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## LOCAL NEWS

### New App Tackles Rural Ride-Sharing

■ The Green Action Centre has developed a new app to help rural Manitobans get around.

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## LOCAL NEWS

### Local Woman Hikes the Freedom Challenge

■ Sylvia St. Cyr of Niverville recently took part in a grueling, and fulfilling, hike through the heart of the Grand Canyon to raise awareness about the scourge of human trafficking. She hopes the experience will help change more lives than just her own.

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## SPORTS & RECREATION

### Niverville to Host Baseball Provincials

■ In the summer of 2019, Hespeler Park's many baseball diamonds will be packed for the 11UA provincial tournament.

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## ARTS & RECREATION

### In-House Concerts Offer Fresh Music

■ If you're a lover of live music, there's nothing quite like in-home Home Routes concerts, hosted by a family in Niverville.

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# St. Adolphe Daycare Passes Council's First Reading

» DETAILS ON PAGES 2-3

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# St. Adolphe Daycare Initiative Passes Council's First Reading



BRENDA SAWATZKY

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On November 22, the RM of Ritchot's council held a public hearing at Pioneer Hall to give first reading to a general borrowing bylaw for the St. Adolphe childcare project. The intent of the meeting was to provide information regarding the scope of council's proposal as well as give the public an opportunity to speak to it. The meeting saw almost a full house of residents and proponents ready to support the project.

Discussions on options to house the provincially promised 90 new daycare spots began in the fall of 2017. Council, together with a daycare taskforce, set out to look at a variety of options. In the end, one location stood out as the most feasible and financially sound: the RM-owned building at 372 Main Street.

"As we started the project, we investigated various sites and options throughout the community," said CAO Mitch Duval. "We narrowed our options down to the site at 372 Main Street, which is commonly known as the [former] Brodeur car dealership. In July of 2018, the municipality moved forward and [hired] an architectural firm for schematic design and cost estimates in regard to renovation of the building."

Council received proposals from four different



Ritchot CAO Mitch Duval addresses residents at a public meeting.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

architectural firms and selected Bridgman Collaborative Architecture, a firm with 36 years of experience, including the design of childcare and community recreation centres. Wins Bridgman, principle architect and director of the firm, addressed council through a PowerPoint presentation that included a conceptual design and a recorded message for those in attendance.

"The existing building at 372 Main has many characteristics that would be an asset to a childcare facility," said Bridgman in the message. "These assets include large windows, high ceilings,

frontage on Main Street, a large play area in the back and a smaller play area on the side of the building for infants, 19 parking spots for staff and visitors, as well drop off for ten cars adjacent to Main Street. The proposed transformation from an auto dealership... to a purpose-filled childcare centre shows the possibilities of this budget-conscious adaptive re-use: a building project that could be open and ready for use as early as September 2019."

As proposed, the renovated building would meet provincial building codes and requirements for a childcare facility and easily

accommodate the licensed childcare spots newly granted by the province as well as the existing daycare spots currently housed in the school and at St. Adolphe Bible Fellowship. In total, the expansion would allow for 12 infant spots, 56 preschool spots, and 45 school-age spots.

The Main Street building would require upgraded insulation, new mechanical and electrical systems, and an entirely new layout before it's ready for use by the daycare.

The interior design would include administrative offices, an infant care room with direct access to an outdoor

play area, two classrooms for school-age children, and a gathering hub with a kitchen to act as an assembly and indoor play area. One of the school-age rooms would have direct outside access and could be used by the community for extracurricular programs when not in use by the daycare.

Each class would have its own dedicated washroom area. The facility would also provide separate space for staff, special needs washrooms, and a storage area. According to Duval, the exterior of the building would be unchanged apart from the installation of some windows and doors if needed.

The total cost estimate for the reconstruction comes to \$1.7 million. Of that amount, \$1.5 million is expected for demolition and renovation while the balance will cover the costs of architectural design, testing, and a nominal contingency fund.

To fund this project, the provincial government has promised a grant to the community of \$560,000 from their Early Learning and Child Care Building Fund. Council has determined that one of the annual allotments of \$140,000 from the Hydro Community Development Initiative will also be earmarked for this project. The final \$1 million will be borrowed from the RM's municipal surplus monies.

Duval says this surplus exists in the RM's coffers due

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Preliminary interior layout of the proposed childcare centre. RM OF RITCHOT

to an accumulation of funds budgeted for other projects that came in underbudget. Because the money would not need to be borrowed from a financial institution, residents won't see any tax increases to support the daycare build or operating costs down the road.

"As of our 2017 audited financial statement, our accumulated nominal surplus is around \$3.5 million," says Duval. "The million dollars that we would loan out for this project is currently earning about two percent [interest] on investment. We would be charging 1.75 percent [interest] on the loan to the daycare, so there's a 0.25 percent deficit on that. At the end of the lease [period], the RM would still have ownership of the building, control of the building, control of the land, and would likely re-enter into another lease agreement at that point 20 years down the road."

For the childcare facility, a 20-year lease scenario

would require a loan from the RM of about \$1.2 million, which includes the interest paid over the lease period. Annually, this means that a lease payment of \$59,680 would be expected from the daycare committee. The RM can provide the flexibility of a one-time per annum payment or monthly payment terms. Duval estimates the utilities to come to an additional \$18,750 for 2019.

Council entertained comments from those in attendance. Many residents came forward with pleas for council to consider voting in favor of the initiative as presented, citing the desperate need for daycare options in the community, the potential jobs that could be created, the draw this would be for families considering a move to the area, and the message council would be sending by investing in the community's children.

"In today's fast-paced, dual-income world, there is an increasing number of

families becoming dependent on two incomes, so in turn the need for quality childcare has skyrocketed," said Lana Redmond, Ste. Adolphe Nursery School director. "Our wait list... is currently 125 children and is growing every day. I get daily phone calls from parents looking for childcare spots, but we are unable to help them."

In the end, council voted unanimously in favour of the first reading of the borrowing bylaw. From here, it is required to go to the provincial municipal board for approval or recommended changes to the bylaw. Council will then entertain second and third reading before tangible steps can be taken on the new build. While Duval cannot say how long it will take to get approval from the province, time is of the essence to keep the promised provincial daycare spots before the deadline date in April 2019.

In the meantime, the St. Adolphe Nursery School board continues to fundraise in the anticipation that everything will eventually fall into place.

"We are hoping to raise \$100,000 for the inside furnishings, so bookshelves, books, toys, and change pads," says Kori Plesiuk, chairperson of the board. "Anything that isn't attached to the floor is the daycare's responsibility. We wanted to start getting things rolling and demonstrate to the RM that we were putting [energy and money] behind this [proposal]."

# MERRY CHRISTMAS

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:11



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**The Mona Jodoin Law Corporation  
Legal Team looks back at 2018**

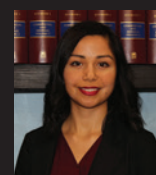
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- ✓ Ile des Chenes became home to our newest and largest branch office;
- ✓ We were honoured with the nomination for the Business of the Year award by the Ritchot Chamber of Commerce;
- ✓ Cassidy Loeppky, Bradyn Gratton and Patricia St. Hilaire were welcomed to our fabulous team;
- ✓ Law student, Erik Gusdal, will soon be articling with our team of professionals;
- ✓ Our team, four branch offices, and amazing clientele list all continue to grow;
- ✓ We had the opportunity to serve so many new clients and continued to receive many referrals from our loyal clientele;
- ✓ Each team member is backed by a supportive family and our supportive team, allowing us to support you, our client, to the best of our abilities.

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# Hiking the Grand Canyon: One Woman's Determination to Chase Freedom for All

By Brenda Sawatzky

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We all love a challenge once in a while. For many of us, a personal challenge creates an opportunity for self-betterment. But for Niverville resident Sylvia St. Cyr, it means bringing a stranger one step closer to freedom.

On October 13, St. Cyr headed to Arizona to begin a four-day trek down to the bottom and back up to the top of the illustrious Grand Canyon. It was called the Freedom Challenge. The goal for St. Cyr, and the six women who accompanied her, was to promote awareness of the plague known as human trafficking and to raise money to help combat this widespread injustice.

Freedom Challenge is an initiative of Operation Mobilization, a non-profit dedicated to bringing medical care, emergency relief, education, and job skills to people around the globe.

This is just one small part of the organization's important mission, but its mandate is enormous: to free oppressed and enslaved women and children all around the world.

According to the Freedom Challenge website, 40 million people in the world today are slaves to human trafficking, and 24 million of them are women and children. The average age of these modern-day child slaves is a tender 12 years. This epidemic can be found in the forms of sex slavery, child marriage, debt bondage, and forced labour, and nets a profit of \$150 billion per year to the traffickers. It is said to be the second-fastest growing industry next to the illegal drug trade.

"Last year I was reading a blog, randomly, and [the author] was talking about how she did the Freedom Challenge and it just hit me, 'That's something I have to do,'" says St. Cyr. "I've been passionate about doing something to help people out of human trafficking in some way for quite a while now."

St. Cyr began by researching the topic, believing that to build real passion for a cause you need to fully understand it.

The documentaries and stories of human trafficking took her to dark places, she says, so she needed to find emotional balance as a wife and mother of two growing children.

"A statistic that became real to me is that the average age of someone who gets into [prostitution] is 12 years old," says St. Cyr. "These predators are looking for people that



Sylvia St. Cyr on her hike through the Grand Canyon.

ANGELA AKEHURST

need love. I have a 12-year old son. To think that him or my daughter would be sold and used [as slaves] drives me crazy and many of these children don't have anyone to fight for them. So I feel like if I can help one person to know their worth and value, awesome. I'm not going to save everyone, obviously, but if I can raise even one person's awareness, great."

St. Cyr set out on the first portion of the challenge in January. Her goal was to raise \$5,000 for the cause. After numerous fundraising events and outreaches on her social media pages, she was astonished to have exceeded her goal by \$1,500.

Next, she commenced training for what would be a gruelling adventure. For 16 weeks she set out to build muscle, strength, and endurance. Three days of every week were dedicated to strength training. On Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays she ventured out on hikes, finding a variety of trails in Pembina Valley and the Whiteshell where elevation changes and landscape challenges could add to the experience.

She soon discovered that finding the right equipment was essential to her success as she added more and more weight to every hike. Forty pounds of weight is what she'd been told to expect during the Freedom Challenge, as they'd be carrying all their supplies on their backs, including food, cooking utensils, clothing, a tent, and sleeping gear.

Just months before the scheduled date for the trek, Freedom Challenge notified all the hikers of a change to the original canyon route. The new route would take them down from the northern rim, a trek they said was equivalent to that of climbing Mount Kilimanjaro. Hikers were welcome to back out. St. Cyr was not swayed.

She arrived in Utah the day before the hike and was sent off by her husband and children, who had accompanied her on the drive down. She was met by her cousin from British Columbia, who had committed to hiking alongside her. A single day of group orientation led to the first stage of the trek, a three-and-a-half-hour van ride to the northern rim. It was a commute she describes as harrowing.

"It had rained the week before, so the ruts on the road were a foot deep," St. Cyr says. "The worst I've ever seen. At one time we were almost sideways and I thought the van was going to break. It was an adventure just getting there."

But the bus didn't make it, its progression stopped by a washed-out road. They were saved by a driver in a passing pickup truck who was able to transport them the rest of the way. By 10:30 that morning, they were finally able to set out, descending 3,000 feet down the canyon wall. It took them eight and a half hours to reach the bottom, their first stop en route.

St. Cyr describes the hiking trail as one of the most difficult she'd ever

seen. Rocks, loose stones, and tree roots riddled their path, making the descent at times treacherous.

"My cousin almost died," she says. "She was tripping and running. She finally caught herself on a rock. There are small rocks littering the path, so rocks are just constantly moving and tumbling. The poles were our lifeline. Every step was so calculated."

By dusk they were able to set up their meagre camp and enjoy an evening meal before bedding down for the night. The morning brought St. Cyr's next challenge: a migraine headache that she was sure would bring her adventure to an end. The team encouraged her to drink water and eat, believing that the migraine may have been brought on by dehydration. It worked and within hours they were setting out for day two of the challenge.

This day would be an easier one, hiking only two and a half hours along the canyon bed. They filled their water containers from local springs and set up camp again, carefully seeking out flat rocks to pitch a tent.

"Our motto was, 'Leave no trace,'" St. Cyr recalls. "The best camping spot is not made, it's found. You find flat spots and you put your tent there. You move a rock, you put it back in the morning. Everything that gets cooked is eaten. All the waste goes into someone's backpack."

Day three began with some

pleasure hiking. Backpack-free, they trekked through an area she calls The Narrows, best described as stunningly beautiful.

"You feel like you're on Mars," she marvels. "There's tons of different marbling in the rocks and the water coming down leaves red and black streaks. There was a tiny pool that some people went swimming in. We felt so free without our packs."

By the afternoon, the reality of their trip returned as they began the steep ascent back up the canyon wall. High winds slowed their trek, causing them to stop for the day before they'd reached their halfway point.

To complete the trek on time, the final day meant rising long before the sun and completing the first portion of their final ascent in total darkness, guided only by the light of their headlamps.

The adventurers arrived at their destination safe and with only a few blisters and sore muscles to remind them of what they'd just completed.

"I would be able to summarize it like this: the first two days I definitely thought I might die," laughs St. Cyr. "The last two days I kept thinking, 'This can't be almost over. Can we just stay another night or two?' It was so liberating, not wearing make-up, being in the wild, eating and communing, and totally getting close to these strangers [that were now friends]. It was an incredible experience."

But, she says, they could never have done it without the seasoned experience of their two guides, both young women who'd completed this trek many times before.

"I don't have good enough words to describe them," she muses. "They are amazing. They had 70- to 80-pound packs the whole time. They would carry other people's packs and always be encouraging."

In total, 29 women completed a Freedom Challenge at the canyon that weekend, all separated into groups and hiking different portions of the immense, rocky gorge. Together they raised \$130,000 which will be used at the front lines of the fight against human trafficking, hopefully releasing many from its ugly clutches.

St. Cyr says she used the words of William Wilberforce to guide her as she followed her passion to help others find freedom: "You may choose to look the other way, but you can never say again that you did not know."



# MLA and Ritchot Mayor Hold Public Q&A

By Lorelei Leona

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Bob Lagassé, MLA for Dawson Trail, has been taking a new approach in creating community connections by hosting community gatherings called Coffee with Bob. Lagassé started doing these informal sit-downs at the beginning of his term as a way to reach out to his constituents on a more casual basis.

Seeing an opportunity to connect members of the community with the right people, Lagassé has now started doing the meetings with regional mayors.

"People will come with an issue and it won't necessarily be provincial," says Lagassé. "This is an opportunity for people to connect with the right people."

The RM of Ritchot participated in a Coffee with Bob session on the evening of Friday, November 23 at 457 Main Street in St. Adolphe.



Chris Ewen.

CHRIS EWEN

Ritchot Mayor Chris Ewen joined Lagassé for the session.

"The main idea is to connect with residents for the Dawson Trail riding and Ritchot," explains Mayor Ewen. "It's an informal coffee chat where we talk about anything from politics to road issues



Bob Lagassé.

BOB LAGASSÉ

to personal lives. It's a great way to get to know people around us and be able to service them better, or even just be able to say hello in the grocery store."

During his term so far, Lagassé has tried to be mindful of the importance of maintaining

relationships with his constituents by continuing to be a presence in the riding.

"A lot of times people get elected and then they disappear," says Lagassé. "Some of our job pulls us away from the communities, but in my opinion the communities are the most important part."

An event like Coffee with Bob is something that is unique to rural communities and allows the different towns to come together and foster the one-community mentality.

"The RM of Ritchot, especially myself as mayor, appreciates the time our MLAs have taken with us to ask questions, hear ideas, and meet our residents together," Ewen adds. "I look forward to positive initiatives MLA Lagassé has brought to Ritchot, especially Coffee with Bob."

## IN BRIEF

### Communities in Bloom Group Looks to Future

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Niverville in Bloom, the local chapter of Communities in Bloom (CIB), made a presentation to council on November 20 which included an overview of their achievements in 2018. They also provided a wish list for the coming year.

Some items on their wish list include the replacement of an aging fence on Main Street with a historical fence, an annual Arbor Day celebration at Hespeler Park, the establishment of an action plan for a graffiti-free community, and development of some historical interest for "Old Niverville" by creating street signs indicating the original names used when the community was first established.

Upon recommendation from CIB judges, presenter Annette Fast suggested that council could look at replacing the welcome signs on the east and west entries into town. CIB judges had indicated to the committee that the existing signs appear more like they are advertising a recreation complex than a town.

Mayor Myron Dyck indicated that this has already been a conversation around council's table. At this stage, they are awaiting answers from Manitoba Infrastructure regarding the future installation of roundabouts at either entry into town.

## St. Adolphe Social Raises Money for Childcare Centre

By Lorelei Leona

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The St. Adolphe Childcare Centre hosted a social on Saturday, November 24 at Pioneer Hall in support of their ongoing fundraising efforts.

The proposed childcare centre's board has spearheaded several efforts throughout the year, with the Leave the Kids at Home social the latest. The evening

began at 8:00 p.m. and continued into the night with music from The Doghouse Band, as well as DJ Bulldog playing between sets.

"Most of the [social] prizes were donated by local business and families," explains Kori Plesiuk, chairperson of the daycare board and a fundraising committee member. There was a normal raffle with multiple regular prizes, and three grand prizes. Prizes included items such as a

professional photography package voucher, a Nintendo Switch, a brewing kit, as well as the grand prize of Jets tickets, a garage door opener, and a handmade toy box full of toys.

The social was pegged as a fun, unique way to get the community involved in the childcare venture, a way to encourage people to let their hair down before the busyness of the holiday season took over.

The committee is continuing to plan more fundraising events over the coming months, including the continuation of Chase the Ace every Wednesday night at the St. Adolphe bar. They are also discussing a gala for the spring.

"So far [we have received] positive responses," says Plesiuk of their efforts. "We are on a pretty tight time schedule and people have been very supportive."



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## A Teen, a Grandmother, and a Volunteer Spirit

**By Brenda Sawatzky**

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The great generational divide can be difficult to cross, and never more so than when you're in your teens. Different life experiences, and the lack of shared interests, makes for a broad chasm that's not easily bridged. Kaitlyn Goertzen has found a way to build that bridge, though, and her effort is making a difference at the Heritage Life Personal Care Home in Niverville.

Sixteen-year old Goertzen began volunteering at the PCH when her baba took up residence there in February 2018. Her 72-year old grandmother suffers from dementia.

"When I was younger, I would go to my baba's house and I would ask to paint her nails and stuff, but she [wasn't that interested]," says Goertzen. "Now she loves it. I also do her makeup now and she never used to let me do that."

While her interest at the PCH began with a desire to continue developing a relationship with her grandmother, before long Goertzen began to enjoy the company of the other seniors at the facility. Now she volunteers up to twice a week, assisting in a variety of recreational activities including baking, manicures, musical entertainment, and chaperoning on outings.

"Before I volunteered here, I was volunteering at Seven Oaks Hospital where my mom works," Goertzen says. "I [also] helped out with the children's summer camp, but it wasn't really convenient for us because I would only be able to volunteer on weekends and that's when my mom doesn't work. So, I only did it in the summer. But this is convenient because my mom visits my baba. I just really



Kaitlyn Goertzen and her baba.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

enjoy the company of elderly people. You can have conversations with them, learn more about their lives and how they grew up."

As an only child, she says she's gotten used to spending time with adults. And whether she's scheduled to volunteer or just feels like popping by, the recreational therapist is always glad to get her involved. Goertzen finds that spending time in the kitchen, baking with the seniors, is a great way to build relationships.

"The same group usually comes," says Goertzen. "Some of them are slower with cutting and stuff, but we give them all a different job. Baba has some trouble with the cutting. My grandpa was there once and he helped her and my mom will help her, too. Baba used to always bake and cook, like perogies and cakes and the whole Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner."

Goertzen is now working on creative ways to use her musical talents to touch the

hearts of seniors at the PCH. The multitasking young lady sings, dances, plays the saxophone, and is teaching herself to play the ukulele.

"For December, I'm putting together a bunch of Christmas songs to [perform]," she says. "I'd talk about each song beforehand. I'll get my own speaker and microphone [and] I might add a little tap dance section."

If things go well, she's hoping to take her one-woman show on the road to other personal care homes around Manitoba. As a Grade 11 student, Goertzen has been actively thinking about her future after graduation and hopes that she can find a career which will allow her to continue her work with seniors.

"I know I want to go to university, but I don't really know what for," she says. "I know I want to help people. My mom's a nurse [and] that's something I couldn't do, but maybe [something] with elderly people."



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## Chamber News

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Photo Credit: Suzanne Turenne

## Updates from the Ritchot Chamber

Recap: The Ritchot Chamber Business Awards Gala  
November 10

Nearly 150 business leaders attended the annual Ritchot Chamber Awards Gala and represented nearly 50 local businesses. We'd especially like to congratulate the evening award winners:

## Corporate Volunteer of the Year:

- Grande Pointe and Île-des-Chênes Community Response Unit

## Entrepreneur of the Year:

- Arrowhead RV Park

## Business of the Year:

- Deva Jatt Transport

## Annual Ritchot Chamber AGM

December 6, 8:00–9:00 a.m. | Lucky Luc's, Ste. Agathe

Chamber and community members are welcome to attend the Ritchot Chamber Annual General Meeting (AGM). We'll reflect on successes of the past year, priorities moving forward, and confirm and elect the 2019 Chamber Board of Directors.

Please send an RSVP to fiona@ritchotchamber.com to attend.

## Growing Strong

The Ritchot Chamber welcomes Ron Slobodian of Blind Adventures, Custom Blinds and Drapes. Would you like to find out more about the benefits of becoming a Chamber member? Contact Fiona Robinson, Executive Director at 204-881-2351 or fiona@ritchotchamber.com.

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## IN BRIEF

## Teen Challenge Hosts Fundraising Dinner Theatre

By Lorelei Leona

lleona@nivervillecitizen.com

Adult and Teen Challenge (ATC) held its Sons and Daughters annual outreach banquet in support of their life-saving programs. The program, which has roots in southern Manitoba, offers community support groups, drug awareness teams, and yearlong residential recovery programs for both men and women, according to a statement provided by ATC Executive Assistant Michelle Friesen.

This year's banquet was held at White-tail Meadow on November 10 at 7:00 p.m. and featured a musical theatre dinner format, along with a few words from Provencher MP Ted Falk.

"It highlights the transformation that is possible for those with addictions," Friesen says of the dinner theatre. "Drama and music was performed by ATC students and graduates in between meal courses."

The evening presented an opportunity for guests to support by donation, but it was also an opportunity for those needing help to hear firsthand accounts of the programs offered by ATC. The organization hosts a variety of programs that are both residential and non-residential, based on the need of the individual. Its residential programs offers support to those 18 and over for life-threatening addictions, while their non-residential programs offer a more support group style of counselling.

# Christmas through the Eyes of Five-Year-Olds

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

If you thought you knew everything there was to know about Christmas, you'd be wrong—just ask a five-year old. This month, 16 adorable elves from a Niverville Elementary Kindergarten class decided to set the record straight by answering some fundamentally important questions about Christmas.



Kindergarten students from Niverville Elementary.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

**Q: Which gifts did the three wise men bring to the manger?**

*Kenzie*—"Some treasure. Maybe coins to buy stuff." (Others within the junior assembly agreed that coins would have come in handy for milk, baby food, and toys.)

*Brielle*—"Gold, myrrh, and frankincense." (Somebody's been paying attention in Sunday school).

**Q: Can you finish this song: "All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth, my two front teeth, my two front teeth. Gee, if I could only have my two front teeth, then I could..."?**

*Mila*—"Eat!"

*Ainsley*—"Put them back in."

**Q: What kinds of presents does Santa want?**

*Sawyer*—"An airplane."

*Adley*—"A card from kids."

*Tyrell*—"A dump truck."

*Brielle*—"A new sleigh, 'cause the old one has lots of dirt on it."

**Q: If Mommy wrote a letter to Santa, would she say you've been naughty or nice?**

*Savanah*—"Nice, because I help her make her bed."

*Asher*—"Nice. I help Mommy make my bed and she helps me make my bed too."

*Colin*—"Nice, because I let the dogs out for her."

**Q: If your daddy made a Christmas wish list, what kinds of things would he ask for?**

*Colin*—"Green coffee with spiders inside."

*Kenzie*—"A new computer."

*Mila*—"Gum."

*Scarlett*—"A new jacket, 'cause his zipper doesn't work."

**Q: If Santa forgot where you lived, how would he find out?**

*Scarlett*—"He uses a map and he sees how far it is to fly to your house."

*Tyrell*—"We have a number on our house so he would find it."

*Adam*—"He already knows."

**Q: Why do we decorate a tree at Christmas?**

*Ava*—"For Santa because it's Christmas."

*Adam*—"That's how Santa knows it's Christmas."

*Asher*—"Because you have to put ornaments on something." (The "duh" was implied).

*Colin*—"If there were no decorations, if Santa got there then he couldn't get out of the house and make any more magic."

**Q: What kinds of things do you hope you don't get for Christmas?**

*Mila*—"Coke."

*Kenzie*—"Dirt."

*Ava*—"Bees."

*Colin*—"A toilet."

*Scarlett*—"A rollercoaster, because there's no straps. What if I get one with no straps and I fall out?"

*Ainsley*—"A toy computer. I like real computers best."

*Savanah*—"An LOL." (For other naïve adults out there, this is a toy).

**Q: What kinds of animals were at the manger when Jesus was born?**

*Colin*—"A giraffe."

*Alex*—"A stork."

*Quinn*—"A chicken." (Others agreed that this would provide an essential source of food for the gathering crowd).

*Kenzie*—"A dog. One that has magic."

*Sawyer*—"A turtle, because so it could breathe." (I didn't ask).

**Q: Where is the North Pole?**

*Asher*—"North."

*Mila*—"In the sky."

*Scarlett*—"It's behind the clouds."

*Brielle*—"Far, far away. So far you couldn't even walk there."

*Zachary*—"It's on land, maybe so far, far away that you can't even drive there."

*Ainsley*—"Far. Really, really, really far."

**Q: What is your favourite part of Christmas?**

*Kenzie*—"Santa comes!"

*Scarlett*—"The Christmas tree."

*Asher*—"Lego."

*Ava*—"Getting a pet."

*Ainsley*—"Doing the fun things like decorating the Christmas tree."

*Sawyer*—"Making cookies and milk."

Santa, if you're listening, the rest all unanimously agreed that presents are, without question, the best part of Christmas!

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# Ste. Agathe Service Centre Embraces the Digital Age

By Fiona Robinson

It's officially winter, which means it's a busy time for Ste. Agathe Service Station, where customers have been lining up to ensure their vehicles are ready for the winter months ahead. This is where locals buy and replace their winter tires while the shop team tests block heaters, checks for winter-strength coolants, and provides an overall winter safety inspection.

Alain and Rachel Robert purchased Ste. Agathe Service Centre from Alain's parents in 2001 after the business had already been serving the community for 25 years. Alain, a certified Red Seal Technician, is hands-on in all aspects of the business, whether the day requires his Red Seal expertise, management skills, or floor-mopping abilities.

The family affair also includes the couple's adult children. One son works on site as a technician, another pops in to help as needed, and their daughter plays a supportive role in the office and with parts.

"Basically, we do it all when it comes to automotive or light truck repair," says Alain. "Some of the most common work includes wheel alignments, A/C fixes, tire repair, and sales."

Those who are familiar with the quaint façade of this 3,200-square-foot shop may be unaware of the busy nine bays that expand well into the property. The original business began as four walls, five bays, and a makeshift office. Alain added an additional five bays, a modernized lunchroom, and a welcoming



Alain and Rachel Robert in front of their nine-bay shop.

FIONA ROBINSON

reception area with a complimentary office Keurig machine for customers.

But a lot more has changed over the years than just the square footage. As part of the computer generation, Alain has strategically worked to integrate computerization wherever it can add value to the business and keep his team up to speed.

His team includes three hired Red Seal-licensed technicians and another three apprentices who are on track in their third and fourth levels to apply for Red Seal certification. Red Seal is the standard for both the province and Canada, so Alain is committed to supporting technicians through the journey.

"Our younger team is particularly adept with embracing technology," Alain says. "Training never ends. There's training this week. Training next week. They make me spend a lot of money on equipment."

This digital integration is apparent throughout the shop where tablets and diagnostic equipment are adorned at every work station.

One distinction that

keeps Ste. Agathe Service Station's customers coming back is the Digital Vehicle Inspection, which adds an extra layer of transparency for the customer.

To complete a Digital Vehicle Inspection, every technician has an electronic tablet in their toolbox. When the vehicle is inspected, issues, photos, and explanations are documented in the form of a simplified checklist that can be texted or emailed to the customer. Simple coding—like red, amber, and green indicators—denote the requirement or urgency of a repair. Over time, a full customer and vehicle history are created, saving troubleshooting time for all involved.

"The Digital Vehicle Inspection improves communication with our customers, especially if they don't have a mechanical background," explains Alain. "They can actually see the problem and we can talk about the process to fix it. This builds confidence and trust."

The digital approach also streamlines communication shop-wide. As soon as data is entered into the system, it

appears live on two screens in the office where the service writers can quickly prepare a report and contact the customer. With everyone in the know, work can be better organized and prioritized throughout the day with less downtime.

Alain adds that the system is also environmentally friendly. "We no longer rely on paper, clipboards, and data entry. We've seen our paper use go way down."

At the end of the day, he knows that it's the people who

make the operation a success.

"We have good, loyal customer relationships," he says. "They are our friends. We have examples of customers that have been with the family business for 40 years plus."

As Alain's team takes care of the customers, he also stays ahead of the game to take care of them. "We are very safety-conscious and we are working with Seine River Safety for future safety certification requirements."

As a long-standing local business in Ste. Agathe, Alain

and his team are active members of the community. Every spring they host a barbeque where kids can get their bike tires pumped up to be ready for the season.

"One year we pumped air into the tires of over 120 bikes," says Alain with a smile. "It was a good time."

The Ste. Agathe Service Centre team also gets involved with local hockey and plays a role in Ste. Agathe's annual community fair, Cheyenne Days, in July.

As for the future, Alain maintains an attitude of ongoing improvement and steady work.

"We'll continue evolving. We'll keep getting more modern with our equipment and work on continuous safety improvements. Even though we've just expanded, some days we think we should have built bigger!"

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## CITIZEN POLL

**If rural ride-sharing options were more accessible, would you take advantage of them to commute to the city?**

- ☐ Yes. Ride-sharing is a good way to reduce your carbon footprint, and a good way to connect with others.
- ☐ No. Ride-sharing simply isn't as convenient as owning my own vehicle and driving myself where I need to go.
- ☐ Have another opinion? Share your thoughts in a comment online.

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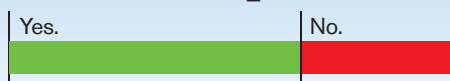
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Price is important for everyone's budget, shop Canadian is important to our economy. Why is it we have to pay more to shop Canadian in most cases. It seems we lose in each choice.

# New App Makes Rural Ride-Sharing Easier

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

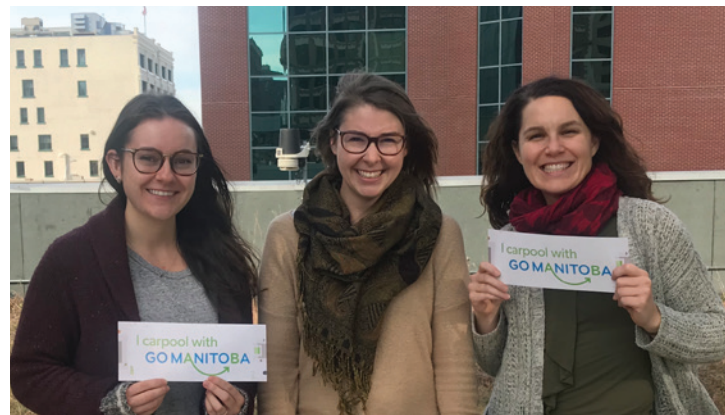
The choice to live in rural Manitoba and work outside your community virtually necessitates the daily use of a personal vehicle—that is, until now. The Green Action Centre (GAC), based out of Winnipeg, wants Manitoba residents to know that rural carpooling isn't just a good idea, it's imperative if we're going to begin the journey toward reversing the threats of climate change.

"As someone who grew up in rural Manitoba, I understand the dependency that rural communities have on vehicles," says Bethany Daman, former Niverville resident and employee of the GAC. "I understand that trips to the city are inevitable and that cycling and walking aren't practical commuting options. What are the alternatives if we want to protect the environment and our wallets? Carpooling is a great option."

The GAC is a non-profit, non-governmental organization whose mandate since 1985 has been to promote greener living by providing environmental education as well as practical, environmentally sound solutions for households, workplaces, schools, and communities. Their primary focuses include commuting, composting and waste reduction, sustainable living, and resource conservation.

One of their most recent initiatives is the GoManitoba app, an online tool dedicated to helping individuals find other people interested in sharing their daily commute.

"With GoManitoba, we have one unified ride-matching system for all Manitobans to access, along with customized and individually managed subsites for workplaces to offer to their employees," says Heather Mitchell



Heather Mitchell, Bethany Daman, and Mel Marginet of the Green Action Centre. © SEAN CARLSON

of GAC. "By coordinating a central system where users can seek out matches [within] their workplace or throughout the entire region, the opportunities for success in finding a match are substantially increased."

Mitchell says that data from the 2016 census indicates that 75 percent of Manitobans are sole occupants in vehicles heading to work or school on a daily basis. Only seven percent of commuters carpool.

"The consequences of this behaviour are quite bleak for our province and our future," Mitchell says. "Infrastructure for vehicles is expensive to build and maintain, our roads are more and more clogged with drivers commuting from communities further and further away, and the quality of air around schools is poor due to the number of kids dropped off in vehicles, as opposed to walking, biking, or taking the bus to school."

But it's not just the environment and the infrastructure that will benefit from ride-sharing. Mitchell says that, for most Canadians, owning and operating a vehicle is their second-largest monthly expenditure, and it doesn't have to be that way.

"If you include depreciation, owning your own vehicle costs

between \$8,600 and \$13,000 a year," says Mitchell. "Recently, Canadians have been noticing a jump in gas prices, and the climb isn't about to end anytime soon. Carpooling allows you to share the cost of gas and parking, cutting your expenses by nearly 50 percent or more. The more occupants in your carpool, the more you save."

Ride-sharing also appears to be an economical approach on a broader scale. Fewer cars on the roads could equate to a reduction in required government spending on maintaining existing infrastructure, the construction of new roads, and healthcare costs as air quality is improved. It could also be the answer to the ever-growing demand on fossil fuels and their alternatives.

"Even if commuters who regularly drive alone the majority of the week choose to carpool just once or twice per week, we could see substantial improvements," Mitchell adds.

The GAC began the ride-share initiative by conducting workplace transportation surveys, the results of which indicated an interest in shared transportation. The problem seemed to be a lack of initiative or know-how in organizing a carpool.

Some Manitoba employers who understand the benefit of employee ride-sharing have attempted to pay for subscriptions to similar online programs in the past, or to create their own company carpooling database. According to Mitchell, these employers typically find that employee uptake is poor because matches are extremely limited. With the GoManitoba app, every employer can link into one database, and individuals will be able to access options beyond their workplace.

The GoManitoba app provides a quick, secure, and personal way to find commuting partners by simply setting up a profile and entering the addresses of your starting and ending points. Participants have the option of commuting with others from their workplace or campus, or with individuals who are simply travelling a similar route.

App users can also log their commutes and keep a regular eye out for potential new matches. Additionally, the app provides personalized mentoring should ride-share participants decide to carpool into Winnipeg and navigate the sometimes tricky public transit or cycling systems available to them from the drop-off point.

"Since graduating from high school, I've learnt a lot about climate change," says Daman. "I find it pretty scary and, honestly, my response used to be avoidance. At some point, I realized that this response wasn't enough. If I truly care about the effects of climate change, I needed to do something. I started out by making changes in my own life such as reducing my waste and choosing to walk, bike, bus, or carpool rather than drive. I would love for my work at GAC to result in lifestyles changes for [other] Manitobans."

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# Robert Steps Out of Public Eye

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Ask almost anyone from Ste. Agathe or the municipality of Ritchot and they'll know the name Jeannot Robert. It's a name synonymous with giving back to the community and municipality through years of service, whether in business or local politics.

For the past eight years, Robert represented the municipality as councillor for Ward 3. In October, he bid a final farewell to council, ready to move on to new aspirations in his life. In part, his decision to retire was to make room for younger council members who have a lot to offer the municipality.

"It definitely is an adjustment to be off council where I have learned and enjoyed so much, but there comes a time to move along," says Robert. "The municipality is fortunate to acquire Curtis Claydon as my replacement and I have all the confidence that he will not disappoint. I have known Curtis for many years. He is dedicated in all he undertakes and will bring results."



Jeannot Robert.

JEANNOT ROBERT

Robert is pleased with the accomplishments of council during the years in which he actively participated to help build a strong

and vibrant municipality. He's witnessed unprecedented growth, many new developments with young families moving in, and the

investment in new infrastructure in every community. Being able to work alongside others to see the completion of the Ste. Agathe fire hall brought his closing chapter on council to a gratifying completion.

"To past council members, I would like to say that I have enjoyed my time with you and I'm proud to have been a part of your circle," Robert says. "To the CAO and all [municipal] staff members, Public Works, Water Works, you are so dedicated to your work and we are, as a municipality, fortunate you are part of us."

For now, Robert says he is hoping to fill his free time with travel, relaxing at the lake, fishing, and visiting with family and friends.

"I want to thank the residents of Ward 3 for their confidence in me and acclaiming me each time," Robert says of his years on council. "You are all, without a doubt, amazing, hard-working, honest, considerate people and I've enjoyed all of you. It was an honour and privilege to represent you at council and I did it with pride."

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# Proposed Niverville Foundation to Offer Financial Aid

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Libby Hanna is one of a group of locals hoping to build the groundwork for a foundation that will help Niverville organizations access grants and funding in the near future. Foundations are charitable organizations that already exist in many communities around Manitoba.

The purpose of a foundation is to facilitate the collection of donations from local individuals and businesses that wish to make a contribution to their community in lasting ways. In turn, the foundation's administrative body disperses those funds to groups who need them.

"It's for the organizations, small or large, in the community that don't already have charitable status," says Hanna. Some examples, she says, might be the Scouts, Brownies, sports teams, and schools.

The foundation would provide a place for these organizations to apply for financial aid, alleviating their need to knock on residential doors and solicit businesses in order to operate year after year.

Donors to such a foundation might include people who choose to bequeath a portion of their estate or who have life insurance policies that pay out after death. Businesses may also be interested in making end-of-year donations to keep the money local rather than paying it out in federal income tax. Community-minded people might choose to set up annual donations to the foundation automatically every year, as a way of giving back.

"The baby boomers are

getting older," Hanna says. "They are selling land, businesses, and what not, and this gives them an opportunity to donate some money that will benefit them or their company as well."

Foundations typically operate in one of two ways. Foundation administrators can collect donations, essentially becoming the executors of those monies, and pay them out to designated organizations as needed until the funds are completely used up. Their ability to function in this capacity is dependent on new donations constantly coming in.

The second way, which is the one Hanna hopes the new Niverville foundation will operate, is an endowment fund. In an endowment fund, the principal donation is used as investment capital, thus becoming a foundation asset that generates an income through interest earned and possible dividends paid back to the foundation.

The investment capital, or the money originally donated, is never used to fund organizations. Grant monies are paid out solely from the income generated from the donation. In this way, the original donation is used as a tool to create ongoing income that never runs out. One person's donation can keep paying out to the community indefinitely.

"That capital money never disappears," Hanna says. "The money you give grows and the foundation disperses the growth. That foundation then is ever-growing, and the more it grows, the more money the foundation will have coming back to it every year."



Libby Hanna.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

Administrators of endowment funds can also set up policies on how much of the interest earned will be paid out to organizations and how much will be retained and reinvested in order to grow the principal.

So, for instance, if a donor makes a \$1,000 donation to the foundation, and it sees an eight percent return on investment after the first year, the foundation might choose to pay out only four percent to local organizations and add the remaining four percent to the principal.

Under this model, the size of the principal investment grows organically as the foundation reinvests a portion of the interest, but it will also continue to grow as new donations come in.

Hanna envisions a local

foundation that will allow each donor the freedom to designate their financial gift to specific organizations such as Communities in Bloom or a local sports group. Or donors might choose to designate it to a specific initiative such as the Community Resource Centre. The foundation will also hold a general fund for money not specifically designated, apart from the donors' wish to help build a vibrant, sustainable community.

The ad hoc committee has already met with administrators of the Winnipeg Foundation and Abundance Canada to get insight into starting and operating a community foundation. At this point, Hanna says they are leaning towards collaborating with the Winnipeg Foundation, who would be able to provide the necessary

administration for Niverville's foundation.

Should they go this route, the Niverville foundation would operate under the Winnipeg Foundation's umbrella, thus allowing their professional team of investment strategists, certified accountants, and endowment administrators to assume the bulk of the responsibility. This would leave the Niverville foundation committee free to simply accept and review applications from local organizations in need of funding.

The Winnipeg Foundation would collect an administrative fee of one to two percent of interest earned. It is a cost, Hanna says, that is easily substantiated when considering the alternative of hiring a team of outside professionals to do the same job on the community foundation's behalf.

"Most of the foundations in Manitoba are [working with] the Winnipeg Foundation: Headingly, Steinbach, Morris," Hanna says. "They've got a particular investment strategy that's been utilized for years and they are a very large foundation so they help people like us. We are one of the only communities that doesn't have an endowed fund. I think, in this day and age, it's getting harder to raise money and yet we have a community that's growing in need."

No firm decisions have been made about how the Niverville foundation would operate. Hanna imagines that once the foundation is up and running, a committee would be elected to manage the foundation. While an ad hoc committee would lay down initial policies for the administration

of funds received and distributed, the elected committee would later have the autonomy to amend the policies based on the changing needs of the community.

"There are Canada Revenue Agency rules to operate under and it takes quite a bit of time to start a foundation, to organize all of this and to fill out the non-profit paperwork," Hanna adds. "It would probably take a year to two years before it's ready to go."

She hopes, though, that the eventual committee will provide for a broad list of local organizations to access the funds. They may also choose to run fundraisers of their own in the beginning years to build on the capital at a quicker rate.

As well, the Niverville foundation could work alongside town council and the existing Niverville Health and Community Foundation so that, between them all, every organization's needs can be met.

"I've always been involved in this community," Hanna says. "We've gotten so much out of the community in our lifetime, as well as our children. I see this as something that needs to be done for the community's health and future."

Right now, the foundation steering committee is looking for more people, including business leaders, to get involved with them in order to see this endeavour through.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Libby Hanna at libbym-hanna@gmail.com for further details or to get involved.

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# Remembrance Day Ceremony Filled with Stories and Emotion

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Sunday, November 11, saw the ballroom of the Niverville Heritage Centre filled to near capacity as approximately 650 residents gathered to remember those who paid the ultimate price to buy our freedom. Also acknowledged were the many men and women who have served, and still serve, in military roles. This year marked the one hundredth anniversary of the end of World War I.

The gathered crowd stood and applauded as some of the few remaining World War II veterans were wheeled in or made their slow ascent to the front of the ballroom. Among them was a U.S. veteran of the Vietnam War.

Remembrance Day committee member Lorraine Kehler opened the ceremony, reading true story accounts of the emotion that marked the day the fighting ceased on November 11, 1918. Telecommunications at the time were poor, leaving many unaware of the ceasefire until days afterward. But as news circulated the globe, celebrations broke out in the streets the likes of which many had never experienced before.

Close to 61,000 Canadians were killed during the five-year war, and another 172,000 were wounded. Many casualties returned home to their Canadian families broken in mind and body. Medical professionals of the day called the brain trauma shellshock. Today, it's better known as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Whatever the term applied, it was poorly understood



Local students performed a series of vignettes to dramatize the high cost of war.

NATALIE BATKIS

and few treatments were available. Many more soldiers succumbed to suicide after their return.

Students from Niverville Collegiate's drama club drew the audience in with vignettes written by committee member Natalie Batkis.

"We decided to do something a

little different this year and wrote six dramatic vignettes highlighting how life is for people who serve or have served in the military and how it directly affects their family members," says Batkis. "Our hope was that it would make the stories more current, more relatable to younger

generations and that it would have an emotional impact on them."

Cloaked behind a screen, the characters' silhouettes told stories of a mother whose son went off to war, of a returned soldier suffering under the debilitating effects of PTSD, and a military mother who feels the guilt

of leaving her own children behind in order to help bring peace to someone else's child.

"I'd read some letters written by soldiers who had served in WWI," Batkis adds, "and I also read accounts of peacekeeping missions, particularly Rwanda, in order to better understand the atrocities that occurred there and how people coped when they returned. When it came to the vignette of a mother waiting for her son to return from war, honestly, a lot of that was me imagining my little boy having to go to war. That was all written from my own perspective as a mother."

Two minutes of silence was observed by all in attendance, followed by the laying of wreaths from a variety of dignitaries including Tache councillor Jacques Trudeau, Niverville Deputy Mayor John Funk, and Colonel Ron Walker. The event closed with a luncheon served by the Heritage Centre staff.

Batkis says it takes a lot of volunteers to pull off this event every year. The committee of ten is always looking for new volunteers. The local Scouts were also involved, handing out poppies and greeting guests at the door.

"Including children and youth in our program is very important to us because we want to make sure we pass the torch when it comes to Remembrance Day," Batkis says. "If we get the younger generations understanding that war isn't so far removed from them, that it affects their family and friends, it makes it more real to them and our hope is that it stays with them."

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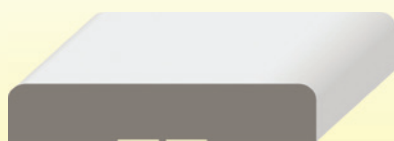
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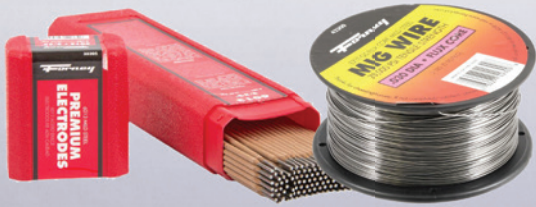
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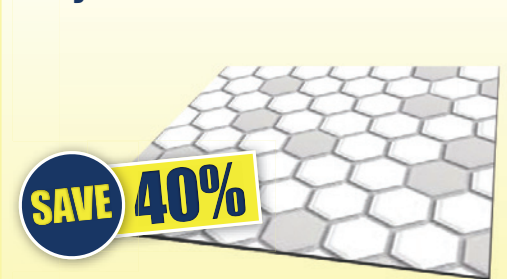


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The new Rescue 1 vehicle eyed by the Town of Niverville.

DEPENDABLE EMERGENCY VEHICLES

## Niverville Fire Department Looks to Expand Emergency Fleet

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@niverillecitizen.com

Improvements to fire and emergency service equipment are an ongoing endeavour for Niverville's Fire and EMS Services.

They are hopeful that a new Rescue 1 unit will soon be added to the town's fleet of emergency vehicles.

The unit would attend the approximate 200 medical, fire, and rescue calls the department receives annually.

"Niverville is a growing community, and with our town growing our department must grow with it," says Fire Chief Keith Bueckert. "We have run out of room to safely and properly store all the equipment needed for emergency calls on our Engine 1 and Engine 2. Rescue 1 will have more room for equipment and personnel needed for emergency calls. The ability for us to bring all equipment and personnel necessary reduces liabilities on responders [taking] their own vehicles [to the scene of an emergency call]."

The 2018 Dodge Ram 5500 is a demo model available

at a dealership in Ontario, Dependable Emergency Vehicles. The asking price is \$140,000 and includes a light tower which will assist in illuminating emergency scenes at night and provide a safer environment for rescue workers. This is a \$25,000 accessory that the dealership has agreed to include at no extra cost.

"Rescue 1 has lots of compartment space and a separate cab area to safely transport members," Bueckert adds. Because the rescue equipment is secured in compartments, the five passengers in the cab will not have to worry about equipment breaking into the cab in the event of an accident.

Recognizing that the department would eventually require equipment such as this, the department has been able to save \$100,000 which they will apply to this purchase. These funds are an accumulation of unused operating monies received from the town's fire and emergency budget over the last number of years.

The balance of \$40,000 will be paid by the town. Council

has already put \$20,000 down as a deposit to hold the vehicle until Niverville fire personnel can go to Ontario to inspect it. Council included a disclaimer that, should the unit not meet expectations, the deposit can be rolled into the purchase of another vehicle for sale by this same dealership.

Council is waiting to pass the 2019 budget before sending the remaining \$20,000.

"We have been preparing for this purchase for a couple years and, with this demo model being found, we were able to return some savings to the town without compromising the needs for the truck and department," Bueckert says.

He adds that the older model Suburban which the department has been using until now will still be put to use after the purchase of Rescue 1.

"The Suburban will be used as a Command and Chief's response vehicle, which will also be able to be equipped with specific equipment to help at emergency scenes," Bueckert says. "Also, it will be a member transporter to calls, too."



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At this time of year we find ourselves rushing about trying to complete the list of things we have to do in order to be ready for Christmas.

When I was a boy and my father would ask me to do something, I would often reply with the grumbling reply "Do I have to?". My father's reply was the same each time "Son, if you want to, then you don't have to!" Christmas is a time where there are many things we have to do. We have to make sure we get gifts for our children, our spouse, and even our boss. There is food we have to buy, dishes we have to prepare, and functions we have to go to. Such is not the case for all in our community.

For many in Niverville Christmas is a time where they wish they had a job, they wish they didn't have to spend it in a hospital, they wish they didn't have family members who don't want to be in the same room with one another, and they wish their loved one that passed away this year could be with them at this time. These are things they wish they didn't have to deal with.

To be a true community means that we look after those in their time of struggle. Thus, I ask all of us if we could put another type of gift on our Christmas lists this year. I call it a "Want to" gift. There may be such a person or family living on your street or in your building that is not looking forward to Christmas perhaps the same way many of us are. Perhaps they are dealing with some of the things I mentioned. This "want to" gift would go a long way in making their Christmas better. It could be in the form of a purchased gift, a gift of something baked or made, or to those who spend Christmas shut in or alone, a gift of your time. If it is felt that this is another thing one has to do, then please don't and that is okay. I would hope however many will find it in your hearts to "want to"!

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

Myron Dyck - Mayor

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## IN BRIEF



Rochelle and Neil Rawdon-Alexander with their children Paloma, AJ, and Elaina.

AMBER LYNN PHOTOGRAPHY

## Rural Taxi Service Off to Busy Start

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Rural residents of southeast Manitoba have a new option when it comes to short distance travel. Emerson Taxi began helping customers get from A to B this past April. The taxi service is run by husband and wife team Neil and Rochelle Rawdon-Alexander and it's available for rides 24 hours per day, 365 days per year.

"Business is growing very quickly," Rawdon says. "We started with one cab and we now have four."

So far, they've taxied as far south as Minnesota and as far east as Fort Francis, Ontario. Rawdon says the service has been used for a variety of purposes including medical appointments, rides to work, shopping excursions, and special events.

"We require no notice at all," adds Rawdon. "We prefer it, but it's not required. Everyone just has to understand that no matter where they are calling from, we are coming from Emerson."

Emerson Taxi uses flat rates to determine ride pricing. Quotes can be obtained in advance by calling the company. The first 25 kilometres from Emerson to the pickup location is free. After that, it's charged out at half the regular rate.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Emerson Taxi at (204) 612-3849 or look them up on Facebook.

# Heritage Centre Gala Honours Volunteers

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

The Niverville Heritage Centre (NHC) held its twelfth annual fundraising gala on Saturday, November 3. The three hundred guests in attendance at the up-scale event were treated to a lavish three-course meal and the musings, storytelling, and music of Canadian celebrity Tom Jackson.

"We feel that the gala was a very good success for the community," says Steve Neufeld, NHC's Chief Officer for Community and Development. "Funds raised [came to] about \$55,000. This surpassed my goal of \$50,000."

Neufeld says that this year's donations will have a broader focus, contributing to the small things that make a big difference at the centre. These include maintaining the already low rates for residents, hiring additional needed staff and a part-time chaplain, and purchasing equipment that will assist front line staff in completing their tasks more efficiently so they'll have more time for the residents and with community groups, projects, and volunteer programs.

The evening's theme focused on honouring the many volunteers who make the campus's seniors facility a better place to live by helping to ease the burden of loneliness, helplessness, and lack of purpose for those living in the Niverville Credit Union Manor and the Heritage Life Personal Care Home.

Mayor Myron Dyck commenced the program under virtual darkness, reminding attendees that there was a time, before electricity and modern-day conveniences, when travel after dark was difficult and at times treacherous. Because of this, early pioneers would set lanterns in the windows of their homes, providing small beacons throughout a vast, dark prairie. The lanterns represented hope, refuge, and at times a warm meal and bed for a weary traveller.

"The Heritage Centre is a modern version of a light that shines on the prairies in all directions, to let others know that here is a place of hope," said Dyck. "Here is a haven, a place of hospitality and a place where help is available. A light in the pioneer's window did not continue to shine on its own. It needed a lightkeeper. Likewise, the light that is the Heritage Centre does not shine out onto our prairie region without someone to keep it lit."

Dyck praised the many individuals who provide that light every



Guest speaker Tom Jackson regales the audience at the annual Heritage Centre gala.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

day: the centre's 300-plus staff members, the health professionals of the Open Health medical clinic, and the many volunteers who selflessly give of their time to improve the lives of others. As he spoke, event staff lit candles on each table, symbolically casting a warm glow throughout the ballroom.

Actor, producer, singer, songwriter, and activist Tom Jackson took to the stage with stories and music that kept the glow alive for the remainder of the night. Jackson is best known for his television roles as Billy Twofeathers on *Shining Time Station*, Peter Kenidi on *North of 60*, and his guest appearance on *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

The singer/songwriter also hosted a Canadian musical production called the *Huron Carole* for 17 years, a production intended to raise awareness and funds for local foodbanks across the nation. He's received an extensive list of awards, honours, and decorations over his 40 years in the public eye.

Born to an English father and a Cree mother on a reserve in Saskatchewan, Jackson also spent many of his childhood years growing up in Winnipeg. His rags-to-riches story saw him move from a teenage drug addict living on the streets to the notoriety he knows today.

"Thirty-two years ago, I lived in a hole in the ground in downtown Toronto," said Jackson. "I was addicted to drugs and I lived in the house of the guy that dealt me drugs. One day, the Creator came to me and he says, 'I'm going to make you a deal. I'm going to send you an angel that is worse off than you, and here's the deal: if you

help him, I'll help you.' And I took the deal."

Jackson described that moment of self-realization as the tipping point for his change of heart and attitude. He began to move through the streets of his neighbourhood, offering his own warm scarf to a mother with a newborn baby and simple aid to a beggar. Those little acts of kindness, he says, transformed his life in ways he never imagined possible.

"I had to find a way to get more, so, figuratively, I came here," Jackson motioned to the gathered crowd. "It led me here to you. You see, I need to survive, I need to breathe, and this is my oxygen. So you never know the value of the gift. The gift is in the giving... All you have to do is think these thoughts and they become real. Think of love, think of caring. If you take care of the elders and love the little ones, the rest will take care of itself."

Jackson's wit also took centre stage as he regaled the audience with stories of his brother Bernie. He told of Halloween nights where the two would visit homes, calling "Trick or treaty," and Bernie's rendition of the national anthem: "Oh Canada, your home's on native land."

While he's openly proud of his Indigenous heritage, Jackson is as proud of the diversity in culture and language that is his home nation.

"We're fiercely independent until something goes wrong," Jackson said. "I work with the Red Cross and I can tell you that when there's a problem or a disaster... all the colour goes away. That's the kind of country we live in."

Truth and reconciliation, he

says, is something each one of us can own. The truth is in recognizing history for what it is. The reconciliation plays out in our response to the needs of everyone around us, regardless of culture or background.

"When we collaborate and we come out of the room, we're not perfect," says Jackson. "But you know what we are? We're better. You don't have to be perfect, but you have to work on being better. We're fiercely independent but we can collaborate."

He compares those places where collaboration takes place as akin to standing on holy ground.

"When you get on holy ground, something special happens. And you have it here. The question comes up about the lantern. Do you have a lantern in your window? It's a question worth answering... You don't have to be the lantern; you can be the light. There's a difference between being a lantern and being a light. Words are very powerful things. Love, in particular, is a great word, but it's a better verb."

While the event provided a shoutout to the many volunteers who already commit time and energy to making lives better, the NHC continues to seek more volunteers in a variety of ways, including senior visitation, meal preparation, transportation, art and pet therapy, yard maintenance, music and entertainment, bingo callers, special event assistance, palliative care, telephone support, and housekeeping.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ To volunteer, contact the NHC volunteer coordinator at (204) 388-5000.

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By: Dawn Harris

## Where will you shop this season?

I saw an interesting exchange on Niverville 2.0 a little while ago about the best way to get internet-ordered parcels into Canada from the US; the time and effort involved; and what duties and taxes may apply or can be avoided.

I have to wonder, is it all worth it? Perhaps it is, if it is a product you can't get in Canada. But how many of those products are there really?

I'm often told things are much cheaper in the States. Are they? Even with the exchange rate?

Some of the difference in pricing comes down to: we have universal health care; we have minimum wages; and we have a much smaller population base so there aren't the same economies of scale. Somehow the costs of these things have to be covered. It translates into higher prices at the till and higher taxes.

Then I often hear and read that residents want more businesses in Niverville and a better product offering. Yet there is significant shopping done out of town and out of the country. I am often surprised that people are amazed at what they can find here when they start looking around.

It's the old chicken and egg situation. Which came first? In the case of shopping, businesses have to be convinced there is ongoing market demand in order to justify an investment of time and money.

So, this season, think about where your money is going when you shop. Is it going to support your community? Is it going to support neighbours who work in town? Is it contributing to the programs, like medicare, that Canadians say they want?

Why not ask a merchant in town if they can bring something in for you? Why not look at some of the service providers in town and see if they have gifts cards?

Check out the Member Directory at [Niverville.com](http://Niverville.com) to find out what our members offer.

**Think outside the (mail order) box when it comes to gift giving this year.**

## Welcome to our new members!

More information about these companies can be found in the Niverville chamber's Membership Directory at [Niverville.com](http://Niverville.com).

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*Merry Christmas and Happy New Year  
 From the Niverville Chamber of Commerce*



## IN BRIEF

## Niverville Council Adjusts Salary Bylaw

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Niverville's council gave final reading to the Staff and Council Remuneration bylaw on December 3. The bylaw will allow for a 2.1 percent cost-of-living increase to staff pay-roll in 2019. Further to that, council will also see an increase in gross wages in the coming year.

According to CAO Eric King, the federal government recently announced that they would no longer be allowing for a tax exemption which could be applied to one-third of Canadian council members' wages. Without this tax exemption, council members would have been seeing a drop in net pay in 2019.

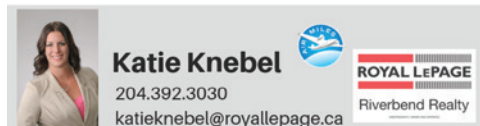
With that in mind, the new bylaw will raise a Niverville council member's gross pay to bring them to the same net pay they would have seen had the federal law not been changed.

"The decision is always between trying to be as fiscally responsible as possible for the sake of the ratepayer," says Mayor Myron Dyck, "versus ensuring there is enough there to have municipal leaders that believe that what is being offered is worth their time and effort to put in. Councils all throughout the country are dealing with this."

\$305,000



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# Local Business Leaders Own the Show at Ritchot Chamber Gala

By Fiona Robinson

The third annual Ritchot Chamber Business Awards Gala on November 10, 2018 was an opportunity to showcase the success of local business. Approximately 140 business leaders and their guests attended, representing more than 50 local companies and organizations. The event was hosted at the TransCanada Centre in Île-des-Chênes.

Former Chamber President Larry Niebel emceed the event, welcoming everyone as cocktails were served at 5:00 p.m. After grace and a special acknowledgement of Remembrance Day, Lucky Luc's Catering served up a great repeat performance of last year with a roast beef sirloin dinner followed by chocolate truffle cake.

As guests cleared their plates, Chamber President Marc Palud led the crowd through a year in review. This included acknowledging the many business owners in the room, as well as political guests such as Chris Ewen, Mayor of Ritchot, and Bob Lagasse, Dawson Trail MLA, who expressed support of the Chamber's continuing efforts to build a strong local economy.

Palud reminded the crowd of the three most important functions of the Chamber: to be a catalyst for regional business growth, to be a convener of leaders and influencers to help get things done, and to be a champion for a stronger community. This was followed by an introduction of the Chamber's executive team.

The most celebrated portion of the evening pertained to the Business Awards. This year, each of the categories had many nominations, with three finalists in each



This year's Business Award winners: Gurvindy and Dave Bhangu of Deva Jatt Transport, Lise and Bruce Bale of Arrowhead RV, and Pierre Leclaire and Bernie Dupuis of the Community Response Unit.

category.

The first award, Corporate Volunteer of the Year, acknowledges an organization that promotes and champions volunteerism in the community, provides time for community causes, and works with other businesses to support volunteerism. The three finalists were the Grande Pointe and Île-des-Chênes Community Response Unit, the Ritchot Citizens on Patrol Program, and TransCanada. The winner was the Community Response Unit, especially acknowledged for their almost 20 years of service responding to scenes faster than official authorities.

The second award, Entrepreneur of the Year, recognizes founders of a business that showcases an entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, tenacity, and drive. The finalists were Arrowhead RV Park, Seine River Safety Solutions, and TechnoMetal Post. This year's award went to Lise and Bruce Bale of Arrowhead RV Park, a dynamic couple who have built a thriving business south of Île-des-Chênes.

The much-anticipated final award, Business of the Year Award, recognizes a business

that has demonstrated growth, accomplishments, and excellence through its past year of operation, including hiring new employees, new expansions, growing their market share, and contributing to the economic growth and improvement in the RM of Ritchot. The finalists were Deva Jatt Transport, Mona Jodoin Law Corporation, and Seine River Telecom. The award was received by Deva Jatt Transport, a newer Chamber member. The company is one of the fastest growing companies in the Winnipeg area and it believes in trust, teamwork, and gender and race equality. Many Deva Jatt team members were in the room to share in the success of the award.

Niebel returned to the stage after the awards to congratulate the winners. This time he had a surprise up his sleeve, introducing hillbilly comedians Doyle Dueck and Gary Roy. Some of the jokes were a bit crass, but everyone's food seemed to stay down.

Afterward, The Doghouse took the stage (the band formerly known as Project B) led by Roger Brodeur (singer/guitar), Wes Pastuzenko (bass/singer), Derek Laurin (drums), Jeff Clark (guitar/

singer), and Vic Goertzen (sound man). They played three great sets as the evening unfolded.

Guests who forgot their dancing shoes lined up to try their luck at the casino tables. Each guest began the evening with \$25,000 of funny money, and any funny money that was won could be exchanged for raffle tickets to win the prize packages generously sponsored by local donors. Indeed, the event would not have been possible without these generous sponsorships. The Chamber would especially like to thank the Niverville Credit Union for being the main sponsor as well as TransCanada Centre for discounting the space fee.

The table wine sponsors included Next Level Enterprise, Garriock Insurance, Deva Jatt Transport, White Cap Foods, and Adventure Power Products. The front stage banner sponsors were the Dan Vermette Remax Team, Avenir IT, Lucky Luc's Bar and Grill, and Tower Engineering. Meanwhile, the casino tables were sponsored by the RM of Ritchot, Craig and Ross Chartered Professional Accountants, Ste. Agathe Service, Craft Financial, and The Body Repair Shop. This year's booze wagon, including \$500 of alcohol winnable by raffle, were Mike Allison Windows and Doors, Renovations Plus, Ste. Agathe Service, the IDC Country Store, Salon 421, Centennial Gravel, RevGenApps.com, Seine River Safety, and Garriock Insurance.

The last dancers left around 2:00 a.m. with the last Doghouse set, wrapping up a fun and successful evening.



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# Commentary



DEPOSITPHOTOS

## The New Face of the Labour Union

*The recent labour crisis at Stella's has hit close to home for many Manitobans.*

By Greg Fehr

It seems like every few months, social media users find a new and creative way to deploy their platforms beyond what the creators intended. When Mark Zuckerberg built Facebook to serve as a social hub for college students, he didn't envision that it would morph into what we see today.

Indeed, it has been recently suggested that social media could become a replacement for the conventional labour union. At this point, if you're the typical small business owner who shudders at the thought of the U-word, you may wish to stop reading. And if you're an employee with concerns about your workplace, you may want to take some notes.

Has the traditional labour movement run its course? I would suggest that while the original motivations to

create unions—unsafe and unfair labour practices—have mostly disappeared from union shops and spaces, those sorts of problems still remain in many industries, such as hospitality and retail.

Consider the situation at Stella's, a Winnipeg restaurant institution. While it may not be popular to acknowledge, their recent labour crisis isn't unique to them. It's indicative of widespread issues that have long existed in the service industry.

Yes, there may be issues related to the individual-people in that company, but throughout the service industry, which is highly dependent on entry-level and part-time labour, there is a daunting challenge for employers who seek to merge customer demands with their employees' needs and rights. Customer flow is unpredictable, sales volume changes, profit margins are tight, and

the demands of the public are ever-increasing. That's not a justification for ignoring the rights of employees, but rather a call to understand the heightened risk of running these sorts of businesses.

*"Employees in the service industry are often young, uneducated in their rights, and quite honestly voiceless. The competition for good positions and shifts is fierce."*

Employees in the service industry are often young, uneducated in their rights, and quite honestly voiceless. The competition for good positions and shifts is fierce. This has produced a systemic issue, with businesses depending on a flexible approach to labour laws.

The social media campaign launched by the employees of

Stella's provided a collective voice to the entire staff and produced quick change in the organization.

But unlike traditional union environments, which result in negotiation between

a company and its workers, the success of this campaign wasn't based on the worker's voices. Because the workers in these types of jobs are, to be blunt, expendable and easy to replace, they can't exert much pressure at a bargaining table. A company might weigh the cost of employee turnover and provide some concessions, and the employees' position

is quite weak.

And yet the nature of the service industry gives employees a distinct advantage when it comes to social media. The campaign wasn't successful merely on account of the collective voice of the workers; rather, it was successful because we as citizens have allowed social media to become a court of public opinion.

So perhaps social media isn't a replacement for labour unions, but it is a tribunal for the airing of disputes in non-unionized industries that are heavily dependent on the public's patronage.

The court of public opinion can have an immediate impact on businesses such as Stella's. This is both incredibly encouraging and downright terrifying at the same time. To provide a voice to the voiceless is noble, and this cannot be understated. However, public opinion is fickle

and prone to decisions of the heart. We support causes based on presentation and feeling, not necessarily logic and merit. We may produce disparity because of this, placing excessive support on certain campaigns and failing to support others.

While labour unions negotiate with a degree of pragmatism, the public isn't bound by this mandate and can produce unintended collateral damage. In the Stella's example, if people show their support by refusing to patronize the business, the company's financial loss will be shared by the existing staff.

The power to leverage the court of public opinion must be wielded carefully. We the public—as judge, jury, and executioner—must be wise in our discernment. With this understanding, we can help balance the scales of justice.





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On the date and at the time and location shown below, a **PUBLIC HEARING** will be held to receive representations from any persons who wish to make them in respect to the following matter:

### BYLAW NO. 795-18 Being a proposed new ZONING BYLAW for the TOWN OF NIVERVILLE

Location: Niverville Heritage Centre, 100B Heritage Trail  
Niverville, MB.

Date & Time: December 11, 2018 at 7:00 p.m.

Applicant: Town of Niverville

Proposal: To adopt a new Zoning Bylaw for the Town of Niverville.  
A copy of the Bylaw and Map are available online at  
<https://whereyoubelong.ca/town-council/by-laws>.

Area Affected: Entire Town of Niverville

For Information Contact: Town of Niverville  
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204-388-4600 ext.102 | Email: [planning@whereyoubelong.ca](mailto:planning@whereyoubelong.ca)

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please send any comments to the above noted email address by noon on December 10, 2018, and they will be read for entrance in the minutes at the hearing. A copy of the proposal and supporting material may be inspected at the location noted above during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. Copies may be made and extracts taken therefrom, upon request.

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# Sports & Recreation

## Clipper Teams Off to Hot Starts



**EVAN  
BRAUN**

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The hockey season is in full swing and Clipper Ice Sports (CIS) has seen some early success.

The home tournaments are right around the corner, and Pee wee kicked things off with the first one, running from November 30 to December 2. Atom will host their home tournament December 7-9, while Novice will wrap up the home tourneys in the new year, January 25-27. All tournaments feature free admission, so the community can come out to support the local teams.

This year's Initiation teams attended a festival hosted in Ste. Anne by Hockey Manitoba on Saturday, November 24. The festival is a fun event where kids get to play games while parents sit in on a session put on by Hockey Manitoba. The Blue and White teams got a surprise visit from Todd Woodcroft and Troy Stevens from the Winnipeg Jets' coaching staff, who attended and ran their practice.

The Novice Blue team is currently tied for first place with a 5-1 record. They also played an exhibition game against Mitchell Blue, who had been undefeated going into the game. Niverville played their toughest game of the year, coming out with a 4-3 win and handing Mitchell their first loss of the year. The first star of the game was awarded to Colton Case for his overall effort.

On November 23-25, the



The Initiation Blue and White teams alongside Winnipeg Jets coaches Todd Woodcroft and Troy Stevens. ✉ TRAVIS MASON

Novice Black team attended a four-game tournament in Portage la Prairie. The team played their first game on Friday afternoon against Selkirk A. Despite a lopsided affair in favour of Selkirk, the team played a great game. The player of the game was goalie Isaac Chamberlain, who faced numerous shots on goal.

On Saturday, Novice Black faced off against St. Claude and Stonewall. Despite losing both games, the team played well. The first game of the day saw Brayden Boone score two goals; he added a few assists, earning him player of the game honours. The evening game saw Nicholas Lauzon score his first goal of the season, and he was also named player of the game.

On the final game of the tournament, against Portage la Prairie 2 on Sunday, the Clippers pulled off a 14-9 victory. All players had an exceptional game, and the player of the game award went to the female duo of Dominique Grondin and Bailey Cuccaro. Cuccaro scored her first goal of the year and Grondin made several key defensive plays.

The Atom teams this year

are all off to hot starts. Atom A is tied for first in their division and carry an undefeated record. Atom B is tied with Pineview for first place. Atom C White is currently on a five-game winning streak. Atom Blue C has only one loss and a 3-1-1 season record.

Atom C White came home from the Steinbach Atom tournament with a gold medal, having beaten MacDonald in the final 5-1. The win saw big performances from Trae Worrell, who scored four goals, and goaltender Ethan Bowyer, who allowed just one score.

The Clipper Pee wee teams are also off to great starts. Pee wee A team has a 3-2-1 record, and Pee wee B team has moved up into the A1 division following the league's realignment for the second half of the season. Pee wee C team sits in first place with a 4-1-1 record.

The Pee wee A team made it all the way to the final at their tournament last weekend, but fell to Carman in a hard-fought match.

"It's great to see the early success from our teams this year," says Travis Mason of CIS. "I believe that the

investment we made this year with our coaching development and player development programs is a huge part of the results we're seeing."

The organization's cash calendar fundraisers are now up and running. This is the only fundraiser CIS holds.

"We do have some exciting news for the community, as Eastman was awarded the Bantam AAA Provincials, which will be held March 1-3, 2019, here at the Niverville Arena," adds Mason. "This will be some of the best hockey played in Manitoba, as there will be an arena full of future hockey stars playing in this tournament. This is a great opportunity for our community to show why we are the best in Manitoba. It's very exhilarating that we're hosting such an event and we will be given more opportunities to host such significant events when the Community Resource Centre building is completed."

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ If you're interested in purchasing a cash calendar, email clippericesports@gmail.com.

### IN BRIEF



The dance team that performed in Miami last year. ✉ LE STUDIO DANCE

## Holiday Sale Gives Boost to Local Dancers

By Lorelei Leona

✉ lleona@nivervillecitizen.com

Le Studio got into the holiday craft and bake sale season, hosting their fifth annual event on Sunday, December 2 at the Ste. Agathe Cultural and Community Centre. The event ran from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

The Ste. Agathe-based dance studio offers family-focused programs for ages three and up. Fundraising from the annual craft and bake sale helps to cover the performance team's costs.

"We believe in fostering a positive environment for dancers to grow and learn," says Raneer Parker, who oversees Le Studio's web design and social media. "Our teachers are highly trained, and we offer classes in jazz, ballet, modern, hip-hop, Hawaiian, acro, baton, tap, and pointe. Our performance team offers an opportunity for dancers who are passionate about dance and ready to take their training to the next level, with weekly rehearsals and more performances throughout the year."

The craft and bake sale featured more than a dozen artisans who sell homemade items. This year, vendors included popular shops like Sweet Legs, Margaret's

Kitchen, and Mamma and Baby Creations, among others.

Santa was on hand for photo ops. There was also a face-painting station, live music, a quilt raffle, and door prizes.

The performance team travelled to San Diego in 2015 to perform at the Holiday Bowl halftime Show, and in 2017 they travelled to Miami to perform at the Orange Bowl halftime show. None of the proceeds go toward the dance studio itself and are instead used to help cover the costs of the travel and competitions.

"This coming spring, a group of our dancers are heading to New York to get a glimpse of what it would be like to move to New York and pursue dance as a career," says Parker. "They will be attending Broadway shows and dancing at Alvin Ailey and Broadway Dance Centre. A portion of the proceeds from this year's sale will also go toward the performance team dancers, so they can compete and showcase their talents as they represent our small community's hard work on a provincial stage."

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■ www.lestudiosteagathe.com

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## Jets Shine, but Hellebuyck Needs to Regain Elite Status

By Nick Anderson

After a month that began with him scoring a hat trick in his home country of Finland, Patrik Laine closed out November scoring 18 goals, adding one assist, and taking home the NHL's first star of the month in the process.

He also nabbed the league lead in goals, with 21 thus far, scoring his one-hundredth career goal in a 6-5 victory over the Blackhawks. He also took home first star of the week honours on November 26, scoring 11 goals, including two hat tricks and a five-goal game against the St Louis Blues, where his five goals on five shots made him the first player to do so since Wayne Gretzky accomplished it in 1984.

It was a good month if you're a fan of any of the Jets superstar forwards, as Laine, Scheifele, and Wheeler each earned star of the week honours. Laine has reasserted himself as a dominant sniper, and now, two months into the season, the Jets look exactly how we thought they'd look.

Currently third in the Central Division, they sit three points back of the Predators and Avalanche who are tied with 37 points apiece. At 16-8-2, the Jets are a scoring machine, with a lethal power play featuring some of the league's better stars. That's good enough for the second-best unit in the league at 29.1 percent.

There have been a few surprises along the way. Kyle Connor is quickly becoming the line-driving winger he showed he could be in university. Despite being held pointless through his last four games, Connor was a dominant force in overtime both against the Devils and the Rangers, showing flashes of just how good he can be. Since being taken off the top line, Connor has thrived as a creator alongside Laine and Little on the second line.

Another Jet outplaying



RAY DOWSE

himself has been goaltender Laurent Brossoit. Heading into the season, I ripped the Jets for grabbing Brossoit, claiming he was a subpar backup with slim potential of becoming anything more. That hasn't been the case thus far. Seven games into his Jets career, Brossoit boasts a 93.5 save percentage with a goals-against average of 2.16.

When called upon, he's been stellar, facing on average 32.85 shots per game.

The guy in front of him, however, hasn't been playing his best. Connor Hellebuyck posted a save percentage of just 90.0 percent, with a goals-against average of 3.18 in November, which are the worst monthly numbers he's had since March 2017. It's been difficult getting back on track for Hellebuyck. To put things in perspective, at this time last year, Hellebuyck was 13-2-2, with a 2.31 goals-against average and a 93.2 save percentage.

So what's wrong with Helly? Third periods seem to be a particular issue for Hellebuyck this season. In periods one and two, he's held a save percentage of 92.7, whereas in the third period he has a save percentage of 86.2. This is very concerning considering how crucial it is for your goalie to be at his best at crunch time.

Evidence of this isn't too hard to find. On November 27, Hellebuyck allowed two goals on five shots and the Jets eventually fell to the

Penguins 4-3. Hellebuyck took full responsibility for the loss after the game, saying, "That one's on me tonight." It's unknown what's causing these third period struggles. Is it a mental issue? Can he not get in the right mindset? Positionally and physically, he looks fine... but he's just getting beat too easily.

If the Jets want to be the elite contenders they were last year, they're going to need Hellebuyck to tighten up and find his game. And who knows? Maybe after tasting playoff hockey for the first time last season, he's had trouble getting engaged and finding that same level of intensity.

As I said with Laine after his slow start to the year, I don't expect Hellebuyck to keep playing this way. We've seen how good he can be, and seen glimpses that he can be the goaltender that the Jets signed to a six-year \$37 million deal this offseason. At 11-7-1, as long as he keeps winning, there's no reason to think he couldn't find the confidence that made him the runner-up for the Vezina last season.

As the holiday season roles around, there's plenty of reasons to be a stress-free Jets fan nowadays. However, due to Patrik Laine's upcoming restricted free agency, we here at The Citizen need everyone to write letters to Santa, asking for eight years at a reasonable annual rate of around \$9.5 million dollars.



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# More Recreation Programming on the Way in Niverville

By Lorelei Leona

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Niverville Recreation has been expanding their programming to reach more ages and offer new activities and easier payment systems.

One new program, Kids in the Kitchen, gives kids a head start in terms of learning practical cooking skills. It also gives them a chance to understand the importance of good nutrition.

Kids in the Kitchen was created after Niverville Recreation received a grant from Healthy Together Now and Southern Health-Santé Sud in the spring of 2018. They had found that their demand for children's programming was higher than other ages.

The cooking classes have proven quiet popular so far, filling up almost immediately and requiring a waitlist for each session.

"The classes have been run in sessions that consist of six

two-hour classes that focus on nutrition education, food preparation, safe food handling practices, and fun and interesting recipes," says Niverville Recreation programmer Angela Janz.

Each session this fall focused on a different age group, allowing the program to reach as many kids as possible. The classes ranged from kids aged six to 14 and only cost \$5 per child, thanks to the grant funding.

The classes were instructed by Rebecca Rempel, of Southern Health-Santé Sud, a registered dietician and certified diabetes educator.

"We have had volunteers for two of our sessions, which has helped immensely with the younger groups where more assistance is required," says Janz. "The classes have been taking place at the Heritage Centre, in the Manor family room, which has been graciously provided to the program."

With the high demand for children's programming, as well as the feedback the program has received thus far, Niverville Recreation is looking to continue Kids in the Kitchen in the new year.

However, as the grant funding will be used up by then, the price per session will necessarily increase, as the program will be run on a cost-recovery basis.

In addition to the new children's programming, Niverville Recreation is getting adults involved as well. They offered a wreath-making party at the south end of the Niverville Arena on Friday, November 23.

In an effort to make registration easier, Niverville Recreation will be implementing online payments in the new year. Residents will be able to access the payment options through the town's eServices website.

This change will also mean that the Recreation Department can better keep track of

enrolment. Online payments will also be accessible to those who don't live in Niverville. They will accept credit card and online debit.

"[This change means] that people will be committing to registrations when they sign up," says Janz. "As of now, there are a number of people who sign up for classes, then last minute decide to drop out and they have not paid. The Recreation Department runs classes based on enrolment numbers, and cancels when there is not enough, so no-shows can really create an issue, with instructors counting on these registrations to meet minimum numbers. People will have to be aware of our refund and cancellation policy as well."

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

## Santa Skated His Way to St. Adolphe

By Lorelei Leona

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Santa Claus came to town on December 2 for St. Adolphe's pancake breakfast and Skate with Santa event.

The doors opened at the St. Adolphe Arena/Pioneer Hall at 9:30 a.m. and stayed open until 12:30. The morning kicked off with a pancake breakfast, where gluten-free options were available. Santa was on hand during the breakfast for kids to visit and share their wish lists.

"There is a group of men in town who do all the cooking," says Dana Ransom, pancake breakfast coordinator, adding that the Bantam hockey team with their parents did the serving and clean-up. "[The event] is put on by the minor hockey and community club."

After breakfast, guests participated in an open skate from 11:45 a.m. until 12:45 p.m., where kids will had the opportunity to skate with Santa while parents took photos.

In addition to the breakfast and skate, the event also featured a Santa Store.

"People donate things like books, games, toys, and jewellery, and we set it up in a room," explains Ransom. "We have the kids go in and buy things for twenty-five or fifty cents, and we wrap it up for them so they can take it home and have a gift for a parent or whatnot."

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# GORP WORLD ATHLETE OF THE MONTH



## Kayden Phelan

Kayden Phelan has been a hardworking hockey player in the Niverville Skating Club's CanPower program since the beginning of the season. The program is for hockey and ringette players who want to improve specific skills.

"It's so much fun to coach a kid like Kayden," says Coach Meghan Rafferty. "He comes every week with a great attitude and is always eager to improve his technique. The first thing that comes to mind when I think about Kayden is his coachability. He is quick to take feedback. With his willingness to try new difficult skills, I'm sure Kayden will continue to develop into a great hockey player."

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# Niverville to Host 2019 Baseball Provincials

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Members of the Niverville Youth Baseball committee were thrilled to receive the rubber stamp on their application to host the Baseball Manitoba 11U A provincial championship in the summer of 2019. This will be a first for Niverville, but the committee is hopeful that it will only be the beginning of many such tournaments in the future. The event will run from July 5-7 and host teams in the age 10 and 11 category from all over Manitoba.

"We were encouraged by our league, the Carillon Baseball Association, to submit an application," says committee member Rod Wolfe. "The process for us was to complete a host application and send it in to Baseball Manitoba for review. We applied to host 11U A or 13U A, hoping this would give us a better chance than just applying for one. My assumption is that, as Niverville was a new applicant, they were interested in giving us an opportunity to host. Niverville's proximity to Winnipeg likely also enhanced our application,

as teams coming from across the province would have access to hotels."

Wolfe says they'll expect upwards of 11 teams to be entered in the event. When you include family, friends, and game officials, he estimates an attendance of around 400 to 500 people filling Hespeler Park over the course of the weekend.

Niverville's growing youth baseball program, he says, is one of the reasons the community is finally in the position to host such an event. As well, the town has worked hard to create improvements to the park's diamonds, which now meet the standards required for hosting such championships.

"In the last few years, the town has been tremendous in supporting the baseball and softball program by adding two smaller diamonds on the south side of the park, replacing the infield material on the diamonds, and most recently building covered dugouts," Wolfe says. "These were a specific requirement by Baseball Manitoba and when we proposed this to the town last year, they fully supported [it]. They

were built in August and look great. We eagerly look forward to using them next season."

Wolfe says this event will provide an opportunity to raise much-needed funds for the local baseball and softball programs, allowing them to invest in equipment, training aids, and other items as the program grows.

"We've hosted several tournaments in the last three years with teams coming from Winnipeg, southern Manitoba, and as far away as Dryden, Ontario," Wolfe adds. "All have commented on how good our facilities are. Hosting a provincial championship [will be] a feather in the cap for the Niverville program. While we may not win every year, it shows we are committed to the sport and want to provide a quality program in our community. It's a big deal because, as the host, Niverville will automatically have a team competing in the event. Playing at provincials is a great experience for the players, coaches, and parents."

A tournament of this calibre could prove to be a big deal for the community as well. Niverville will have an opportunity to

demonstrate its pride as a growing and progressive place to live with vibrant sports programs for every age. Local business should also expect to benefit from the crowds of newcomers pouring in over the course of the weekend.

While it's too early to prepare a schedule for the three-day event, the committee is expecting that Saturday will kick off with an opening ceremony with representation by some local dignitaries, including reps from Baseball Manitoba. They say there will still be some work to do to get the park and diamonds ready. Volunteers and sponsors will be key to pulling it off and ensuring that everyone has a great experience.

Some of the expected costs include hiring umpires and providing accommodations and meals for them. Advertising, programs, team welcome packages, raffle prizes, and a large tent for shelter from the elements are just some of the important details not to be overlooked.

"We want to make this event as good as possible so we may have an opportunity to host future baseball or softball championships," says Wolfe.

# Local Baseball Coach Given Award

By Lorelei Leona

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Dean Sproule of Niverville was recently honoured with the Grassroots Coach of the Year from Baseball Manitoba for his work with the 14U Manitoba girls team.

Sproule has been coaching baseball for nine years with various teams, including in Niverville, with the Carillon High Performance baseball program, and most recently the provincial Girls baseball program. A veteran in coaching, Sproule understands that having a team that is committed but can also have fun are a few of the things that can drive a successful season.

"The team really came around as the year progressed," he says. "Early in the year, we weren't convinced we would have had the success that we had, but as a team we put in a tremendous amount of dedication and hard



Dean Sproule (back row, far right) with the 14U girls team.

DEAN SPROULE

work and we saw the team continue to get better and better as the year progressed, culminating in the silver medal at the Western Championships."

Sproule wasn't the only one recognized from the team this past season. The whole team was also named Grassroots Team of the Year.

"Being recognized as the Manitoba Grassroots Coach of the Year to me is a byproduct of having a great group of girls that worked hard, resulting in a successful year," says Sproule. "They made it a pleasure for me to put the time in that is required of a baseball coach."

The team not only attended

their normal practices and games throughout the season, they also showed their dedication by holding a development weekend in Niverville, where they sharpened their skills and faced off in a doubleheader against the Carillon Pee wee Prospects.

For Sproule, the true reward for a coach is seeing his players succeed and having fun while playing. But he is quick to give credit where it is due, praising his fellow staff—assistant coach Chad Foster; Patti Haucult, who is one of the founders of the girl's baseball program; as well as team manager Vanessa Gorham.

"I was beyond elated and appreciative of being recognized with this award. It was a nice gesture, to say the least!" Sproule says. "I feel it would be an honour to continue to build on that progress and continue on as their coach for this coming year."



# Gab-Roy Sends Three Teams to Volleyball Provincials

By Lorelei Leona

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College Gabrielle-Roy in Île-des-Chênes dominated their volleyball season, with three of their teams qualifying for Provincials.

The Junior Varsity Boys and Varsity Girls were ranked first and second, respectively, in Manitoba before the championships, while the Varsity Boys ranked fourth in the province and were able to climb two spots in the end.

The Junior Varsity Boys, coached by Daniel Lother and Rhéal Chaput, weren't only Zone 13 champions but also won the JV A/AA Provincial Championship in Flin Flon for the second year in a row, defeating the Rosenort Redhawks in the final. Setter Reece Clarke was named the tournament MVP, and right-side hitter Nicoles Carter was recognized as a tournament all-star, according to the school's press release.

Alain Hebert and Alex Sabourin coached the Varsity Girls into being recognized as the Zone 13 Champions and Regional Playdown Champions. The team also qualified for Provincials, where they won their last match against McGregor to win



The top three teams from the AA Varsity Boys Provincials: Green Valley, Gabrielle-Roy, and Steinbach Christian—amazingly, all from Zone 13.

JOEL MANGIN

bronze. In addition to the team's win, one of their players, Angéline Ritchot, received two acclamations: tournament all-star and grad all-star. A prestigious acknowledgement, a

grad all-star recognizes 24 boys and 24 girls from more than 100 schools at the A, AA, and AAA levels. A banquet and all-star game will be held in their honour on December 8.

Silver medals and a finalist banner were awarded to the Varsity Boys after they were defeated by Grunthal in the final of the Provincial Championship in Carberry at the end of

November. Despite not winning the tournament, a few players were recognized for their stellar play: Dany Dupuis and Liam Poirier were honoured as tournament all-stars, as well as grad all-stars, while Colin Leger also walked away with a grad all-star nod.

The top three teams coming out of the AA Varsity Boys championship were Green Valley, Gabrielle-Roy, and Steinbach Christian—all teams from Zone 13.

"Thankfully, the regional play-down format allowed for these three teams to qualify for the Provincial Championship," says Gabrielle-Roy Vice Principal Joel Mangin. "All three teams know each other well and a great deal of respect is shown towards each other despite frequent meetings on the court."

Also a member of Zone 13 is Niverville Collegiate Institute, who took home second place in the AAA category despite being a AA-sized school. For those of you doing the math, that would make four Zone 13 boys teams picking up medals this year.

"It's certainly a testament to the quality of coaching and dedication of players in our zone," says Mangin.



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# Arts & Entertainment

## Home Routes Brings In-Home Concerts to Niverville

By Liz Byron

Music fans in Niverville have a new option for experiencing live music. Since September, town residents Becky and Matt Burke have been hosting a series of monthly concerts in their home featuring musicians from across Canada.

The Burkes are participating in a program called Home Routes, which connects musicians with people willing to open their homes to both artists and an audience. There are tour routes across the country, including three in Manitoba, and each route has 12 stops. Niverville is part of the Agassiz Route, which also includes places such as Selkirk, Altona, and Glenora.

"My parents had been participating [in Home Routes] up in Ashern for about seven years," says Becky. "We always thought that when we had the chance, we would do this, because it's such a cool opportunity to hear some great music and meet new people—both the musicians and the local people who come out to hear them."

When they moved from Norway House to Niverville this past summer, Becky and Matt decided that it was the perfect time and place to step up as concert hosts.

"As hosts, we provide the concert space, dinner and breakfast, and a place to stay for the night, so the cost to the artists is minimal," Becky



A live in-home performance in Niverville.

BECKY BURKE

says, adding that most of the artists who participate are lesser-known performers who are trying to get their music out there and connect with an audience.

The hosts are also responsible for finding an audience. In the Burkes' case, that means putting up posters, advertising on social media, and getting to know their neighbours. It has also meant providing a space for neighbours to get to know each other.

"If you haven't been to a house concert, it might be a weird concept

to grasp, but it's really great. It's like going to a bar to listen to live music, but more intimate and laidback," says Becky. "You get to really listen to the music, and you get to meet the artists... my husband and I also work hard to make sure that everyone is welcome. We introduce people to each other, we provide snacks—socializing always needs food!—and by the time the show starts, you're all friends, whether you knew each other coming in or not."

The intimate setting is something that also appeals to the artists who

performed November's concert. Ontarians Kelly Lefaive and Joëlle Westman form the folk duo Georgian Bay, and they have thoroughly enjoyed the laidback setting of house concerts.

"I think that what's so special about these shows is the kind of intimacy, the connections you make right away with everyone there, the community aspect," says Westman. "You're literally in someone's house and you're just a few feet away from where the music is happening, and that's pretty unique."

Lefaive agrees, noting that she's heard from several people that they've met good friends through house concerts.

"In a world where technology rules supreme, this is a nice change—such a cool way to meet people," she says.

The two musicians also enjoy the opportunity to connect with the audience on a personal level, and talk about how and why they wrote each piece. In Niverville, they reminisced about growing up in small towns with the audience. They also invited the two youngest attendees, Becky and Matt's sons Brody and Logan, to identify the various instruments they were playing.

The Home Routes schedule gives both hosts and artists a break for the holidays, but the Burkes are already looking forward to their next concert on February 3, which will feature Celtic- and jazz-inspired duo Early Spirit.

The 2018–19 season will be rounded out with folk/country artist Abigail Lapell on March 6 and folk band Rube & Rake on April 4. Admission for each show is \$20 with the full ticket price going directly to the artists.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ [www.facebook.com/groups/216565852356353](http://www.facebook.com/groups/216565852356353)  
■ Becky Burke: [remcameron@hotmail.com](mailto:remcameron@hotmail.com)

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# Last Call Headlines Holiday Dance Party

By Lorelei Leona

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If the best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear, then Niverville's Last Call delivered at their upcoming Holiday Dance Party.

The cover band teamed up with Whitetail Meadow for an evening of live music, flowing beverages, and a hearty helping of holiday cheer on Saturday, November 24.

Last Call started up the music-making around 7:00 p.m. and carried on until around midnight.

"The band has a massive variety of songs spanning many generations that are guaranteed to sooth the music lover's soul," says keyboardist Will Neufeld.

Not only did the evening give attendees the opportunity to let loose through dance, it also featured a cash bar, a night snack, as well as an ugly Christmas sweater competition. The prize? A night for two at Whitetail's Marigold Cottage.

"The dance was so much fun," says Jan St. Cyr of Niverville, who attended with her family. "It was reminiscent of the old town hall or barn dances of times past that I had only seen in movies. It was wonderful to attend a community event like this that the whole family could enjoy. The little kids



Last Call puts on a show at their holiday dance party.

SYLVIA ST. CYR

met up with their cousins and friends and were free to dance and explore while the adults danced or talked with friends and neighbours alike."

St. Cyr says the best part of the evening was getting to dance with her grandkids and catch up with friend she hadn't seen in a while.

"The band was fabulous and the venue was beautifully decorated, which made the evening wonderfully festive," she adds. "Very much looking forward to the next one!"

As a newer band, Last Call is seeking to make sure they can generate interest in their music, as well as show people that they know how to have a good time. Thus they have partnered with Whitetail Meadow to host a series of dance parties.

Just a few months after the band played their first gig, which happened to be a Whitetail wedding, they hosted their first party in the spring, which saw a great turnout.

The band currently has a

recurring slot at The King's Head pub in downtown Winnipeg and has played a few private shows over the past year.

"Over the next few years, we are hoping to become a household name in southern Manitoba's cover band scene," says Neufeld.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ [www.facebook.com/lastcallwinnipeg](http://www.facebook.com/lastcallwinnipeg)  
■ [www.lastcallwinnipeg.com](http://www.lastcallwinnipeg.com)

# Niverville Professor Publishes First Book



Dr. Joshua Coutts.

PROVIDENCE

By Lorelei Leona

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Niverville resident Dr. Joshua Coutts has published his first book, *The Divine Name in the Gos-*

*pel of John.*

Previously lecturing at Regent College and Edinburgh Theological Seminar, Dr. Coutts is currently in his first year at Providence College Theological Seminary, where he is the Associate Professor of the New Testament. He currently has a class focused on the Gospel of John.

The book explores the Gospel of John in the New Testament, and how the early Christians wrestled with how to make sense of Jesus based on their experience of Jesus, as well as the social pressures they were facing.

"Their devotion to Jesus cost them socially, yet they didn't feel free to abandon Jesus or scripture," he explains. "So John pulls those

two convictions together in his Gospel—their devotion for Jesus and their reverence for scripture."

The book initially began as research during his four-year doctorate, but after it was complete Dr. Coutts found that the information within it could very well be relevant to other scholars, and thus he decided to publish his works into a book.

"It's certainly more upstream than what we are currently seeing in popular culture," he says. "It will likely be something you would see in academic libraries used by scholars, or with those like pastors that use Bible commentaries [to produce sermons]."

While Coutts admits that the exploration of New Testament

studies, particularly as it pertains to his book, can be a niche, he also explains that its findings are an interesting read for others wanting to explore deeper elements of the New Testament.

"There is a broad resonance... many parallel issues in our current culture," he explains of how the book can be applied to modern society. "There are the questions of how you make sense of God with the changing social pressures. We have certain convictions, but previous experiences or traumas can change our impression of the universe, so how do we make sense of our reality and our experience of Jesus within that?"

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