be plenty of opportunities to hit the fairways, including league play for both men and women.

The ladies' league will play on Monday nights, beginning May 9 and ending September 12. League fees are \$399 (to walk) and \$479 (to ride). The men's league will take place on Tuesday nights starting May 17 and ending September 6, and costs \$419 (to walk) and \$599 (to ride).

League fees include all league games, except for holidays, as well as access to the driving range on league nights and guaranteed rain checks. Players can sign up either as individuals or with a group.

Memberships and passes are available for the season, if you plan to golf often. Memberships include unlimited golf anytime on weekdays (excluding league play) and on weekends and holidays after noon. For more information, visit the Old Drovers Run website.

Instructional programs are

on offer as well, as part of the course's commitment to building a strong juniors program. This season's Junior Golf Pass is selling for \$300 to players 11 to 17 years old.

Only the first seven holes will be playable in the spring and early summer, though there's a good possibility that the final two holes will be ready to go in August. Until then, golfers will only be charged 7/9 of the advertised fees.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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# Niverville Ministerial Addresses Refugee Crisis

## Towns across Canada, like Altona, are stepping up. What can Niverville do to help?

By Brenda Sawatzky

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

Living in our quiet little community, it's hard to imagine a world where peace is not the norm. The ravages of war; the destruction of entire cities, homes, and livelihoods; and death by shootings and bombings are as unfathomable to most of us as an alien encounter in our backyard.

Yet we are exposed to it, if only through our TV sets, newspapers, or online newsfeeds. It's hard to miss the plight of Syria's people—harder still, at times, to believe we can do anything tangible to change it.

The Niverville Ministerial, a group of representatives from our local churches and church-affiliated organizations, has put out a call to our residents. They are providing an opportunity to do something collectively.

A number of congregations had already started conversations about what they could do to aid Syrian refugees, but the magnitude of the investment of time, energy, and money brought them to the ministerial for direction.

"[The ministerial] is looking at ways of being more intentional in the community," says Jason Kehler, chairman for the ministerial board. "So what started as discussions around leadership tables in each church has grown into a greater vision, not just for the churches

but, more importantly, the community of Niverville."

Together, he feels, we can build a greater solidarity on the issue as well as give individuals opportunities to get involved in ways they may not have been able to do alone.

Syria's war is currently touted as the worst humanitarian crisis of our time. To date, half of the country's pre-war population—11 million people—have been killed or forced to flee their homes. Dead civilians alone number well over 100,000. Over four million citizens are on the run, hoping that somewhere, somehow, they will be able to pick up the shattered pieces of their lives and start anew. More than half of these are children. Refugee camps are bursting at the seams with living conditions that are deplorable and inhumane.

Residents of Altona began a campaign to sponsor refugees recently. Through their organization, Build a Village (BAV), they have successfully helped 15 families start a new life in Canada. Though their mandate has been to sponsor one family per year, five new Syrian families are expected to make their home in Altona by March 2016. The first of these families arrived in mid-December.

Cindy Klassen, a lead member of BAV, says that the reward comes from the cross-cultural friendships that

they build and seeing these families enjoying the safety and freedom deserved by every human.

"Our first family has been in Altona three weeks," says Klassen. "Two days ago I was sitting with the mom looking at photos on her phone. One of the photos was of her family surrounded by a good number of their volunteer support group. She said, 'My family now,' and she touched the photo to her heart."

BAV is run solely by local volunteers. They recently hired one couple on a part-time basis to look after the day-to-day needs of each sponsor family as they get settled. The couple raises their own support. 100 percent of the donations received by BAV goes directly to the sponsorship families. They have no fundraising, overhead, or organizational costs.

On Tuesday, January 26, the Niverville Ministerial held an informational meeting at the Niverville Community Fellowship Church. A spokesperson from the MCC (Mennonite Central Committee) was present to discuss ways we as a community can get involved. Details of the meeting will be relayed in next month's issue of The Citizen.

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# Commentary

## Learning from Our History

While the current refugee crisis has sparked debate, often heated, we must learn from the past.

By Greg Fehr

I recently attended a gala evening at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights. For anyone who has not yet visited the CMHR, I encourage you to visit what is quickly becoming a showcase for Winnipeg and the pride of all Manitobans and Canadians. While the dollars spent on this landmark may be a subject for debate, it truly is a beautiful space that contains great displays and activities around the struggles, successes, and failures of mankind. My proverbial and literal long walk on the numerous ramps connecting the galleries gave me time to reflect—and work off a large number of calories from dinner.

In light of the recent discussions and press around the Syrian refugees, it was interesting to see Canada's response to the many refugee situations in the previous century. While we have much

to be proud of, a few decisions in our history produce much regret.

In the late 1930s, as Germany encouraged the departure of the Jewish populace, the nations of the world struggled with the idea of allowing significant immigration. While the campaign of National Socialism in Germany was reaching its height, even Canada deemed large-scale Jewish immigration too risky, not just from a security standpoint, but on the basis of its upset of the social fabric. The window of opportunity closed for the Jews and other persecuted minorities as the world tipped to self-preservation, and with the exception of the Dominican Republic, all nations refused to accept them in large numbers. History now shows that when this window closed in 1939, more than a million people lost their lives.

While the current refugee crisis has sparked debate, often



Canadians await the arrival of the first plane of Syrian refugees at Toronto's Pearson International Airport.

ISTOCKPHOTO

heated, we must learn from the past. And while government policy is more open than in the pre-war discussions, the social attitudes and underlying fabric may not have changed as much. During the pre-war period, anti-Semitism was both openly discussed and generally accepted. While most would now see the error in this thinking, the advantage was the openness, the proverbial devil-you-know, allowing for transparent debate and discussion.

Perhaps we are in a more dangerous place now. Browsing through the plethora of social media and "news" sites on the web, it can become quite

concerning. Stories abound of criminal and/or immoral activities of new immigrants or Muslims in general. Most of them do not appear to have a factual basis, and many come from sources of hearsay. For every story and position you read, a quick search can find a conflicting story disputing the claims.

Yes, we must be cautious. We must be vigilant in our screening of individuals who strive to enter our country. But we must also be cautious of our attitudes towards them as they do arrive. Will they change the social fabric of the communities they enter? Yes, they will, and bluntly said, likely in both

good and bad ways—as every new group entering our great nation always has.

The arrival of the Lord Selkirk settlers (or perhaps they should more rightly be called what they were: refugees) signalled the beginning of the Canadian West as an agricultural breadbasket for the nation and the world. Yet this caused considerable conflict with the existing First Nations and Métis traders. The Mennonite settlers (also refugees) of 1874 brought additional expertise and value to agricultural exploits, yet they required concessions on the policies of military service and the homesteading act. All groups bring value and expect

some consideration, a true quid pro quo arrangement.

Was the situation that much different in those days than it is now? The fabric of the Canadian identity always has been, and always will be, tied to multiculturalism. From the beginning of a dominion carved from the distinct Anglophone Upper Canada and Francophone Lower Canada, we have embraced parts of every group, requiring adaptation rather than assimilation. We should be cautious to ensure that baseless fears and prejudices do not stand in the way of the continued development of our great nation.

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# Sports & Recreation

## We Fought for Our Game: Looking Back at the Niverville Clippers Legacy



**EVAN  
BRAUN**

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

These days, it is a novelty to watch a hockey game played in the great outdoors. The National Hockey League holds an annual Winter Classic, around New Year's Day, in which a regular season game takes place outside, a throwback to days past. This year, the good people of Ste. Agathe held their very own Winter Classic. Speaking for myself, I spent New Year's Day at a friend's home in the country; their yard is large enough for their very own outdoor rink, and yes, a friendly game broke out.

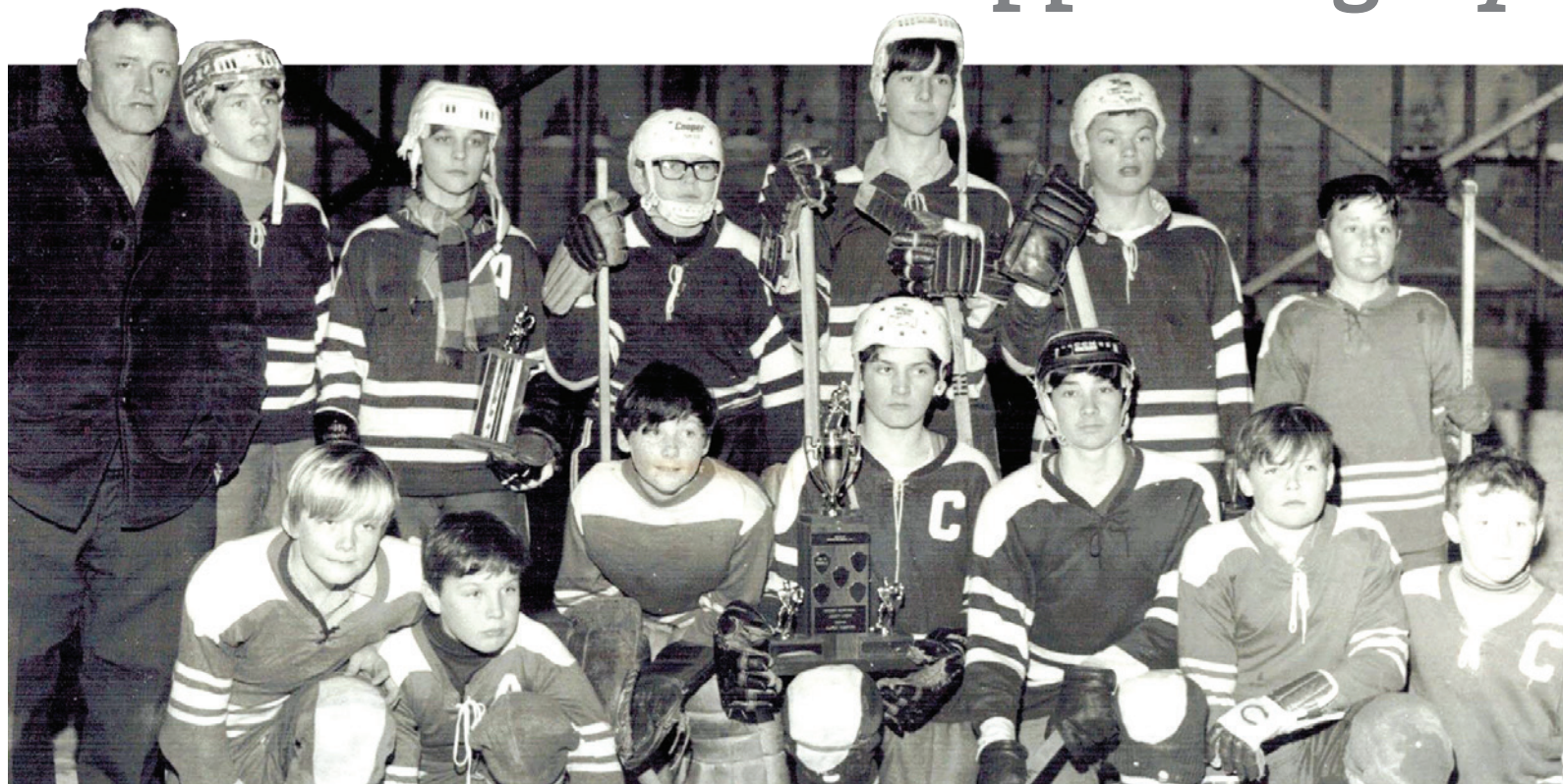
Like I said, a novelty.

But I can assure you that if the temperature had been ten degrees colder, the wind stronger, and the snow falling heavier, that friendly outdoor hockey game would have quickly been substituted for a friendly indoor board game.

Let's face facts: hockey may be widely recognized as this country's favourite pastime, but it has become a relatively safe, entirely indoor sport.

Flash back to the winter of 1958, however, and the same cannot be said. The Niverville Arena was still nine years away, and hockey was played outside on a community rink located behind the current Niverville Credit Union parking lot, the site of a long-gone Gulf service station.

"We had an old shack," says Bill Redekop, who played right wing on the first Clippers team. When the roads were impassable, players were forced to resort to a more old-fashioned mode of transportation. "There was a barn for horses... I



*Niverville Pee Wee Clippers (1970). Front Row: John Enns, Ken Doerksen, Mark McMahon, Bill Condon, Shawn McMahon, Raymond Dyck, and Roger Lamplight. Back Row: Marvin Rempel (coach), Brian Doerksen, Fred Fast, Clarence Braun, Ian Wallace, Levi Isaak, and Ronnie Friesen.*

✉ RUTH BRAUN

mean, there were storms that the roads were plugged a lot of times. We didn't drive the car for seven months."

The Hanover Tache Hockey League (HTHL) started up in the mid-1950s, prompting a number of communities in the southeast region to put teams together.

"I think it was '57 when they started the league," says John Koop, who spent years coaching and managing the team. "Niverville wasn't in it the first year. We got in the second year."

The way Koop tells it, he and Ron Ginter heard about the league and decided that they were going to get enough people together to form a

team. Ginter started out as coach, and Koop served as manager.

Readers may rightly wonder how a team from Niverville, in the middle of the flattest stretch of prairie known to exist, came to be called the Clippers.

"Way back when they original started the Hanover Tache Hockey League and Niverville put a team

in, Clare Enns was one of them," explains Koop. "They were sitting around, shooting the fat, and Clare Enns was the one that came up with

the idea of calling it the Clippers. I don't know how he came about it, and Clare never played hockey in his life."

The question of where the logo came from is a little easier to nail down. Koop says, "The ship logo, that came up when we decided to get new uniforms one year. We decided to put a ship on there, and the guy that drew it just used the image from the dime. And that's basically what it was. Taken right off the dime."

But long before the team had

matching uniforms, official logos, or even a roof over their heads, players like Redekop had to face the elements head-on.

Transportation to the rink was never easy in winter. Even once the players got to the rink, there was a lot to get done before dropping the puck. Players were responsible to show up early and shovel off the ice to get it ready for the game. After each period, the players would scrape the rink again.

"They had a 45-gallon barrel and you filled it with firewood and you fired it up," says Koop. "Then you'd stand next to it and you'd have to



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be careful or your clothes would burn and your rear end would be freezing. So you had to make sure you turned."

Kind of like roasting marshmallows, that.

Freezing cold temperatures and blustery conditions didn't keep the players away. Same story with the spectators. According to Redekop, upwards of 50 people would show up to watch each game. Because there were no stands, everyone stood in the snow.

"In those days, that was the highlight of the town... I mean, there was nothing else for them except maybe a dance Saturday night," Redekop says. "They really were cheering us on. I know Mr. Steingart, old John Steingart, he was there every game, and boy, he would let the ref know if he'd made the wrong call!"

The league didn't pay for referees, at least not in the beginning, so the games were called by whichever local guys happened to be available. They were volunteers.

we had to score 22 goals. This was the last game we played of the [regular] season. And we did it!"

Finding this story a bit hard to believe, I looked for evidence—and sure enough, I found it, in Wes Keating's book, *The Hanover Tache Hockey League Story*. That year, Niverville was chasing the last playoff spot, and by scoring 22 goals they were able to rank third in the goals-for-and-against metric, enough to get them in. Niverville was eventually eliminated from the playoffs in a dramatic game against St. Pierre, in overtime, falling 7-6.

Koop remembers that the HTHL was only loosely organized in its early years, before arenas were commonplace. "There was no governing body, no committee, no nothing," he says. "It was difficult."

Without a doubt, life got a lot easier with the construction of the Niverville Arena in 1967.

"I was on the community club board when we built the arena. Somehow I got drafted into that," Koop says of the days after the

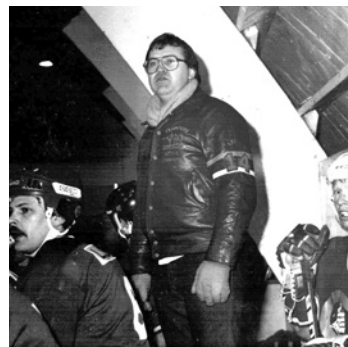
taking care of the books and over-seeing 50/50 draws. He and Koop were involved in opening a sports shop at the arena to sell hockey equipment and sharpen skates.

After one particularly successful season, the players decided to rent some ice time during the summer. "I told them, 'Well, if you do that, I'm not getting involved with it,'" says Koop. "So they rented ice at an arena in the city."

"At the Maginot Arena," Wiebe clarifies. His brother-in-law, Roger Chammartin, played for the team and worked there.

The players rented the arena late at night to skate and practice. Koop continues, "They were skating one night, and a local NHL icon happened upon them and asked whether he could skate with them. Because, you know, there weren't very many ice surfaces available in summertime. So he wanted to skate and some of our local guys were skating with him—and that was a big thrill."

The NHL icon's name? None



Clare Braun coaching the 1986 Senior Clippers. **RUTH BRAUN**

championship, players quit, and you can't blame them. The Hanover Tache League was such that, you had to get up and go to work the next day and you didn't have insurance coverage. If you had a wife and kids to support, you couldn't afford to get beat up or hurt or break a leg."

Thirty years later, Niverville no longer has a Senior or Junior Clippers team.

Redekop suggests that one of the reasons the hockey program in Niverville hasn't flourished in recent years is that kids these days have a lot more things to do. "There's too many options. When I look at our kids—hockey, volleyball, watching and going to see the Jets, they're gone three to four days out of the week."

Indeed, he recognizes that times change. "It's changing so fast," Redekop says. "And that's the same thing with hockey. It's changed. And now you see these kids, they've got equipment which we didn't even dream of. We were lucky if we got two sticks for Christmas."

Koop has some mixed feelings about his years with the team. "Toward the end there, I was basically living at the arena, either games or practices or league meetings. So I was spending very little time at home. So I finally had enough of it."

Koop quit the team in 1980, and he has hardly been back since.

With the possibility of a new arena in Niverville's future, and a population that booms larger with every passing year, some people in the hockey program hold out hope that the town may one day get a successful farm system in place. A new facility, capable of hosting big tournaments, could help change the fortunes of the Clippers program.

But according to Redekop, even if that happens, it won't be the same.

"The kids get catered to now," Redekop says, remembering those early days of anarchic hockey, freezing and shovelling and occasionally fighting with visiting fans. "We had to clean the rink and we accomplished something. We were dead tired and then we went and played hockey. We fought for our game."



Niverville Senior Clippers (1977-1978). Front Row: Roger Chammartin, Clarence Friesen, Tony Kehler, Ed Giesbrecht, Garry Sherbain, Ben Bremaud, Ted Peters, Stan Hildebrand, and Brian Doerksen. Back Row: John Koop (manager), Gil Leclerc, Tom Neufeld, Clarence Braun, Brian McNaughton, Bert Krahn, Vic Warkentin, Ken Warkentin, Harold Wiens, Andy Klassen, Alvin Ginter, and Pete Toews (coach). **RUTH BRAUN**

"Yeah, they had their hands full," Redekop says, smiling. "Actually, the spectators got a good game. But we weren't as talented as there are now. We didn't even have the proper equipment." Case in point, a lot of guys played without a protective cup. Risk was part of the game. "But we liked the sport. It was fun."

Redekop's memories are mostly positive, though he acknowledges that those early days of organized hockey weren't always very organized. For example, he recalls a game against East Steinbach when the spectators started fighting with the players.

Not that this is Redekop's biggest highlight from his years on the team. He fondly remembers the first time Niverville made it to the playoffs—in spectacular fashion. "We were playing in Blumenort, and in order to make the playoffs,

arena was built but before the artificial plant was installed. "I remember that I started the ice numerous times... I could be out there working all those nights after work, so I could work until late at night flooding the ice, and never a soul would I see. But as soon as there was a patch big enough to maybe skate on, all of a sudden there'd be people there. I don't know how they figured out that there was ice to skate on."

In 1980, years of effort paid off when the Clippers won their one and only HTHL championship.

"We beat Mitchell on a Thursday evening," says Ben Wiebe, who served as secretary-treasurer for the team from 1974 to 1982. "I used to haul chickens for Keystone, and I was supposed to take a load out after supper and I said, 'No, I'm staying to watch the game.'"

Wiebe looked after the finances,

other than Bobby Hull.

"So I imagine that's, you know, quite a story," Koop says. "And it's probably been embellished as the years go by!"

In many ways, the 1970s represented a golden era for the team.

"The Clippers actually did very, very well financially," Wiebe says. "When John resigned [in 1980], we had money in the bank."

But in the years that followed, the sports shop shut down, the players from the championship year gradually moved on, and Wiebe quit. Thus, the Clippers entered a bit of a Dark Ages period.

"For a lot of years, it was pretty dark," Wiebe agrees. "When I was involved with the Clippers, we had a good team. Especially once the Juniors moved up to Senior, we were very competitive. We didn't always win, but we were very competitive. After the 1980

## 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

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

### Adult Rec Hockey

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

### Curling 2-on-2 Bonspiel

February 5-6  
Niverville Curling Club.

### Actif Epica

Saturday, February 13  
Niverville Arena, 10:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m.

### Couples Curling

Friday, February 19, 7:30 p.m.  
Niverville Curling Club, \$20 Pre-registration.

### Home Alone Program

Friday, February 19, 6:00-8:30 p.m.  
South End of Arena, Cost \$40 (Ages 9+)

### Canadian Red Cross Babysitting Course

Saturday, February 20, 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
South End of Arena, Cost \$50 (Ages 11+)

### Canadian Firearms Safety Course

Sunday, February 21, 8:30 a.m.-6:00 p.m.  
South End of Arena, Cost \$90.

### Emergency First Aid & CPR (Level C)

Saturday, March 5, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
South End of Arena, Cost \$85.

### Hunter Education Course

Saturday, March 6, 9:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
South End of Arena, Cost \$55.

### Zumba

Tuesdays, January 5-March 8  
South End of Arena, 7:30 p.m., \$10 drop-in fee.

### TUFF-N-UP Bootcamp

Mondays/Wednesdays, January 4-February 9  
South End of Arena, 6:30 p.m., \$15 drop-in fee.

### Yoga (Core Flow & Yin Yoga)

Mondays, January 4-February 29  
Curling Rink, 7:00 and 8:15 p.m., \$15 drop-in fee.

### For More Information:

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

### Send your event listing to:

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## The Chamber Corner



### 2015 business awards

Nominations are now open for the chamber's annual business awards:

- Outstanding Business of the Year Award;
- Outstanding Customer Service Award; and
- The Alex Fast Sr. Memorial Award, for contribution to the community (new this year).

Nomination criteria and forms can be found at the Chamber's website: [www.niverville.com](http://www.niverville.com). Deadline for nominations is 5:00 p.m. March 1. Awards will be presented at the chamber's annual meeting.

The award for outstanding customer service is voted on by the community once nominations have closed.

### Volunteer appreciation awards program

We've had some questions lately about the volunteer appreciation awards. The program is a partnership between the chamber and town council. Any person(s) or group who volunteers within the community may receive the award, and anyone can make a nomination. The chamber's board reviews nominations and selects each month's recipient.

If you know of a worthy recipient, please provide the name, contact information, and background on your nominee, and send it to: [chamber@niverville.com](mailto:chamber@niverville.com).

Recipients currently receive a certificate and a gift card sponsored by one of the chamber's members. For 2016, Wm. Dyck & Sons has graciously agreed to sponsor the gift card.

### February volunteer of the month

Mayor Myron Dyck on behalf of Niverville Town Council and Jenifer Bardarson on behalf of the Niverville Chamber of Commerce were pleased to present the Volunteer Appreciation Award to Lucien Berard.



Lucien has managed the Niverville Community Bus since it started as a project of the Maranatha Good News Centre three years ago with support from other churches in Niverville. The bus is available for any projects that contribute to the well-being of the community of Niverville, whether it be for sports teams, seniors or youth events, or transporting students from Providence University College to the local church of their choice in Niverville on Sunday mornings. Not only does Lucien facilitate the use of this bus as driver, but he organizes other drivers as well in a co-operative way within different spheres within our community.

### Notice of annual meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Niverville Chamber of Commerce will be held at 5:00 p.m. Thursday, April 7.



President: Mel Buhler Co-ordinator: Dawn Harris  
Email: [chamber@niverville.com](mailto:chamber@niverville.com) [www.niverville.com](http://www.niverville.com)

**NIVERVILLE**  
**CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**



By Chantel Gadiant

cgadiant@nivervillecitizen.com

Mark your calendars for February 13: Manitoba's largest outdoor bike race will be traveling through Niverville. Actif Epica is an outdoor bike and running/walking race that uses the Crow Wing Trail segment of the Trans-Canada Trail from St. Malo to Winnipeg, a distance of 125 kilometres. For those wanting more of a challenge, this year is offering a longer trek of 160 kilometres, starting in St. Malo and heading south to the Senkiw suspension bridge.

Actif Epica, a challenging race through extreme winter conditions, has been running for five years. The race promotes outdoor winter activities in each of the communities it passes through.

"First year was cycling only," says Dwayne Sandall, Race Director. "Running was added the second year, which is when I became more involved as the founder of Trail Run Manitoba."

The icy temperatures, windswept trails, big skies, and huge landscapes challenge ultra-endurance racers. The race takes approximately eight to 25 hours to complete, depending on the conditions.

There are roughly 50 to 70 participants each year. Sandall says that racers are mostly from Manitoba, but the race does draw people from as far as Brazil and California, along with a large group of regulars from Minnesota.

What's Sandall's favourite part of the race? "Being out on the race course checking conditions... in the lead up to the race and soaking in the intensity of the prairie in winter. I grew up close to the mountains, but there is still something pretty amazing

# Actif Epica Running through Niverville



2014 Actif Epica.

TRAIL RUN MANITOBA

about the vastness of the prairies. It's also pretty cool to see people leaving the last checkpoint at the U of M, often late at night, with the sense of determination and relentless perseverance."

Actif Epica is listed as a top-ten race in Canada, according to *Cycle Magazine*. It was also recognized as the Event of Year (under \$5,000) by Manitoba Tourism in 2015.

The Niverville Arena will be the racers' third checkpoint, where they can warm up and energize with food.

Sandall encourages people to stop by the arena when racers start to arrive, around 10:40 a.m. "It really depends on conditions, and the stragglers have to leave by 7:00 p.m." After all, these stragglers need to then make their way to The Forks, which could take a few hours.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

## A Look at the Historic Crow Wing Trail

By Chantel Gadiant

cgadiant@nivervillecitizen.com

You may have heard of the Crow Wing Trail here in Niverville, but did you know the Crow Wing Trail is the longest section of the Trans-Canada Trail in Manitoba? The Crow Wing Trail is 191 kilometres and starts in the RM (Rural Municipality) of Emerson-Franklin, then runs through the Roseau River First Nation, the RM of De Salaberry, St-Pierre-Jolys, Niverville, and the RM of Ritchot to Winnipeg.

The trail, a main route in the 1800s, was used to transport goods to and from the Red River Settlement and the Crow Wing Settlement on the Mississippi. The trail connected Fort Garry, Manitoba to

Saint Paul, Minnesota from the 1820s to 1870s, until a railway line was constructed.

In 2006, a dedicated team of volunteers revived the Crow Wing Trail for recreational use.

"I was involved from its beginning [in 1998] when Trails Manitoba was still in the process of encouraging communities to develop the Trans Canada Trail in Manitoba," says Murielle Bugera, President of the Crow Wing Trail Association. "I was the Economic Development Officer for the Village of St-Pierre-Jolys and the RM of De Salaberry at that time and they were interested in developing trails to connect their communities. We felt the best approach was to work with our neighbours south of Winnipeg. The Crow Wing Trail

was a common denominator amongst the RMs of Ritchot, the RM of De Salaberry, the Village of St-Pierre-Jolys, the RM of Franklin, and the Town of Emerson. These councils all passed a resolution supporting the re-creation of the Crow Wing Trail. The Town of Niverville and the Roseau River First Nation joined a few years later."

Bugera sees a bright future for the Crow Wing Trail section in Niverville. "I applaud the Town of Niverville in the development of their interpretive centre in Hespeler Park, where they are decommissioning the old lagoon through wetlands. This is the type of initiative that trail users like to learn about. We hope to install a Crow Wing Trail trailhead map in this area and direct

people to park and access the trail here."

Some exciting features to see along the trail include the Senkiw suspension bridge. Emerson has Fort Duggerin, an abandoned cemetery, and another suspension bridge. Roseau River First Nation has beautiful ceremonial grounds. In St. Malo, you'll find a list of donor names on the bridge to St. Malo Park. Also check out the Maison Goulet in St-Pierre-Jolys. In the RM of Ritchot, you'll find the Menno-nite Memorial Landing Site.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ [www.crowwingtrail.ca](http://www.crowwingtrail.ca)  
 ■ [www.archumanitoba.ca/greenmap/pages/GM\\_kw\\_CrowWingTrail/](http://www.archumanitoba.ca/greenmap/pages/GM_kw_CrowWingTrail/)

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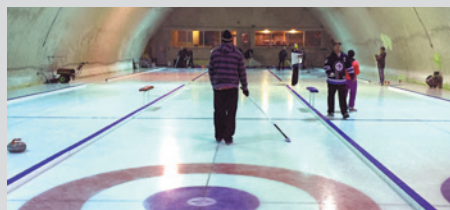
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## IN BRIEF



DUSTIN KRAHN

## Niverville Curlers Take on Challenging Conditions

By Joel Martens

Thanks to a cold snap right before Christmas, a small army of volunteers led by Niverville Curling Club legend Kevin Stott managed to get the ice ready just in time for opening day, which took place on Tuesday, January 5. Thanks to this year's super El Niño, the NCC was handed the task of making the playing surface ready in just two and a half weeks. In a normal year, we would generally take four weeks to prepare the ice.

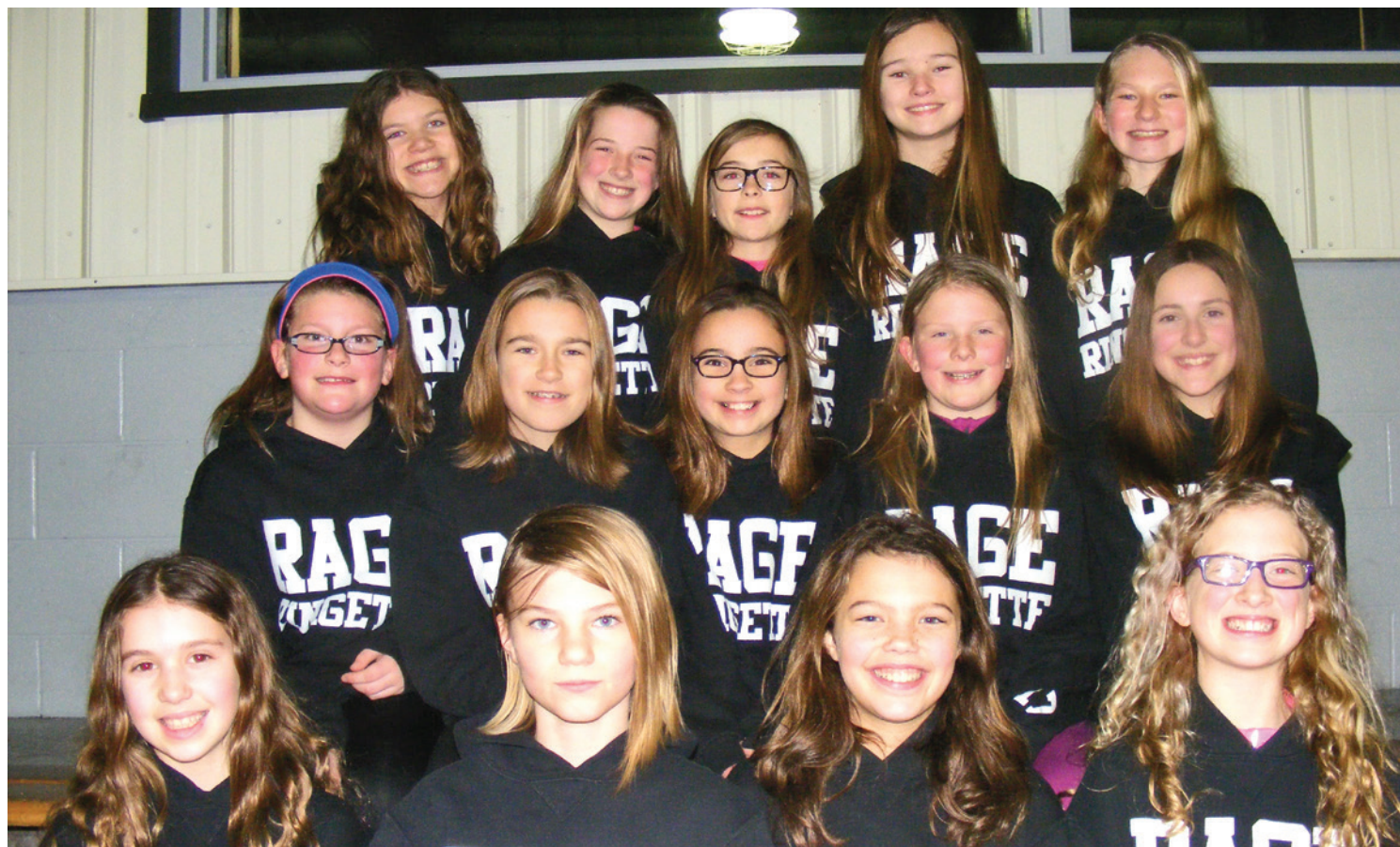
Early reviews from the 18 teams that have signed up to play in this year's league is that the ice is in great shape and is actually curling both ways on all three sheets—which isn't a guarantee, as you'll know if you've ever played on the NCC's natural ice surface.

If the challenge of playing on natural ice wasn't enough for our curlers, throw in the ever-changing temperatures outside. And you're lucky if a train goes by in the middle of a game... it just might help you with that out-turn curl on sheet three!

If you are new to town or a life-long resident of Niverville and haven't been to the curling rink before, I encourage you to come and watch some of the action, which gets underway Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights at 7:30 p.m.

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

- February 5–6: Two-on-Two Bonspiel
- February 19: Couples Curling
- February 26–27: League Playoffs



Top row (left to right): Rebecca Burnett, Tierzah Hiebert, Carly Leoppky, Brianna Ginter, Jayelle Doell. Middle Row (left to right): Rylee Schwill, Rhea Peters, Riley Hyduk, Aysia Richards, Ashley Dumaine. Bottom Row (left to right): Hailey McWilliams, Avery Hall, Rhyann Beardy, Nyah Hiebert.

MELANIE HALL

## U12 Ringette Team Looks Ahead to Playoffs

By Melanie Hall

The Red River Rage U12 ringette team is made up of girls in Grades 5–6 (ages 10–11). The U12 team plays in both the Winnipeg Ringette League and the Eastman Ringette League. There are 14 players split between three towns: Niverville (12 players), Ste. Agathe (one player), and St. Adolphe (one player). Some

girls have played seven years, and other players may only be in their second year of the sport. The team is coached by Melanie Hall and Jackie Dumaine, and managed by Stuart Ginter.

In the first half of the season, the team was undefeated in league play in the A3 division. In January, the team was moved up to the A2 division and won their first game

in a convincing 7–3 victory against Kirkfield Westwood.

On January 8–10, the team participated in a tournament in Brandon. A great time was had by the players. Besides playing ringette, the girls got to enjoy the waterslides at the Canad Inns, and a pizza party. The team faced stiff competition from two teams from Regina and one team from

Brandon. The U12s finished the tournament with a 1–1–1 record.

The U12s have seven more Winnipeg Ringette League games before playoffs, which commence at the end of February. The Eastman Ringette League playoffs are being hosted by the Red River Rage and will take place on the Louis Riel Day long weekend at the Ste. Agathe Arena.



## Heading out of country soon?

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# Abgrall Takes Gold at World Dance Competition

By Sylvia St. Cyr

✉ sstcyr@nivervillecitizen.com

If you read the December issue of The Citizen, you'd know that Brynne Abgrall of Niverville went to Poland to compete in the World Dance Competition.

Abgrall came back with many medals, including four gold medals and a bronze. She placed first for a solo dance in the category of Junior Female Modern World Champion, dancing with many girls ranging in ages from 12 to 15.

This was quite a feat, considering she was on the young end of the scale, and many of the girls competing were three years older than her.

"The win was completely unexpected," Abgrall says. "Coming out on top was something I could have never dreamed of and is the best feeling! To stand on the podium and hear the national anthem play and to represent Canada as the world champion is amazing."

Winning the gold for her solo was quite a process, as it wasn't a matter of performing once, then being judged. It was a process of elimination. There were six other dancers, with eliminations taking place one round at a time. Therefore, she had to perform the same dance, at top level, five times until it was down to her and



Brynne Abgrall.

© CREDIT

one other dancer.

In total, Abgrall competed in eight dances while in Poland: two were solos and six were small and large group dances. The group dances fell into three different categories: modern, ballet, and jazz. In all of the small groups, Brynne and her team placed first.

"I am so proud of all 24 dancers on Team Canada West and so happy with our

amazing results!" Abgrall says. "It could have never happened without the support of my studio, Shelley Shearer School of Dance, and my mentor and choreographer, Lindsay Nelko."

Having taken only a two-week break at Christmas, Abgrall is busy preparing for her next competition, called Thunderstruck Canada, in the first week of March.



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## IN BRIEF

## Novice-Bantam Playoffs

By Jason Hudson

It most certainly has been an exciting month of Clipper hockey in all divisions. There has been some great success on the ice, and that is an achievement in itself. It is hard to believe that we are already getting ready to close out the Novice-Bantam regular season as we prepare for playoffs. The Novice A, B, and C tournament will take place the week-end of January 29.

## Ste. Agathe Holds First Annual Winter Classic



DAN BARNABE

By Dan Barnabe

On Saturday, January 2, the community of Ste. Agathe held its first annual Outdoor Winter Classic for the newly formed recreational Ste. Agathe Hockey League.

Team Baudry Construction took on Hemp Oil Canada, and Ste. Agathe Service Centre played against Lucky Luc's.

The games were played on the new outdoor rink in Ste. Agathe, which was built by local volunteers.

Even "Boomer," one half of the Buzz-and-Boomer mascot team from the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, joined us and took part in a special kids hockey game.

The day included horse-drawn wagon rides and hot chocolate, s'mores, and hot dogs, courtesy of the Caisse Populaire, over a roaring fire.

Fantastic weather certainly helped with the success of the event. There were about 60 hockey players and countless families on hand to cheer on the players, enjoy their neighbours' company, and take part in the festivities.

## Time Running Out for Jets Comeback



TIM HIEBERT

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The Jets are struggling to regain the form that got them into the playoffs last season. They are currently last in the Central Division and have numerous teams to pass in the standings in order to secure a wildcard spot.

One of the main reasons for their struggles so far are poor starts to games. Last season, Winnipeg scored the opening goal in 60 percent of their games and went on to win approximately 65 percent of them. This season they're winning around 78 percent of games when they score first, but it's only happened 39 percent of the time. That's a pretty significant drop-off. Only Pittsburgh, Toronto, New Jersey, and Ottawa are scoring the first goal at a lesser rate.

The Jets seem to be scoring goals at about the same rate as last year, but the goals-against stat is killing them. Last year, they only allowed



On-the-ice action at the MTS Centre.

TIM HIEBERT

0.67 first period goals per game. Through their first 46 games this year, they have allowed exactly one first period goal per game. That's eight goals more than the second highest total (Dallas).

It's difficult to win consistently when you're "chasing" your opponent so often. The elite teams score first and know how to protect a lead. Washington, for example, has only lost one game in regulation when scoring first. Chicago leads the league by scoring the first goal of the game in 69 percent of their games.

It's even harder when you're missing some of your top offensive players. With Scheifele and Stafford on injured reserve, too much of the offensive burden is on the Ladd-Little-Wheeler line. The Jets have been forced to use rookie Joel Armia on the second line with Perreault and Ehlers since the injury bug hit some of their top forwards. The trio has shown some nice chemistry together, but it's expecting a lot out of them to carry the scoring load as a second line.

Another reason Winnipeg is not

racking up the standings points at the same clip as last year is their lack of overtime games. I wish the league would change this rule, but you are guaranteed at least one point if you make it to overtime in the NHL. The Jets have lost far too many games in regulation and have been unable to score a late game-tying goal to send it to extra time. Only Buffalo, Edmonton, and Columbus have more regulation losses at this point.

Winnipeg has allowed 13 empty net goals already. This points to the fact that they are often in desperation mode at the end of the game and are having little success making a late push. Winnipeg and Toronto are the only teams to not win a game when trailing after the second period.

It certainly makes it harder to cheer for a team when they're down and have a history of not being able to make a comeback. Unfortunately for Winnipeg Jets fans, that seems to be the case this season. There is still time to turn things around, but not much.

## Comets Competitive in Junior League

By Chantel Gadiant

cgadiant@nivervillecitizen.com

This year's IDC/Lorette Comets are in the midst of a competitive season and expect to be in the running for the Hanover Tache Junior Hockey League championship. The Comets consists of players from Île-des-Chênes, Lorette, and the surrounding area.

Head Coach Jesse Pelletier has been with the Comets for the past ten years as a player, manager, and now coach. He says that this year's

league is as tight as he has ever seen it. "Only four points separates first and fifth as of today. That's unheard of in this league. Usually there is one or two top teams who run away with it and a team that sits in the basement of the standings." This year, he says, any team can win.

"We have a veteran squad this year and the expectation is we will compete for a championship," Pelletier says. "After a very slow start, we've come together over the last month, winning six of our last seven games. The play of both

of our goaltenders has given us a chance to win every game. We have an extremely balanced group of forwards that all contribute in different ways. Similarly, our defense corps has been solid this season. We have the second least goals against through 13 games."

The Comets are headed towards the end of the season in fourth place, with 17 points. Steinbach is currently first, with 20 points. The Comets have three games left to play until the playoffs.

You can go out and cheer on the

Comets on January 30 at 8:00 p.m. in St. Jean, February 3 at 8:00 p.m. in Grunthal, and February 6 at 7:30 p.m. in Lorette.

Niverville doesn't have a team this year in the Hanover Tache Junior Hockey League, which currently is made up of six teams: the Steinbach Huskies, Red River Mudbugs, Springfield Extreme, Grunthal Red Wings, Mitchell Mohawks, and IDC/Lorette Comets.

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Miqaela Olatundun.

LESLIE BARDAL



Zoe Bardal.

LESLIE BARDAL

# Local Skaters Earn Silver Honours

By Leslie Bardal

Local skaters Miqaela Olatundun and Zoe Bardal participated in the Regional Championships at Lorette Skating Club in Île-des-Chênes on Saturday, January 9, representing the Niverville Skating Club. The girls are coached by Meghan Rafferty.

Miqaela, 8, competed in Star 1 and received silver honours. Zoe, also 8, competed in CanSkate Stage 5 and earned silver as well. CanSkate has six stages, which lead into the Star Skate levels of the Skate Canada figure skating program.

Both girls attend Niverville Elementary and would love to spread the word that the Niverville

Skating Club is not just about learning to skate. It is about building on ringette and hockey skills, and even leading into the world of figure skating.

"We are so proud of how dedicated these two are to the sport of figure skating," says Leslie Bardal, secretary of the Niverville Skating Club. "This was Zoe's second

competition and Miqaela's first."

Neither girl had stepped on the ice until October 2014.

The Niverville Skating Club would like to thank Sport Manitoba, Skate Manitoba, BSI Insurance, GORP, the dedicated volunteer program assistants, board members, as well as Coach Meghan Rafferty.

## PROFILE



Oskar Dyck.

ADRIAN BRUCE

## Oskar Dyck: Athlete of the Month

Oskar Dyck, 10, has been busy setting himself apart in the sport of wrestling. Having a few years of experience in the wrestling program has allowed Ozzie to develop very strong leadership qualities. This is his third year, and he sets a great example for the younger athletes to follow. He is a very coachable young man who has a genuine passion for wrestling. His hobbies include wrestling, travel, and reading. His brothers Leo and Moses are also Junior Wesmen wrestlers. Oskar is in Grade 5 at the Niverville Collegiate Institute.

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# Arts & Entertainment

## Handmade Pillows Cause Online Buzz



Bethany Speers and Melodie McMahon holding their handmade pillows.

GLASS FLOOR MEDIA

### By Matt Falk

mfalk@nivervillecitizen.com

What do you get when you cross a traditional medium like crochet with pleather? It's not the start of a joke; it's the start of a brand-new business. Created by two Niverville women, Joyful House Designs is a small online business that sells custom-made pillows. The pillows, which come in an array of creative shapes, sizes, and colours, are painstakingly crafted by sisters-in-law Bethany Speers and Melodie McMahon.

The pair teamed up to start this enterprise early last year.

"I had the idea to make crochet letter pillows one night as I was falling asleep," says McMahon. "Over time, and many trial pillows, the idea evolved into what it is today!"

McMahon notes that she had been wanting to start a business with her sister-in-law for a while. The idea was to create a business they could run while their kids were playing.

The pillows generally take between two to six hours to make, depending on the shape and size.

Both women agree that the most difficult shape to make is the anchor (pictured above).

"[It's] quite intricate and large," says Speers.

"It's our tallest pillow," says McMahon. "So that, combined with all the angles, takes a good amount of time to make."

Joyful House Designs made quite a splash recently in the online world when they were featured on the website of popular blogger Danielle Burkleo. McMahon reached out to Burkleo to see if she would like some of their pillows. Burkleo loved the pillows and immediately featured them on her blog.

Last December, the popular online shop Etsy posted one of Burkleo's photos of the pillows on their Instagram page. The subsequent buzz resulted in over 200 followers in under 24 hours for Joyful House Designs.

"[It] was pretty fantastic watching our followers increase by the minute," says Speers.

Among other successes, the pillow-making duo has been featured on the Etsy website and several Manitoba newspapers. They were even heralded in *The Winnipeg Sun* as a "great local

gift to buy for Christmas."

"It was a major confidence booster to just send out pictures of our pillows and hear how excited people were about them!" says McMahon.

After the buzz of their first year, the sisters are making pillows and shipping them all over. Speers says that it's a treat to see where their many customers come from.

Both these women, though entrepreneurs, value family more than anything. Speers and McMahon each have two kids, with the former expecting her third.

"Things might slow down a bit," says Speers. "Because family always comes first."

But neither woman has any intention of stopping. They are currently building their stock for craft shows and incoming orders.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.etsy.com/ca/shop/JoyfulHouseDesigns

### EVENT GUIDE

#### Mark Morisseau (fiddler)

January 29 | 7:00 p.m.  
Pat Porter Active Living Centre, Steinbach. \$11-\$16

#### Next Generation (pop rock)

January 29 | 8:00 p.m.  
Granite House Lounge (Curling Club), Steinbach. Free.

#### Brock Reimer (roots country)

January 30 | 8:00 p.m.  
Granite House Lounge (Curling Club), Steinbach. Free.

#### Old Time Country Band

February 3, 10, 17, 24 | 7:00 p.m.  
Pat Porter Active Living Centre, Steinbach. \$1.

#### Painting On The Prairies (Little Red Barn)

February 4 | 7:00 p.m.  
Slice of Life Bakery, Niverville. \$35.

#### Country Gospel Night

February 6 | 7:30 p.m.  
PW Enns Concert Hall, Winkler. \$17.25.

#### SwingCatz

February 6 | 8:00 p.m.  
Granite House Lounge (Curling Club), Steinbach. Free.

#### Justin Aron & Dirty Pool

February 13 | 8:00 p.m.  
Granite House Lounge (Curling Club), Steinbach. Free.

#### Painting On The Prairies (Dinner and Painting)

February 14 | 5:30 p.m.  
Hespellers Cookhouse & Tavern. \$35.

#### Painting On The Prairies (Paint & Play Party)

February 15 | 2:00 p.m.  
Cripple Creek Farm, Otterburne. \$10-\$25.

#### The Hounds of Baskervilles (MTC Production)

February 16 | 7:30 p.m.  
SRSS Theatre, Steinbach. \$5-\$28.

#### New Bothwell Winter Carnival

February 19-20  
Rec Centre, New Bothwell. Free.

#### Painting On The Prairies (Cherry Blossoms)

February 23 | 7:00 p.m.  
New B's Café and Store, New Bothwell. \$35.

#### Buckskin & Satin

February 26 | 8:00 p.m.  
Pat Porter Active Living Centre, Steinbach. \$11-\$16

#### Painting On The Prairies (Winter Swing)

February 29 | 7:00 p.m.  
Hespellers Cookhouse & Tavern. \$35.

#### Send your event listing to:

mfalk@nivervillecitizen.com



93 Claremont Drive, Niverville

Katie Knebel

204-392-3030

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# Council Connections

Now that the Christmas tree and the ornaments have been put away for another year, we can focus on the New Year's resolutions we made a few days ago. Not sure if you are still keeping yours. If you are congratulations ... you are better than most as the average person usually lasts only two weeks.

A new year is a time for looking ahead and planning. By the time this paper goes to print, Council will have completed a two day planning session. This is an annual event where over the course of 20 intense hours, Council reviews direction and vision. Plans are made for both the immediate and the future. I hope to provide more information from this year's planning session in upcoming Citizen editions.

In preparation for planning session, Council held various meetings with different departments, committees, and organizations. During the first week of January Council hosted a delegation from MIT (Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation). Discussion items included a review of traffic counts at various Main Street intersections; possible future intersection improvements such as

turning lanes and lights, as well as reviewing our speed zones at both entrances to our community.

During the second week of January Council hosted a delegation from the Manitoba Department of Justice. Lively discussion was held on Niverville's policing requirements, both now and into the future. New enhanced municipal bylaw enforcement authority was examined. The province has been working on giving the Municipality greater authority in the area of by law enforcement. This is very welcome news!

Speaking of policing, Ron Poirier, staff sergeant of the St Pierre Detachment has accepted a promotion and will be leaving the detachment. Council wants to let Staff Sergeant Poirier know how much our community has appreciated his hard work in ensuring the safety and care of all of our residents. We thank you for your service to us!

Until next month...

**Myron Dyck**  
Mayor

## Summer Employment Opportunity

The Manitoba Youth Job Centre (MYJC) program is accepting resumes for a summer position in Niverville as a Youth Engagement Leader (May 10-August 19). The MYJC provides job referral and placement services, provides youth with employment related resources, records and reports statistical, financial, and narrative information, and provides information to clients on other government programs and services.

### All applicants must:

- Must be a current, full-time student at a post-secondary institution, planning to return to studies in the fall of 2016;
- Must hold a valid driver's license and have access to a vehicle;
- Must be available to begin employment the second week of May 2016 to attend a three-day training event in Winnipeg (travel, accommodations and meals are provided and/or covered by the Province of Manitoba);

Hiring preference is given to local residents.

Interested applicants are encouraged to forward their resume along with a cover letter to:

Town of Niverville—2016 MYJC Position  
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Email: [humanresources@whereyoubelong.ca](mailto:humanresources@whereyoubelong.ca)

Deadline for submitting applications is February 19, 2016 4:00 p.m. We thank all applicants for their interest, however, only those being considered for an interview will be contacted.



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## IN BRIEF

## High School to Produce Classic Comedy

By Matt Falk

mfalk@nivervillecitizen.com

The NCI drama team has finally settled on a play. This year, the team will mount "The Man Who Came to Dinner," by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman.

The plot of "The Man Who Came to Dinner," an outrageous comedy written over 75 years ago, centers on an egocentric and flamboyant radio personality who slips and falls on the steps of an unassuming American family. He proceeds to wreak havoc on the family over the next six weeks as he recovers in their home. The play features over-the-top characters and quick, funny dialogue.

The play was chosen after a successful bout of auditions garnered more attention in the spring drama than expected. The original script the department had selected could not accommodate the number of interested and talented students. "The Man Who Came to Dinner" features a cast of more than 25 characters.

The lead role of Sheridan Whiteside has been given to Grade 12 student Brett Zacharias. The supporting roles of Maggie Cutler and Lorraine Sheldon have gone to Abby Fox and Hana Stott respectively.

"The Man Who Came to Dinner" will be directed by Deanna Wiebe and presented during the last week of May.

This is the second piece written by Hart and Kaufman that NCI has produced. A few years back, the department performed "You Can't Take It with You," another comedic play.

# Moroccan Artist Paints for Kings



mfalk@nivervillecitizen.com

Moroccan art may not be something a lot of Manitobans are familiar with, but to artist Ahmed Laarissa, it is his passion. Laarissa has been painting in this difficult style for many years.

"It's not something you can learn at school," says Laarissa. "You will learn the basics of [art] but everything else comes from your mind."

The only true way to learn traditional Moroccan art is to apprentice under an expert, and that's exactly what Laarissa did.

He has gone on to do some truly amazing things in his field, including painting for the king of Morocco. He also painted for the Moroccan pavilion at the Expo in Seville, Spain in 1992.

The most traditional canvas for Moroccan art isn't a canvas at all; it's your home. Ceilings, doors, furniture... every painting is unique and designed specifically for the surface the artist is working on. Laarissa's art can be found in homes—and yes, palaces—around the world, including in Saudi Arabia, Dubai, and France.

Making this kind of art can be time-consuming. "The more complicated the pattern, the more time you will spend on it," says Laarissa.

He notes that creating the pattern actually takes more time than

the painting itself. He even meticulously creates his own stencils, used as an outline to guarantee that the patterns stay symmetrical.

The geometric nature of many of his designs make his work all the more difficult, requiring a dizzying combination of artistic vigour and math. "If you screw up with one millimetre, it's all going to be off."

Laarissa still paints doors and tables, but since moving to Canada he has also started painting on traditional canvases.

"Because I thought people here might like something portable," he says, having noticed that Canadians move a lot. "They will be in a house for two or three years and then move."

Indeed, if you don't plan on staying in your home for many years, you may not want your whole ceiling painted, so a traditional canvas is more practical.

But nothing about Laarissa's art is truly conventional. Even his paintbrushes are handmade from Moroccan donkey hair which cannot be bought in stores. When he runs out of brushes, he calls his brother in Morocco to go and look for a donkey that has the right hair.

"It has to be a smart donkey," jokes Laarissa, noting that not every donkey has the right hair, "[and] it has to be specific hair." The hair cannot be too rough or too soft. "Either of those, it won't work. It has to be 50/50."

Laarissa tells the story of a time



Ahmed Laarissa with some of his Moroccan paintings.

MICHELLE LAARISSA

when he was working in France and ran out of hair. "Basically we're stuck... We had to order from Morocco and wait until it arrives," he says. "If you don't have the right tools, you cannot do it. It will not turn out as you wish."

Laarissa's method's might seem extreme to some, but that's the price you pay for truly beautiful art.

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# Providence Theatre Program in Limbo

By Matt Falk

mfalk@nivervillecitizen.com

Providence University College has traditionally been a hub of creative and artistic talent in southeastern Manitoba. Now, with the seeming eradication of the theatre department, that image has been put in question.

"Our reaction is of complete disappointment," says Cindi Rempel Patrick, Executive Director of the Steinbach Arts Council. "It certainly weakens the theatre culture with opportunities in our region."

The program itself isn't the only thing that's up in the air. The countless costumes, props, and set pieces that have been built and collected over the years are also no more.

"You can only imagine how sorrowful it was for me to watch all that stuff leave," says Val Hiebert, a professor at Providence who ran the theatre program for many years. "Pretty much every prop was a part of a story that I helped to tell and every costume was crafted for an actor that I knew and directed, so that was hard to see all that stuff leave. There's no doubt about that."

Providence was a rare artistic oasis in the region, with ten theatre majors last year alone. Now, the school is spending \$2.1 million to turn the old theatre classroom into business classrooms and science laboratories.

Gordon Giesbrecht, the Chair of the Providence Board of Governors, recently told reporters that they are renovating an older, unused part of the facility—specifically, the old dining hall.

What Giesbrecht didn't say, and which he probably was not asked, is that after it was a dining hall, it housed a successful theatre program for five years. The planned science labs will be where the theatre stage props and other institutional storage were located, and the business classrooms



Marlene Kornelsen as Sister Gabriel and Marie Harland as Young Mary in the play "Sisters".

TAYLOR SUMMACH

and offices will be exactly where the theatre teaching and rehearsal space was.

The actions and comments of board members seems to have not only distanced the theatre program from Providence's future, but from its past as well.

"I was very disappointed to learn of the cancellation of the theatre program at Providence," says Cora Fast, a 21-year-old theatre major graduating from Providence this April with a Bachelor of Arts. "I also was disappointed with the way the entire situation was handled, as I was not even given the courtesy of being notified

of the cancellation of the program. I found out through word of mouth and the fact that all mentions of the theatre program had been removed from the website."

"I think it's a huge loss to arts in southeastern Manitoba," says Hiebert. "We trained a lot of good theatre artists who contributed back into the community in this area. And I think that's a real loss."

The theatre program also worked in conjunction to help produce the full-length play at Providence every year. The 2016 production has been cancelled, despite the fact that several current and former students stepped

up and offered to run the play.

"[We] were railroaded by a lack of support due to lack of funding," says Fast.

The play itself operated on the same shoestring budget for many years, with no increase ever offered, not even to adjust for inflation. The play stayed alive like this for over 12 years.

Providence maintains that the play itself is simply on hiatus and will return again next year. "Providence has always had a strong theatre program, and in a year of transition we chose not to rush into a production that would not meet the high

standards we have set for ourselves and our audiences," says Jerrad Peters, the Creative Content Specialist from the Marketing and Communications Department. "Theatre will continue to have a significant role at Providence in the future."

But what role, exactly, has been left unclarified.

"If Prov decides to bring back the program, or even just the full-length [play], they are going to be starting from the ground up as they have eliminated almost all evidence of the theatre program from the campus," says Fast. "And depending on how long they wait, they will not have the passionate and driven theatre students they currently have to get it going again, so I cannot guarantee their success."

Fast says the annual production garnered a significant amount of attention for the school. "It was a good way to get young people interested and in the doors of the school." She notes that the theatre program is what got her interested in Providence.

The play itself brought between 1,000 and 1,500 people to campus every year, the second biggest public event, next only to graduation exercises.

"I'd have people coming in from the city to watch our shows who were just amazed by how professional [the shows] were," says Hiebert.

Fast says that the disappearance of the theatre program does more than just eliminate theatre. "It eliminates the opportunity for students to come together and try new things together."

"Less creativity does not make a stronger community," says Rempel Patrick. "We hope they plan to reinstate that department—it is a surprise, as they are known for their focus on the arts, and it has certainly been compromised in this way."

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Kids 12 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.

## Last Month's Winners

Logan Wachniak, age 8  
Nyles Fast, age 3



Artwork by: [www.doverpublications.com](http://www.doverpublications.com)

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

	1		2		3		4		5		6	
	7	8					9			10		11
12									13			
14												
15									16			
17								18				
							19					
	20		21			22					23	24
25					26					27		
28									29			
30									31			
32								33				

- Across**  
7. Devastating weapon  
9. Avoided  
12. Fossil fuel  
13. Prima donna  
14. Poor performer  
15. Downwind  
16. Stench  
17. One who kills by mob action  
18. Spoils  
20. Snug  
22. Fortified wine  
25. Stare with the mouth open  
27. Repair  
28. Too heedful  
30. Ill temper  
31. Last characters  
32. Remuneration  
33. Smallest
- Down**  
1. Fake  
2. Mouselike rodent  
3. Sanded  
4. Indian capital  
5. California city  
6. Embankments  
8. Scouts founder  
10. Branches out  
11. Depressing  
12. Reject  
19. Kneecap  
20. Expensive fish food  
21. Ranch  
23. Concentrates  
24. Choppers  
25. Lumps  
26. Persists  
29. Russian emperor

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



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## JOB POSTINGS



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## CORRECTIONS

In the January 2016 issue, the "Elementary Students Perform Christmas Play" article contained an error. We reported that half of the Kindergarten class did not participate in the rescheduled Christmas concert performance on Friday, December 18. However, a last-minute change did, in fact, make it possible for the Kindergarten to participate. We were not aware of the change, and we apologize for getting it wrong.

In the January 2016 issue, on page 5, "www.boldcommerce.ca" should have been "www.boldcommerce.com."

## ANNOUNCEMENTS



Cure the Cold this winter by donating new and used winter wear in support of Siloam Mission, Steinbach Community Outreach, Lighthouse Mission, and Union Gospel Mission. Donation bins are located at Chicken Chef and Slice of Life. Go to [Facebook.com/curethecold](https://www.facebook.com/curethecold) for more information. Thank you for getting involved!

## This Month's Crossword Puzzle Answers





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