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FEBRUARY 2018

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LOCAL NEWS

MRI Clinic in Limbo

■ The proposed diagnostic centre in Niverville has been on hold in the wake of a provincial task force report which questions whether it's needed.

Details on Pages 10-11



LOCAL NEWS

Mission to Peru

■ A group of dedicated local philanthropists and volunteers are striking out on a mission to help an orphanage in Peru. The Red River Mission has been undertaking aid trips overseas for ten years.

Details on Page 12

SPORTS & RECREATION

Snowmobile Culture

■ In winter, snowmobilers blitz the countryside like packs of wolves. But riding is about more than catching a thrill—it's about community.

Details on Page 18

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Playing with Fire

■ Local entertainer Pedro Balseiro does it all—juggling, fire-dancing, and knife-throwing. You'll also find him on film sets!

Details on Page 21

Niverville School to Be Built in Two Phases

NEW HIGH SCHOOL

FUTURE MULTIPLEX

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DETAILS ON PAGES 8-9

THE CITIZEN

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Registration for Kindergarten and Grade 1 (Fall 2018) will take place **February 5-9, 2018** between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

TO REGISTER, CALL OR VISIT YOUR DESIGNATED SCHOOL

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

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

Kindergarten: Children must be 5 years of age on or before December 31, 2018.
Grade 1: Children must be 6 years of age on or before December 31, 2018.

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

Anmeldung der Kindergarten und 1.Klassen: 2018 – 2019 Schuljahr

Die Anmeldung der Kindergarten und Ersten Klasse (Herbst 2018) wird am 5-9. Februar, 2018 zwischen 9:00 und 16:00 Uhr stattfinden. Um ihr Kind anzumelden, rufen Sie bitte die entsprechende Schule an oder kommen persönlich vorbei. Schüler des Kindergartens oder der 1. Klasse, müssen in der Schule, die in ihrem designierten Einzugsbereich liegt, registriert werden. Um Ihren Einzugsbereich zu bestätigen, schauen Sie sich bitte die Schul-einzugsbereichskarte im Internet unter www.hsd.ca an oder rufen Sie die zu Ihrem Wohnsitz nächstliegende Schule an. Bewohner, die ausserhalb der Stadt wohnen, werden gebeten die HSD Transport Abteilung unter 204-320-2347 anzurufen um herauszufinden welche Schule für ihren Einzugsbereich bestimmt ist.

Kindergarten: Das Kind muss am oder vor dem 31. Dezember, 2018 5 Jahre alt sein.
1.Klasse: Das Kind muss am oder vor dem 31. Dezember, 2018 6 Jahre alt sein.

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

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The Citizen

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Council Sets Bold New Direction for Niverville



BRENDA SAWATZKY

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Economic development has, without question, been at the forefront of Niverville council's mind in the last year—as well it should be with the town desiring to move beyond the bedroom community image many rural communities like it attain when they're in such close proximity to a city.

For residents, economic growth means more amenities within town limits, the potential for competition, and a larger base from which to draw property taxes. This should, conceivably, lower taxes for everyone. For business, it means lower corporate taxes than they would pay in large urban areas, incentive programs, and a larger network of business owners to collaborate with.

While some might argue that the small-town feel they long for will be lost, or has already been lost, council believes that there's a way to achieve sustainable growth while maintaining all the benefits of life in a small community.

In the fall, council obtained the services of Sison Blackburn Consulting, Inc., which performed an extensive analysis of the community and provided a detailed template by which the town could grow and thrive into the future. These details are available in the November edition of *The Citizen*. With that template, council was able to focus on the community's strengths, weaknesses, unique qualities, and gaps. These were featured in the January edition of *The Citizen*.

Since that time, council has successfully created an economic action plan, providing tangible means by which a host of new initiatives will be introduced into the coming budget.

A number of action items have been prioritized right out of the gate to improve the



The Business Enhancement Committee: Eric King, Dawn Harris, Mel Buhler, and Chris Wiebe.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

business side of economic growth. These include the development of a Business Enhancement Committee (BEC), comprised of Chris Wiebe as council representative and Eric King, the town's economic development officer. They will join forces with Mel Buhler, president of the Niverville Chamber of Commerce, and Dawn Harris, the Chamber's executive director.

Their mandate will be to seek both short-term and long-term opportunities to attract new businesses as well as support the growth of the existing business sector.

"We are pleased that town council has taken this step and want to commend Eric King on the work that he has put into it," says Buhler. "Several areas that have been identified for action address comments we have been hearing from our members. Over the past year, communication with council has been excellent. This is an extension of the efforts both council and the Chamber have been making to improve communication."

This four-person committee will also take on the responsibility of creating a Business Mentorship Committee (BMC) to provide expertise and assistance to start-up businesses. Members of this committee might include accountants, investors, law-

has tentatively budgeted \$5,000 per year for the administrative needs of these committees, pending budget approval in April.

To encourage new business development, council will work together with the Chamber on a unique marketing strategy through advertising aimed at selling the community to the region and beyond.

Council hopes to increase spending on networking with manufac-

turing companies in order to entice them to purchase land in the business park.

Business incentive grants are also in the works with the hope of encouraging developers to build more leasable space.

In the spirit of creating a more vibrant Main Street business corridor, council is working on developing specific design standards to improve on consistency in appearance and accessibility by foot. This will eventually see the elimination of Main Street residences. Council plans to provide a grant program for

business façade improvement and to continue working with businesses and committees on other aspects of Main Street beautification.

Looking beyond the business sector to the community as a whole, council intends to increase tourism by setting Niverville up as a regional tourist attraction. Completing the construction of the wetlands project will draw in visitors for classroom field trips, family outings, bird-watching, and environmental study projects.

A holistic look at Hespeler Park, the community's main greenspace, has council working on a playground to draw in families from surrounding communities to spend the day. Further work on the Mennonite Landing site along the Red River will provide opportunities for education on the area's history.

With these tourism aspirations, the up-and-coming multiplex, and the expanding medical facilities in Niverville, council recognizes the importance of attracting a hotel chain to the community. Special marketing strategies will be initiated this year to attract such a chain.

The cost to initiate all these strategies will come in at around \$100,000 in the first year, with longer-term financing set to increase by \$50,000 in 2019 and another \$75,000 every year for three years after that.

With a municipal election coming up this fall, the current council has set the gears in motion. It will be up to future council members to adopt these policies and carry on the vision well into the future.

"The positivity surrounding the momentum that exists within our business leaders must be contagious," reads the conclusion of council's action plan. "The future of Niverville is bright in their minds if we continue down the path the Town and Chamber has taken over the last few years—in particular, the last twelve months."

"We are pleased that town council has taken this step... Over the past year, communication with council has been excellent."

Mel Buhler | Niverville Chamber President

yers, and business owners.

"Initially it will help address one of several components of business development in town: business start-ups and entrepreneurship," adds Buhler. "In talking to some of our members, many have said they wished that they could have had someone or a group of people to talk to when they were starting out. Hopefully this program will meet some of those needs."

The BEC will further administrate a database showing available space within the town as a resource to potential new business owners. Council



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Still No Arrests Made in Niverville Post Office Break-In

By Eric Peterson

When Tara Friesen drove by the Niverville Post Office on the morning of December 14 and saw an RCMP presence outside, she knew something was up. Later that day, a call confirmed her fears. Not only had there been a break-in, but the Christmas gift she had ordered for her husband was missing.

In fact, the video game Friesen had intended to put under the tree was one of 19 parcels stolen that day, according to RCMP Media Relations Officer Tara Seel.

Seel reports that the break-in occurred at about 6:20 that morning. When RCMP arrived to investigate, they found parcels strewn on the floor throughout the post office. The only damage was to the inside door of the building. Seel adds that the investigation is ongoing and thus far no arrests have been made.

Luckily for Friesen, the still-at-large grinch—or grinch—responsible for this crime wasn't completely successful in stealing



The Niverville post office, site of a recent break-in.

JOEY VILLANUEVA

her Christmas. Thanks to the help of post office staff.

"I'm sure they had a lot going on, but she took the time answering my questions and were genuinely sorry about the gift being gone," Friesen recalls.

Staff put her in touch with Canada Post, who recommended she call Amazon, since she had ordered the gift through them. In the end, Amazon had the same gift expedited to her home free of charge and her husband had his version of *Horizon*

Zero Dawn by Christmas morning.

Canada Post declined to comment on this story, citing the ongoing investigation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ If you have any information about this crime, you are asked to contact the St. Pierre-Joly RCMP detachment at 204-433-7908. Another option is to contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477, www.manitobacrimestoppers.com, or text "TIPMAN" and your message to CRIMES (274637).

Ritchot Council Looks for Youth Representative

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Ritchot's council has developed a new volunteer position to ensure that young people's interests are represented in local government. Council is currently accepting applications for Youth Council Member, which will go to an enthusiastic and self-motivated high school student in the municipality who seeks to provide a voice for youth.

Although this position is for a non-voting council seat, it will in every other way be a fully engaged member of council.

The student will be expected to attend all evening council meetings during their term, which will last

between eight and 12 months, and be held to the same standards as other councillors.

"Including a youth member in council adds value," says Ritchot Mayor Chris Ewen. "It offers a growing mind that isn't afraid to ask questions and take risks. This will give us as council an opportunity to look at a fresh way to do things and evolve our way of thinking."

Council has identified some key objectives of the position, which include bringing forward issues that have a unique impact on youth people, acting as a positive advocate for youth, promoting meaningful activities for young people in partnership with the community, and providing leadership experience.

"By working with youth," the policy states, "council hopes to develop better communications for existing opportunities, involve and familiarize them with the operations of our municipal government, and listen to suggestions on what the municipality can do to improve its youth-oriented efforts."

Candidates must be under 18 years old and enrolled in school full-time. Applications have been distributed to local schools.

All candidates for the position will be assessed by the municipality's CAO, after which council will appoint the successful candidate by resolution.

The deadline to apply is Wednesday, February 28.

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Providence Kicks Off Annual Lecture Series

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Providence University College is once again setting out on its annual Public Lecture Series, with many of its professors holding free lectures throughout southern Manitoba. The goal of the program, currently in its sixth year, is to give members of the community an opportunity to engage post-secondary academics on a range of relevant subjects.

"Two themes this year are 'communication' and 'contention,'" says Dr. Dennis Hiebert, Providence's Professor of Sociology and head of the public scholarship committee. "Putting them together, we could say that the series is about communicating about contentious issues—something public education is obliged to do. Public education is part of the reason Providence exists. Events like this series are an important way to increase

general understanding of the world, the issues and the human condition we share, with the intent of contributing to human flourishing."

The 2018 series will kick off at McNally Robinson Booksellers in Winnipeg on February 3 with a lecture entitled "Beyond the 'Pro-Life' Versus 'Pro-Choice' Debate," which asks whether it's time to abandon both contentious positions and navigate a new path through the divisive abortion issue. The lecture, led by Dr. Randall Holm, Associate Professor of Spiritual Formation, will run from 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Other topics to be explored this year include "The Religious Impulse in U2's Mediated Brand," "Pandora's Gifts: Language Learning through Expressive Arts," "The Beginning in Light of the End: Re-thinking Evolution Theologically," and "Helen Keller and the Power of Language to Actualize Humanness."

FULL SCHEDULE

Beyond the "Pro-Life" Versus "Pro-Choice" Debate

Dr. Randall Holm, Associate Professor of Spiritual Formation
Feb. 3: McNally Robinson, Winnipeg, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Feb. 6: Steinbach Arts Council, Steinbach, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Feb. 8: Howison Room, Providence University College, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

The Religious Impulse in U2's Mediated Brand

Dr. Nicholas Greco, Associate Professor of Communications and Media
Feb. 10: McNally Robinson, Winnipeg, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Feb. 13: Steinbach Arts Council, Steinbach, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Feb. 15: Howison Room, Providence University College, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Pandora's Gifts: Language Learning through Expressive Arts

Dr. Elfrieda Lepp-Kaethler, Assistant Professor of TESOL
Feb. 17: McNally Robinson, Winnipeg, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Feb. 20: Steinbach Arts Council, Steinbach, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Feb. 22: Howison Room, Providence University College, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

The Beginning in Light of the End: Re-thinking Evolution Theologically

Dr. Patrick Franklin, Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics
Feb. 24: McNally Robinson, Winnipeg, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Feb. 27: Steinbach Arts Council, Steinbach, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Mar. 1: Howison Room, Providence University College, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Helen Keller and the Power of Language to Actualize Humanness

Dr. Dennis Hiebert, Professor of Sociology
Mar. 3: McNally Robinson, Winnipeg, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Mar. 6: Steinbach Arts Council, Steinbach, 7:00–8:30 p.m.
Mar. 15: Howison Room, Providence University College, 7:00–8:30 p.m.

Second Community Resource Gala Announced

By Heather Miller

Following last year's successful Black & Gold Gala, a May 5 fundraising event at Evergreen Village in support of the Niverville Multiplex, members of the multiplex fundraising committee have been asked many times, when is the next gala?

The answer is Friday, May 11, this time at the new Whitetail Meadow facility at the junction of Highways 311 and 200, west of Niverville.

One key change is that the Niverville Multiplex is now being called the Community Resource Centre. One thing that won't change is the fun.

This year's gala, The Casino Blanc, will be the perfect occasion to pull out your favourite white attire. The evening will consist of both silent and live auctions, as well as a casino event. Tickets will cost \$75 each and go on sale in early March.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ If you or your business would like to donate cash or prizes to our live or silent auctions, or if you have questions about the event, please contact Heather at multiplex@whereyoubelong.ca.

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Chamber News

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Updates from the Ritchot Chamber

The Ritchot Regional Chamber of Commerce is pleased to announce the hiring of Fiona Robinson as their new Executive Director. Fiona will take a leadership role in charge of business development and operation of the Chamber focusing on priorities, programs and initiatives that bring value to Chamber members.

World Trade Centre Winnipeg facilitated a B2B Dialogue Roundtable Workshop with the following, Mike Allison of Mike Allision Windows & Doors, Tom Derksen of Derksen Realty Ltd., Roger Brodeur of Renovations Plus, Rob MacLeod of Glenlea Greenhouses, Lesley Gaudry, Community Economic Development Officer for the RM of Ritchot and Marc Palud of Repstar Agencies Inc. The workshop was led by World Trade Centre Winnipeg's Director of Trade Services, Alberto Velasco who provided guidance and advice on growth, best practices and recommendations for resources participants could access.

Members of the Ritchot Regional Chamber of Commerce enjoy the following benefits: opportunities to connect and network with other area business owners, training, seminars and webinars on business-related topics, a voice for business owners in our region, promotional and marketing opportunities, discounts and member to member promotional offers, and exclusive offers from affinity partners, including the Chambers of Commerce Group Insurance Plan, which gives small business owners access to employee benefit programs typically not available to smaller companies.

New Member Announcement:

We would like to welcome and recognize the following new member this month:

- Niverville Credit Union, providing financial services for businesses and individuals in Niverville, Landmark, Steinbach and surrounding areas.

www.ritchotchamber.com



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Cleaning Up the Lakes in Fifth Avenue Estates

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

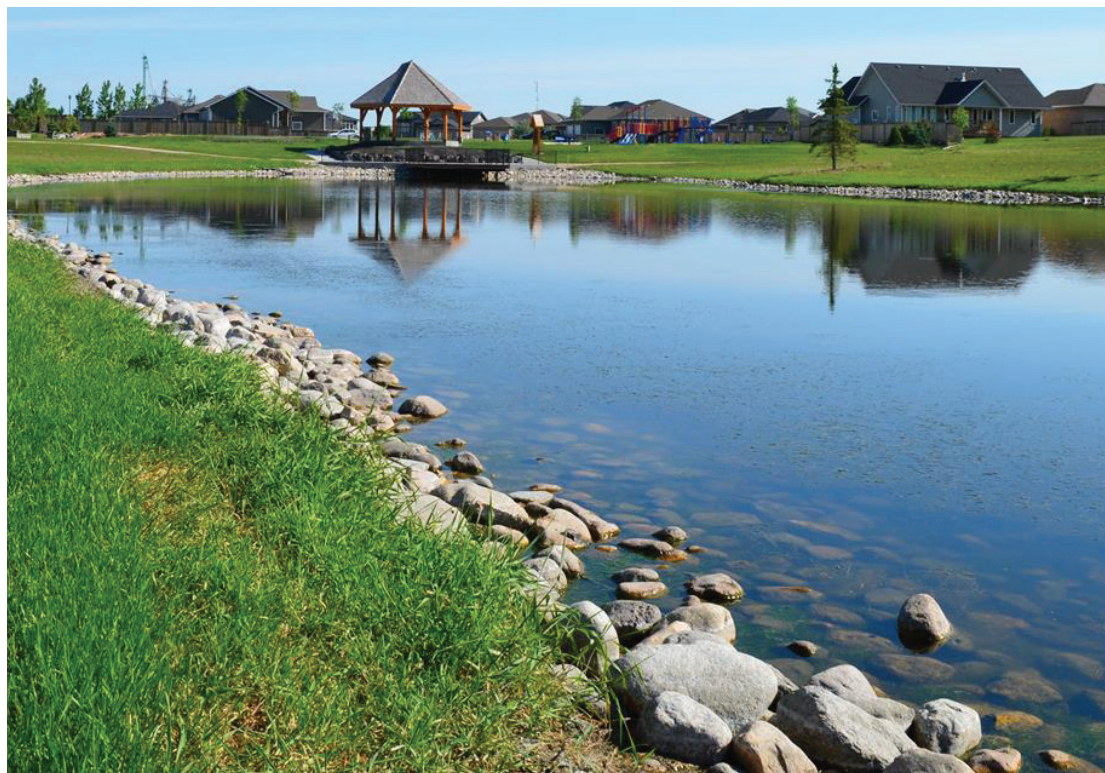
The services of Native Plant Solutions (NPS) have once again been called upon by Niverville's town council. With new provincial guidelines regarding herbicide use in waterways, the lakes in Fifth Avenue Estates are becoming overgrown with weeds in the rip rap, the stone abutment used to armour the shore against erosion.

NPS will provide counsel on the best means to deal with weeds in a chemical-free manner. Consultation costs of almost \$6,000 will be required to get answers.

"This design was not a problem at the time of construction," says counsellor Chris Wiebe. "[It's] become a problem due to the changes in provincial regulations. Residents have told us they don't like seeing weeds. The weeds blow into their yards and make their yards unmanageable. With it being impossible to mow and chemical application not being an option, we need to look for another solution."

One of the solutions, council believes, lies in Niverville's recently remediated lagoon in Hespeler Park—bulrushes. NPS was deeply involved in the old lagoon's transformation and the project has become renowned since then as a unique, sustainable, and environmentally friendly way of dealing with toxic waste.

"Bulrushes are nature's way of cleaning contamination out of waterways," says Wiebe. "This would be a way to get in line with provincial guidelines for herbicide use and to reduce labour costs for



Currently, stones line the edges of the lakes in Fifth Avenue Estates.

■ FIFTH AVENUE ESTATES

maintaining the rock shoreline. In the future we may have to physically weed between the stones to eliminate the weeds. I feel that the goal of this project is to see if we can be fiscally and environmentally responsible."

Wiebe adds that an established stand of bulrushes in the lakes will reduce the current maintenance costs of the shoreline while at the same time attracting more wildlife, especially birds—but not the annoyance of prolific migrating geese that have become a staple of the development.

"Another benefit [of bulrushes] is that geese have a tendency to avoid shorelines [that have them]," he says. "A concern of the residents is that of the geese and the mess they leave behind. Bulrushes act as a natural deterrent to geese as they are afraid of predators that could be hiding inside."

Because there are so many varieties of bulrushes, NPS's counsel should help the town understand which variety would best meet their needs.

Council has further put aside a \$4,000 contingency, allowing them

to publicize their strategies and possibly rent a bus which could take affected residents on a tour of other developments that have created sustainable residential lake systems. The development of Pritchard Farms is one such example, located just north of Winnipeg in East St. Paul.

At the close of NPS's analysis and recommendations, council will create strategies and seek out companies for the design and construction of those changes to the lakes in Fifth Avenue Estates.

IN BRIEF

The Citizen Expands Web Content

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The Citizen is stepping up its online game in 2018 with expanded web content. Until now, *The Citizen* has been focused on organizing its articles and features into a single monthly paper. While that focus won't change and we will continue to distribute a high-quality monthly edition of the paper, starting in January we have started to post articles on our website as they happen. This change allows us to remain even more current with the stories that matter most to residents in our area.

Other website features include the monthly opinion poll, access to our monthly feature sections, daily weather information about advertising and placing classified ads, ways to contact newspaper staff, and of course a complete archive of all content going back to the paper's first edition in September 2015.

We invite you to check out our website as we grow it throughout the coming year.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Niverville High School to Be Completed in Two Phases

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The new high school in Niverville is well on its way. With the plans now complete, Hanover School Division has recently announced the start of the tendering process for construction. It is anticipated that construction will begin in early March, on schedule.

If the schedule continues to hold, the new school will be open by September 2019.

"That's one of the things we're celebrating," says HSD Superintendent Randy Dueck. "The biggest challenge for us, right from the very beginning, was to be able to open the school in a shorter timeframe than we've done in any of our previous schools."

Dueck notes that the only part of the process that has been shortened is the time devoted to developing the architectural design. This process had to be expedited in order to meet the ever-growing demand for more classroom space in Niverville. The province has deemed the new school one its highest priorities.

"As for the building phase, we had aimed for starting construction in early March right from the get-go," he notes. "That's typical of what we did at Clearspring School and then SRSS, with roughly 18 months in terms of construction time.



HSD trustees Ruby Wiens and Shannon Friesen with Superintendent Randy Dueck and Niverville mayor Myron Dyck at the site of the future school. **EVAN BRAUN**

The question was, were we going to be able to do the architectural planning time within the shortened timeframe? The answer today is yes, because we have been able to get the tender out on time."

The school division is excited about the facility that's been designed. As previously reported, the 66,700-square-foot high school will initially serve 450 students from Grades 9 to Twelve, although it will have the capacity to expand for up to 500 students.

TWO PHASES

One major change since this project was first announced in 2017 is that the high school itself will be split into two construction phases.

"The first phase will include all elements of the school with the exception of the drama room, band room, and childcare facilities," reads a press

release from HSD. "School spaces not included within the first phase of construction will be completed by the spring of 2020."

"We're celebrating that we're on schedule... We will get the doors of the school open in September 2019."

Randy Dueck | HSD Superintendent

Some residents of the community have expressed disappointment in this, but

Niverville Mayor Myron Dyck wants to assure people that there's a strong rationale for the decision.

With the town still working

hard to secure funding for the Community Resource Centre (previously known as the Niverville Multiplex), to be built adjacent to the new high school, there is an opportunity to secure important grant money. Arts programs like

drama and band are likely to be eligible for enhanced funding, primarily from the federal government, but those funds will only be available before construction begins. After construction has already started, it's no longer possible to seek new grant funding. The new school's childcare facility, previously announced and still very much part of the plan, is another area where funds could very well be available.

Therefore, the Town of Niverville requested that construction on these three elements—the drama room, band room, and childcare facility—be put on hold for a few months while the rest of the school moves forward. This will allow the necessary

amount of time to apply for the grants. The town is already in the process of developing these applications.

"Things like band, which we would associate generally with the arts, is there an opportunity to increase funding?" says Mayor Dyck. "We believe that there is. Daycare. That has to do with families, so is there going to be funds available around that kind of an angle? We believe that there will. But the specifics are yet to be realized."

The mayor adds that the term "Community Resource Centre" has been chosen specifically because research and advice from the province shows that this nomenclature will help get the federal government's attention.

"So, Community Resource Centre, what does that mean?" Dyck says. "Well, it could mean a whole host of things. It's a space where a community would gather. It's not being specific. [The government] is saying, 'Sell us,' in many ways. So here are some of the points we're selling. Okay, we had a gas explosion a few years ago, and we needed a warming centre. So could this space be that? We're planning on running it on geothermal, so it could be a place that in times of emergency essentially serves as an emergency shelter. Sometimes there are these key phrases that lead

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them to say, 'Yeah, okay, we need that, that's a good thing, that's important.' Also, this space could be a command and control. In 1997, when we had the flood, the army came in and they were scattered throughout buildings in our community. So should we have an emergency scenario, whether it's flooding, a tornado, whatever it might be, where we would set up our emergency measures operation? Again, that's a community space... and obviously we've been able to convince the school division and the provincial government that there's a real enough possibility of this that they were prepared to do this two-step process."

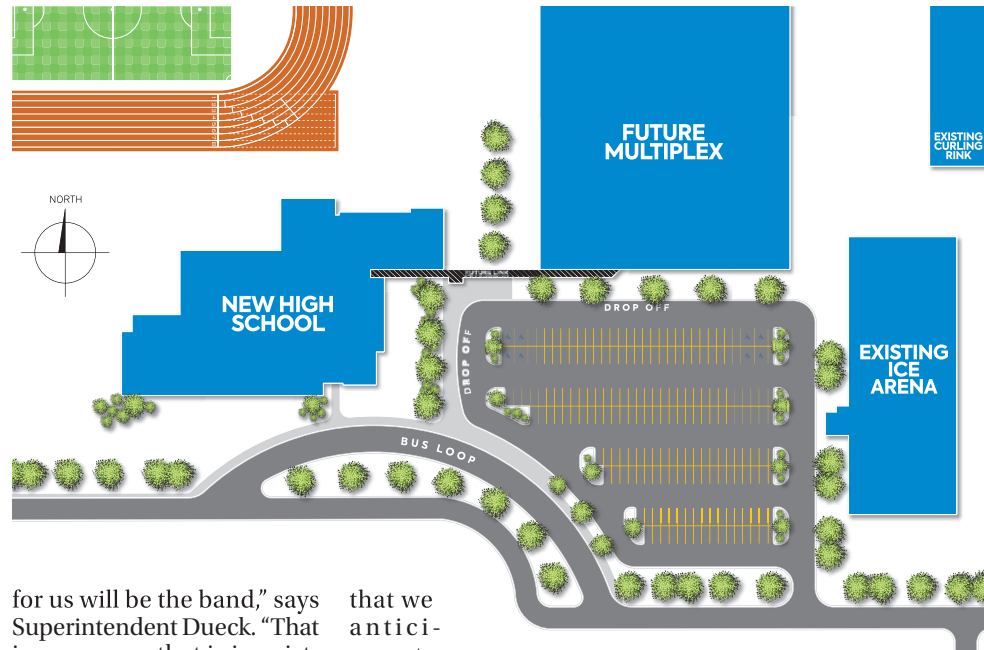
Although this process prevents council from being too specific about what they hope to get out of their current round of grant applications, it shows a level of creative thinking that will hopefully lead to the school and the multiplex campus being broader in scope in the long run.

Dyck adds that provincial support of this campus concept has been exceptional, with MLA Shannon Martin taking a keen interest in the project.

LENGTH OF DELAY KNOWN

That said, all parties are acutely aware that the delay of the second phase will have an initial impact on the high school's band program in particular. Superintendent Dueck says that maintaining a high-quality band program will remain a priority through this process.

"The biggest challenge



for us will be the band," says Superintendent Dueck. "That is a program that is in existence currently, and they are running band, and they have been running band for years. In fact, I attended the band Christmas concert this year. It was very good! What we'll have to do is find an alternative location. We have a year and a half to sort that out. We've got a few ideas that we're going to have to explore to see how good those ideas actually are, but that will be the biggest challenge in terms of programming, is what will we do about the band location? And how do we continue with the band program, because we will need to during the time when we're waiting for phase two to open."

The good news, he notes, is that the school division knows how long the delay will be, and it's not excessive.

"An important note here is

that we anticipate phase two to be completed within a year of the opening of phase one," Dueck says. "I think they're looking at a March 2019 date for start of phase two, so it's right there in the tender process. It's not like, 'Some day we'll get to it.' It's clearly articulated in there, so odds are pretty good that in September 2019 when we open phase one, phase two will already have a floor and walls and a ceiling and windows in it. And we'll be at the point of finishing the interior of that space."

Dueck also points out that Niverville doesn't currently have a highly developed drama program, but this is going to change.

"We have been able to add a drama room to the new school with the understanding that

we will commit staff to a drama program at that point in time," he says. "What [will] happen is the drama program won't start until the drama spaces are available for it."

A similar situation exists for the planned childcare space. Although additional childcare spaces are badly in demand, it's a program currently not offered at the school. And if Mayor Dyck's forecasts prove true, the community will benefit from potential increases in funding.

"So we're celebrating that we're on schedule, we're right on track," Dueck says. "We will get the doors of the school open in September 2019 and we're pretty excited about that."

CITIZEN POLL

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION:

Is the short-term pain of not having adequate band, drama, and childcare spaces worth the potential long-term gain of improved facilities?

- ☐ **YES.** The whole community will benefit from taking a patient approach.
- ☐ **NO.** Band, in particular, is one of the NCI's most successful programs and needs to be accommodated immediately. The students deserve better.
- ☐ **OTHER.** Let us know what you think.

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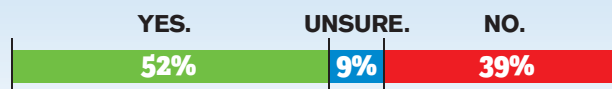
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LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

Would you try cannabis if it was legal?



YOUR COMMENTS:

I will only take what my Dr. prescribes to me.

Totally against it being legalized.

I have nothing against people who use it, and I am sure there will be a market for it once legal, just not something I have ever wanted to try.

There are still health issues that are being swept under the carpet and not openly discussed. It becomes just another vice that will hurt us (as a society) in the future.

It's not so much about the morality of cannabis as it is the long term affect on the community (higher medical costs, increased traffic accidents) that concerns me.

I don't need any help to be positive or cope with life. And at this point in life I'm not in any pain, but I can't say I won't try it if I would have some type of chronic pain.

Perhaps in the oil form for medicinal purposes but not in the smoked form.

Although I support the program and don't care if others use the program from a recreational side, I would not. However, the benefits of the medical aspect could be a possible option as age and health becomes an issue.

Why it's ever been treated differently than alcohol is beyond me. But it's time that's changed.

As a medical cannabis user, I'm mostly curious about the initiatives that will be put into place to help recreational users understand dosing and what side effects to expect. Strains are complex and can effect people in a variety of ways. I do see cannabis as something that can enhance well-being, but I fear that recreational users may abuse what it is intended for.

I'm a regular cannabis smoker. Compared to alcohol and caffeine, cannabis should have been legalized a very long time ago.

Everyone who wants to smoke already does, so legalizing doesn't do much except tax it so the government can make some money.

I've smoked cannabis in the past and enjoyed it. I actually prefer it to alcohol. I didn't like having to acquire it through "dealers," and I'm looking forward to being able to buy it legally.

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New MRI Clinic Gets a Yellow Flag

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

While the province hasn't said a definitive yes or no to Niverville's proposed MRI clinic, the plans are on hold—for now. The anticipated construction of the Heritage Life Diagnostic Centre (HLDC) was set for 2018, with a grand opening later this year. The clinic would round out Niverville's expanding medical options, offering diagnostic services such as MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), ultrasound, and x-ray.

In 2017, the Wait Times Reduction Task Force (WTRTF), established by Minister of Health Kelvin Goertzen, held consultations in communities across the province to gather information regarding wait times in emergency care and surgical and diagnostic procedures. In December, based on their findings, the task force submitted their 384-page analysis to the Minister of Health. The WTRTF determined that capacity could be increased at the province's existing 13 MRI units, which would alleviate the need and cost of adding more units.

"There is capacity within the existing infrastructure to provide more MRI services, without adding additional MRI scanners, by expanding the hours of operation," the document states. "Running all [existing] scanners for 16 hours per day, including on weekends and statutory holidays, would add nearly 200 hours per week, without the need for overnight shifts."

According to a CBC report, this



approach would come at an estimated cost of \$1.8 to \$2 million a year.

In the past ten years, the wait list in Manitoba has increased by 340 percent. In 2017, the average wait time for an MRI across Manitoba was more than six months. The WTRTF suggests that there may be some correlation to this increased wait time by recognizing that it was also ten years ago when family physicians and nurse practitioners were given authorization to order MRI scans, and not just specialists. Regardless, by extending the hours of operation, the task force says the wait list could

be eliminated as early as May 2019.

In its analysis, the WTRTF also revealed findings that indicate MRIs have been ordered in times when they may not have been necessary.

"While it appears the demand has been steadily growing, it is not clear how many of the referrals are for MRIs which are useful in order to diagnose or determine a treatment plan for a patient, and how many would be considered 'inappropriate,'" states the document.

They have also made recommendations to tighten up protocols for ordering scans.

Grand Forks, North Dakota boasts MRI scans without a wait, sending many Manitobans south of the border for expedited service. These are the very residents the HLDC was intending to target, along with professional sports teams and Workers Compensation Board clients: people or organizations who wish to pay for their MRIs out of pocket anyway.

Gord Daman, spokesperson for Niverville Heritage Holding Inc. (NHHI), says that they aren't so much disappointed with the task force's findings as impatient for the province's final decision.

"This is for the common good, so if there is no longer a need for MRI capacity, that's okay," says Daman. "We only got involved to address a need that aligns with our mission at NHHI and the chance to work with a community resident. However, it is not fully clear as to whether the MRI capacity needs in the province can be met through simply doubling the hours of existing MRI sites. [There's still] lots of challenges around that."

Niverville's plan for a diagnostic clinic is a unique one, proposing a third way to operate such a centre: not private, not public, but a combination of the two. While patients would be required to pay for their own MRI and ultrasound diagnostic services, these fees would be set by an NHHI-sanctioned administrative body to function on a sliding scale based on a client's income level. X-ray and lab services would still be fully covered by Manitoba Health.

Daman says they've been given no indication of how long it will take until the province has reviewed the findings and makes a decision. The Health Minister has since also created a new oversight body called Shared Health, an organization whose mandate will be to provide services to regional health authorities. The task force findings will be reviewed by Shared Health, which won't convene until April 1.

"The decision to proceed includes ensuring we are acting within the spirit of the Canada Health Care Act and whether there is a need for

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additional diagnostic services like MRIs in the province," Daman says. "For the Town and NHHI, a further consideration is not to assume any capital and/or operational debt for the diagnostic centre. If the [operators] determine that these conditions can be reasonably addressed, and risk mitigated for all the stakeholders, in a not-for-profit environment, then the project would proceed."

Doug Deans, the chairperson of Dauphin's health foundation, was understandably less forgiving of the task force's recommendations. At the time of the document's release, the city of Dauphin was completing the final stages of a new addition to their regional health centre, complete with diagnostic space for an MRI machine as well as staff who have been hired and trained to run it.

"I'm surprised at the result of the findings from the report," Deans told *CBC News*. "I think the value to rural citizens [is] endless for having an MRI in the Dauphin area. Some people need an MRI on a less-serious basis than others. Some need it on an emergency

basis."

Deans added that the cost of air ambulance to Winnipeg in an emergency, or the cost and time of numerous commutes in a non-emergency, is significant to both the taxpayer and individuals.

The task force agrees with this concern, citing the repeated appointments a patient is required to go through before they reach the treatment stage. Despite these commonly held sentiments in rural Manitoba, the WTRTF is clear on their recommendations to the province.

"Based on the available information, the committee believes that the actual demand for MRI in Manitoba is lower than it appears," states their report. "Therefore, while an increase in MRI volumes may be necessary to meet demand, further work must be done to assess the actual need for MRI in Manitoba. Until this work is complete there should not be further investment in installing new MRI machines in Manitoba."

The question remains whether Niverville's proposed diagnostic centre model will supersede some of these

arguments. The proposal suggests that HLDC operators Yves Kimbo and Felipe Campusano will be assuming the entire cost of the building and diagnostic equipment, thus alleviating any additional strain on the provincial healthcare budget. Licensing and quality control will be left up to the province.

"The reason to wait for the direction of Shared Health is to see if the province will significantly reduce the wait times by extending hours at existing provincially run MRIs," says Daman. "If they do and the wait times go down, folks will simply wait a few weeks for an MRI that won't cost them money. In that case, Niverville's would not be sustainable."

Yves Kimbo was approached for comment but indicated that he prefers not to comment until more information comes to light.

CITATION

¹Riley Laychuk, "No New MRIs for Manitoba, Wait Times Task Force Advises," *CBC News*. December 20, 2017 (<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/wait-times-mri-manitoba-1.4458838>).

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Red River Mission Heads to Peru

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Escaping the Manitoba chill for a tropical climate has become like a winter sport for many of us. Some of us can't wait for the beaches and non-stop mojitos, while others just need a change of scenery. Still others want their winter getaway to have purpose and bear fruit. Red River Mission (RRM) are just those kinds of people.

RRM is a not-for-profit organization committed to helping the less fortunate in third-world countries. Before we let the term "organization" fool us, the RRM is really a group of five big-hearted individuals, four of them residents of St. Adolphe and one of Winnipeg.

"I had wanted to do some humanitarian work and friends of mine were going to the Dominican Republic," says Denis Robert of how the group got its start. "I heard about it and ended up going with them. Even while I was there, I said, 'I'm going to go back and organize a group at my parish.' So I went to the parish priest and we established a group and it became obvious from the beginning that it was going to be way more than [people from] St. Adolphe. The first year we were 11 [volunteers] and we've been going ever since."

That was ten years ago. The group has morphed and changed since its beginning in 2008, new volunteers joining the mission every year under the guidance of Robert and his team of coordinators. But the focus has always been the same: to deliver love, friendship, and aid to orphans.

To date, the RRM has travelled to the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, and Peru. In late January of this year, a team of 12 headed to Casa Santa Rosa, a Peruvian orphanage, for the fourth year in a row.

Casa Santa Rosa is a unique orphanage, housing over 100 boys and girls. Unique because it defies many stereotypes. As a matter of fact, they don't even use the term orphanage, but rather albergue, the Spanish term for hostel or inn. Here, a series of family-style brick homes dot the grounds, each housing a group of children ranging in age from infant to young adult. Each home is run by local house parents, known to the



Members of Red River Mission prepare for their 2018 trip to Peru, with laptop gifts for the orphans living there.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

children as Tío and Tía (Uncle and Aunt).

According to Robert and his team, building a strong sense of family is a priority. Children are given the option to come here, but it's not enforced. Few turn it down. Other children with birth families of their own often demonstrate jealousy for the children living at Casa Santa Rosa.

On the grounds of the Casa, you'll find a common dining hall, therapy rooms, a clinic, and a library. Volunteers have constructed playgrounds, soccer and volleyball fields, vegetable gardens, and an orchard. Thirty-nine staff and dedicated volunteers provide support in tutoring and physical and occupational therapy, helping children through learning, motor, and cognitive issues.

"The kids never reach an age where they are too old to be there," says Robert. "They live as a family in houses on the compound. They really have a fine sense of what a family is and what sharing is all about. They leave of their own accord, once they've been educated and feel that they are ready to go out into the world. And they are always welcome to come back for visits."

Robert adds that most of the children from albergues such as Casa Santa Rosa grow up to be well-adjusted, contributing members of society. This kind of orphanage system is only possible due to the dedicated volunteer foundations that stand behind them. Orphanages in Peru aren't subsidized by the government.

RRM has been volunteering

under the umbrella of Friends of the Orphans Canada (FOTOCAN). FOTOCAN, in turn, partners with Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH), Spanish for Our Little Brothers and Sisters. NPH began when a priest started a home for boys in 1954 and it grew from there. Their mission is to "provide homes in which the children receive food, clothing, health care and education in a family environment based on the principles of unconditional acceptance and love, sharing, work and responsibility."¹ Their focus is in Latin America and the Caribbean.

But while it's evident that these orphans are the blessed recipients of volunteer efforts, the RRM team would argue that their own lives have been changed in equal measure.

"It's the most awesome experience ever," says Corey Bossuyt of RRM.

This year, Bossuyt's wife and 14-year-old stepdaughter will be joining him. As the group gathers to organize their suitcases of gifts for the orphanage just days before departure, there is a collective agreement among them: there is absolutely no better way to spend a winter vacation in a tropical climate.

To make this trip possible, the RRM team spends the better part of a year fundraising and collecting a mini-mountain of practical items for the orphans, enough to fill five 45-pound suitcases. Nine laptops will also accompany them. These will be distributed to the children going into post-secondary education to ensure that they'll have all the advantages of

their non-orphaned peers. On their own, each team member also brings goodie bags stuffed with toys and candy.

Upon arrival, they will treat the children to a pizza party.

"We asked the [Casa] director, 'What can we do for the kids that they never get?'" says Robert. "He said, 'They never get pizza.' The minute they see us come into the orphanage now, you can see pizza written all over their faces."

The RRM volunteers will be housed in a tent village right on the Casa grounds. For many of volunteers, sleeping in a tent for two weeks is part of the appeal. Their fundraising dollars will also be used to pay the local cook who feeds them. While onsite, volunteers will be putting in intense hours to build a roof for the Casa dining hall as well as a lean-to so the children can relax outdoors in a region where the temperatures often reach 35 to 40 degrees Celsius.

Downtime will include having fun with the kids, playing soccer and tie-dying T-shirts that the volunteers brought along. Each year, they plan a new and interactive activity as a way to get to know the children better.

Each RRM volunteer must pay for their own travel and boarding expenses, which amounted to \$1,700 per person this year. Operating under FOTOCAN, each member must also contribute an additional \$1,250 to further the cause of the organization. They can either pay it out of pocket or run their own fundraising campaign.

Their total fundraising goal this

year came to \$20,000. They managed to surpass that by \$5,550 due to the generosity of their donors. The team busies themselves with fundraising events throughout the year by way of socials, spaghetti suppers, cake auctions, Bud & Spud nights, and sending letters to previous donors and churches that have supported them in the past. Many of the members belong to churches who also stand behind them financially.

"People in my circle know that I do this, and they will actually ask when I'm going because they're prepared to donate," says Bossuyt.

Laurie Beachell, a first-time volunteer with RRM, says his church in Rosser stood behind him from the start.

"The kids in our Sunday school held a pancake breakfast last Sunday and raised \$355," says Beachell. "I just let friends, family, and members of the church know and it just happens."

But flying out to volunteer in Peru isn't the only way these philanthropists give to the orphans they've come to know and love. Many of them have become long-term sponsors, meeting a special child at the Casa and supporting them throughout the year with donations to the umbrella organizations on their behalf. Twenty-five children have been sponsored over the years by RRM members.

"Sponsorship is critical," says Robert, "not only in helping the orphanage survive but in giving them an adult that they can relate to that they know really cares for them."

Anyone is welcome to join the RRM in their humanitarian mission. Robert says their volunteers over the years have come from every age bracket and denomination and none have walked away without a feeling of satisfaction and purpose.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ Contact Denis Robert:
lesserre@mymts.net or (204) 470-3340
■ To follow the progress of the 2018 team in Peru, visit: www.rmr2018.blogspot.com

CITATION

¹ "The Many Faces and Facets of FOTOCAN," Friends of the Orphans Canada. Date of access: January 26, 2018 (<http://www.fotocan.org/about-us/>).



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STEINBACH CREDIT UNION

Commentary

The Unselfish Philosophy

By Greg Fehr

The First Nations of Canada have a traditional philosophy that is central to their oral teachings. The Cree version of this philosophy is *Manatan*, and while the word varies through languages and dialects, it always invokes a larger thought. Loosely translated, it would be the idea of universal respect—respect for self, for individuals, for other groups, and for mother earth. Respect itself may not be enough of a definition, as *Manatan* invokes a sense of caring, love, and connectedness as well. This philosophy is the guiding principle in all aspects of existence from one's personal life and family relations to the political and economic decisions of the tribe and leadership.

A full translation of the intent of this word is difficult in English (je pense en français aussi) because it doesn't mesh well with the traditional Western way of thinking. Our European and colonialist roots teach us that someone must lose if we are to win, and hence we perceive any win by someone else as a loss to ourselves. This is the underlying principle influencing our decisions. From personal relationships to negotiations, we jockey for position to ensure that our wins exceed our losses. We extend this to our authority structures, too, and strive not only to climb the proverbial



DEPOSITPHOTOS

ladder but hold onto and take advantage of this position once we achieve it.

When we think in a win-lose paradigm, we act in a selfish way. We negotiate without thought for the other party. Personal gain is our primary consideration. Although there are some exceptions for companies who make legitimate efforts, our corporations often try to put a "green spin" on their products, even if they don't really have a true environmental impact. The spin is used as a marketing ploy. If we perceive the economy and the environment to be in conflict, the economy usually wins.

But the most dangerous aspect of this paradigm is that when we think in win-lose terms, we believe that at some

point we will lose. This drives an attitude of entitlement and advantage; we must maximize our wins to pay for our inevitable loss.

The inappropriate conduct—whether physical, emotional, or economic—of those in authority is nothing more than entitlement. It's a lust to seize all that can be seized before the next downfall. Historically, this type of person has been admired and respected, with those achieving positions of influence and power being held in high esteem.

Because win-lose is like a scale, are we comfortable with weighing a successful person's accomplishments against what they did to get there? While we may have advanced beyond

the *Mad Men* era, those same roots continue to influence us today.

It's unfortunate that universal ideals are seldom, if ever, universally accepted and practiced. Yet there would doubtless be a positive impact if *Manatan* became a core teaching in our society. How unfortunate it is that the European masses weren't the ones to be "civilized." It's likely not the fault of Indigenous teachers, but rather those arriving on the New World's shores, those old dogs incapable of learning new tricks.

While most of us arrived on these shores through good navigation, it will be through the proper use of a moral compass that we truly find the New World we all want.

Look on the Bright Side: The Frequency of Love

By Jan Kendall St. Cyr

Did you know that love has its own frequency? Energy is measured in frequencies, or cycles per second of vibrating electrons, and it has been said that 528 hertz is the fast-paced frequency of love.

As a comparison, music, which also moves at high energy, resonates at 440 hertz, which is the musical note A above middle C. This is the standard tuning note for instruments.

What this means for us is that when we choose to connect to this fast-moving love vibration, our own energy resonates at a higher frequency, enabling us to experience and express the God-like qualities of compassion, understanding, forgiveness, healing, generosity, joy, and peace... all the amazing things that inspire and empower us to live our best lives.

Connecting to the frequency of love lifts us to a higher state of consciousness and frees us from the negative thoughts, feelings, and actions that minimize and victimize us. Fear, guilt, judgment, envy, greed, arrogance, and our need to be right simply cannot exist in this realm because they vibrate at a much lower and slow-moving frequency, also known as ego. It's interesting to note that these negative

emotions—along with sorrow, depression, and despair—resonate anywhere from six hertz and lower.

Living in this love vibration requires us to keep our ego in check when relating to people and circumstances. Our egos easily indulge in the dramas of life and we advance its cause whenever we choose the lower vibe responses.

We know when we're living in this love vibration, because we feel it. It's that natural high, the experience of connection and wholeness, and the feeling of light, expansion, and bliss.

Because this love vibration requires us to surrender our egos, we actually get out of our own way, clearing the path and making room for our dreams and desires to flourish! Prayer, meditation, inspirational readings, music, nature, and acts of kindness are all ways to connect to the frequency of love.

Love is the oil of joy and the antidote to pain. It fuels our passions and lifts us from limitations to possibilities. It transcends time and space and so is the very essence of life. Learning to live in the love vibration is why we're here!

May we rise up and resonate with this most extraordinary frequency and experience a life of vibrant love.

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Sports & Recreation

Clippers Minor Hockey in Late-Season Action

By Travis Mason

All levels of the Clippers have been busy the last couple of months as the teams finally enter the second half of the season and approach playoffs.

On December 9, the Clippers' Squirts B team participated in the Squirts Winter Classic in Steinbach. After the tournament, Deklan Billey and Riley Shaw received awards as the Hardest Working Players. Nash Smook and Kolby Mason received Player of the Game honours. Coach Dan Kosman placed third in the coaches' skills competition, and Niverville won the competition for loudest fans. The team is planning to hit the road again for the Altona Minor Hockey Tournament on February 24.

The Novice teams kicked off the new year by moving to full-ice games.

The Novice A team competed in a Winkler tournament December 15–17. The kids came together as a team and won first place, undefeated.

Novice B has had a slow start to the second half of the season, losing some close games while missing some key players. They lost their first three league games, two of them by just one goal. After the Christmas break, they



Niverville players participate in Midget All-Star Game: Danielle Hiebert (coach), Logan Unger, Chaseton Long, Bailey Hiebert, Zach Anderson, and goalie Damien Glenham.

TRAVIS MASON

competed in a tournament in Rosenort on January 6, where goalie Taylor Radley recorded his first career shutout. The Novice Bs are playing a well-rounded game and will make a big push to finish off the regular season strong before the playoffs.

The Novice teams will be hosting their home tournament January 26–28. The

Clippers organization looks forward to some big crowds.

The Atom B team played their home tournament December 1–3 and had a tough start with a loss to the St. Adolphe Hawks. But they fought back and ended up facing St. Adolphe again in the final where the Clippers came out on top to win gold in a close 7–5 match.

The Atom A squad wasn't as successful, but they played hard, coming out on the wrong end of the A-side final.

The Bantam team had a great December with a 7–5 victory over Lorette and a 4–4 tie with Rat River. Following a finger injury, Evan Groening returned to the ice and added a hat trick in the Rat River match.

The Midgets have a record

of 7–6–1 and are currently in fourth place in a very tight division. Only five points separate third from seventh place. With just two games remaining on the schedule, each win will go a long way in securing a higher seed for the playoffs.

Each and every Clippers squad is excited as they fight to climb the standings and get into playoff mode. If the

weather stays mild, players can continue getting in extra skating time at the town's new outdoor rink. This great addition to the local program allows children to work on their skills after practices and between games.

THE MIDGET ALL-STAR GAME

On Sunday, January 21, Clipper Ice Sports hosted the Midget A All-Star Game in Niverville. All nine teams in the league were represented and divided into Team White and Team Dark. Niverville forwards Logan Unger, Chaseton Long, and Bailey Hiebert joined defenseman Zach Anderson, goalie Damien Glenham, and Coach Danielle Hiebert on Team White.

The clean, fast-paced, and hard-hitting game remained tied up at 1–1 going into the third period before Team White broke it open and came out on top with a 6–2 final score.

The CIS Executive would like to congratulate all the all-stars for their performance and the way in which they represented Niverville. They would also like to thank Darryl Rempel and his team for putting on such a successful event.



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Canadian Firearm Safety Course (PAL)

Feb. 2/4, \$99.75

Canadian Red Cross Babysitting Course (ages 11+)

Saturday, Feb. 3, \$50.

Public Skating

Fridays, 3:30–4:30 p.m.; Saturdays & Sundays, 11:00 a.m.–12:00 noon
For Louis Riel Day (Feb. 19): 2:00–4:45 p.m.
For In-Service Days (Feb. 2/23): 2:00–3:30 p.m.

Sticks & Pucks

Fridays, 4:30–5:15 p.m.; Saturdays & Sundays, 12:15–1:00 p.m.
For In-Service Days (Feb. 2/23): 3:45–5:15 p.m.

Adult Rec Hockey

Saturdays, 9:30–10:30 p.m., \$10.

Tot Gymnastics (ages 0–5)

Wednesdays, Feb. 7/21, 12:30–1:00 p.m., \$4 (drop-in).

Family Snow Day

Saturday, Feb. 17, 12:00, noon – 3:00 p.m.

▼ NIVERVILLE CURLING RINK**Youth Curling**

Tuesdays, Jan. 8–Feb. 20 (ages 6–12), \$40.

Yoga

Mondays, Feb. 5–Feb. 26. Flow at 7:00 p.m., Yin at 8:15 p.m., \$15 (drop-in).

▼ GOLDEN FRIENDSHIP CENTRE**Taekwondo**

Mondays & Thursdays, 6:30–8:30 p.m.

ST. ADOLPHE RECREATION**▼ ÉCOLE ST. ADOLPHE SCHOOL****Badminton**

Mondays, 6:00–8:00 p.m., \$2 (bring shoes & racket)

Pickleball (50+)

Thursdays, 6:00–7:30 p.m., Free.

Karate

Tuesdays/Fridays, 6:00–7:30 p.m.

Tales & Tunes

Thursdays, Feb. 1–Mar. 15 (ages 2–4), 6:30–7:15 p.m., Free.

Shake, Rattle, and Roll

Wednesdays, 5:45–6:45 p.m.

▼ ST. ADOLPHE COMMUNITY CLUB**Gymnastics & Stunting (ages 2–8)**

Mondays, 6:00–8:30 p.m., costs vary by age.

▼ ST. ADOLPHE ARENA**Public Skating**

Fridays, 5:00–6:00 p.m.; Sundays, 5:30–6:15 p.m.

▼ RITCHOT SENIOR SERVICES (457 MAIN ST.)**Yoga**

Wednesdays, 1:30 p.m., \$40/10 classes

Cardio Fit

Mondays, 9:30 a.m., \$40/10 classes.

Chair Fit

Mondays, 11:00 a.m., Free.

Muscle Fit

Thursdays, 9:30 a.m., \$40/10 classes.

Wii Games

Thursdays, 1:00 p.m.

ÎLE-DES-CHÊNES RECREATION**▼ TRANSCANADA CENTRE****Indoor Walking**

Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays, 9:00 a.m.

Seniors Yoga

Mondays, 10:00 a.m., Free.

Yoga

Tuesdays, 6:30 p.m., \$125/10 classes.

Golden Zumba

Tuesdays, 10:00 a.m., Free.

Zumba

Mondays, 7:00 p.m., \$75/10 classes.

Pickleball

Wednesdays, 1:00–3:00 p.m., Free.

Healthy Baby

Tuesday, Feb. 20, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon, Free.

▼ ÉCOLE ÎLE-DES-CHÊNES SCHOOL**Taekwondo**

Tuesdays/Thursdays, 6:00–7:30 p.m., \$40/month.

Spirals Rhythmic Gymnastics

Mondays, 6:00–8:00 p.m., \$105.

▼ ÎLE-DES-CHÊNES ARENA**Public Skating**

Thursdays, 3:30–5:00 p.m.; Sundays, 12:45–1:45 p.m.

Shinny

Tuesdays, 3:30–5:00 p.m.

▼ ÉCOLE GABRIELLE-ROY LIBRARY**Tales & Tunes**

Wednesdays, Feb. 7–Mar. 14 (ages 2–4), 6:30–7:15 p.m., Free.

STE. AGATHE RECREATION**▼ ÉCOLE SAINTE AGATHE SCHOOL****Taeknowdo**

Tuesdays/Thursdays, 6:15–7:30 p.m., \$40/month.

Vinyasa Yoga

Mondays, 8:00–9:00 p.m., \$10.

Pickleball

Fridays, 7:00–8:30 p.m., Free.

Zumba

Wednesdays, 7:00–8:00 p.m., \$10.

Tales & Tunes

Tuesdays, Feb. 6–Mar. 13 (ages 2–4), 6:30–7:15 p.m., Free.

▼ STE. AGATHE ARENA**Public Skating**

Tuesdays 4:15–5:15 p.m., Fridays 6:45–7:45 p.m.,
Sundays, 12:15–1:15 p.m.

Hellebuyck and Wheeler Named NHL All-Stars

The Jets stay hot through January.

By Nicholas Anderson

When the Jets chose to go by the slogan “Rise Together,” few could have predicted just how quickly the team would, in fact, rise together. Yet 50 games into this regular season, the Jets are ranked third in the NHL. At 29–13–8, few expected this kind of turnaround from Winnipeg, especially considering that the roster is more or less the same as it was last season, with the only significant addition being Dmitry Kulikov.

For the Jets, last season is nothing but a vague memory.

When centre Mark Scheifele went down to injury in late December, many around the hockey world wondered if the Jets would be able to maintain their high level of success. It's safe to say, the Jets proved those people's doubts wrong. Through the first 12 games without Scheifele, the team went 8–2–2, thanks in large part to Blake Wheeler. Wheeler, who played centre back in his college days, was thrust back to the middle of the ice and hasn't looked back since. With five goals and seven assists in those 12 games, Wheeler has been the focal point of the Jets' offence.

Having only lost in regulation twice since the holiday break, the Jets are 9–2–2 since December 25, making them the third hottest team in the league heading into the All-Star weekend. Representing the Jets in Tampa Bay are goaltender Connor Hellebuyck and captain Blake Wheeler—a more than deserving honour for the two

players who have carried the Jets thus far.

One player whose impact has gone slightly unnoticed is defenseman Dustin Byfuglien. Since his return to the line-up on January 2, he's racked up two goals and two assists in 10 games. The Jets, who were 6–3–1 during Big Buff's absence, improved to 21–9–7 when Byfuglien was in the line-up. There's no exact explanation as to why the Jets play well when Byfuglien is around, but having Tyler Myers and Jacob Trouba healthy certainly gives the team a scary right side on the back end. The three combined for 17 points in January, with seven of those points coming on the power play.

Among the numerous adjustments made since the new year, no area has seen as much improvement as the penalty kill. When 2017 concluded, the Jets sat nineteenth in penalty kill percentage, at just about 80 percent. Since January 1, however, the Jets have posted the fourth most efficient penalty kill, killing just under 90 percent of the penalties they've taken. This success can and should be attributed to goaltender Connor Hellebuyck, who's stopped 94.2 percent of shots during power plays in 2018.

This alone highlights just how good Hellebuyck has been as he delivers stellar performance after stellar performance. The 24-year-old all-star continues to make his case for the Vezina Trophy, improving to 26–6–7 on the season, making him second in wins among all goalies. He's

also tied for second in shut-outs, with four to his name so far.

In last month's article, we discussed just how great the Jets are on home ice. While that stayed true in January, their success at BellMTS place will truly be tested after the all-star break, as 11 of their next 13 games take place at home. On top of that, four of those games will be played against divisional opponents and could really make the difference down the stretch.

As far as the trade deadline is concerned, don't expect the Jets to make too much noise. While general manager Kevin Cheveldayoff has a history of not making deals, he should take an interest in adding depth and playoff experience this year, especially considering the fact that divisional opponents St. Louis and Nashville are expected to be very active.

The Jets close out the month on January 30 as they host the first-place Lightning, and then they take on the second-place Vegas Golden Knights on February 1. As far as February is concerned, the Jets need to take advantage of their long upcoming home stretch and try to separate themselves from the Predators, who are just one point back of the Jets for the division lead.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ For more about Jets' approach to the trade line, visit www.nivervillecitizen.com/news/sports-and-recreation/how-should-the-winnipeg-jets-approach-the-trade-deadline

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Run, Jump, and Play with Shake, Rattle, and Roll

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By Amber Mamchuk

Short days and cold weather can make it even harder to fit in the recommended 60 minutes of energetic play for your toddlers. Luckily, there are free programs close by where your child can burn off that extra energy and develop gross motor skills!

Shake, Rattle, and Roll classes are filled with running, jumping, singing, and playing. Each class starts with a warm-up song, followed by gross motor skill development and ball work, and finishes with games, a cooldown, and a story.

A love for movement starts at a very young age as babies learn to roll, crawl, and eventually walk. Physical activity programs like Shake, Rattle, and Roll help develop a child's motor skillset, or "physical literacy," in a fun and safe environment. Preschoolers who know how to move in a variety of ways will become children who are confident in many sports and activities—and this leads to a lifetime of staying active.

Not only does Shake, Rattle, and Roll develop physical literacy in toddlers, it's also an opportunity for children and



Children shake, rattle, and roll.

AMBER MAMCHUK

their parents and guardians to be active together. The program is designed to have parents participate alongside their toddlers. Truth be told, if parents do everything their kids do, they'll be squeezing in a workout for themselves.

To try out Shake, Rattle, and Roll, you can drop in for the St. Adolphe program on Wednesdays from 5:45–6:45 p.m. at the École St. Adolphe School gym until March 7 (note that there's no class on February 28). The Île-des-Chênes program runs on Mondays from 5:45–6:45

p.m. at the TransCanada Centre until March 19.

Funding for Shake, Rattle, and Roll in the region has been generously provided by the South East Healthy Child Coalition.

Other physical literacy development classes for toddlers include the Niverville Tot Gymnastics program, for those up to the age of five. The cost is \$4 per week, with classes taking place at the south end of the Niverville Arena. Drop-in classes are available February 7 and February 21, from

12:30–1:00 p.m.

Also, Ste. Agathe's "Bouger en famille" is a one-hour French program offering parents and preschool-age children the opportunity to play educational games and be active. The program was created to combat low levels of physical activity and to encourage a healthy, active lifestyle. The main goal of the program is to develop gross motor skills through running, jumping, skipping, catching, and rolling in a playful environment. The program also includes songs and rhymes to encourage activity. "Bouger en famille" runs at the École Ste. Agathe School gym on Wednesdays from 6:00–7:00 p.m.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ If you would like more information on how to become a Shake, Rattle, and Roll leader in your community, contact Andrea Klassen: aklassen@southernhealth.ca or (204)346.6698

■ Note that the Île-des-Chênes program is currently full. To be added to the waitlist, email recreation@ritshot.com.

■ To learn more about Niverville's Tot Gymnastics program, contact aman-da.neima@gmail.com.

Niverville Announces Family Snow Day

On Saturday, February 17, residents of Niverville are invited to come out to the arena for the town's annual Family Snow Day. The event, which lasts from noon until 3:00 p.m., will include public

skating, snowman-building, snow-painting, curling, snowshoe racing, broomball, and a bonfire.

As with previous years, the highlight will be the opportunity to watch as Actif

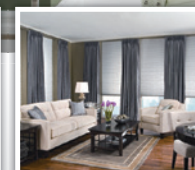
Epica racers begin travelling through Niverville starting at 1:00 p.m. Actif Epica is a weekend-long race along the historic Crow Wing Trail, which winds its way through Niverville. Cyclists and

runners alike will begin the 125-kilometre race near the U.S. border and work their way north until they reach The Forks in Winnipeg.

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IN BRIEF



Niverville Rush to Hold Soccer Tryouts

By Jason Thompson

The Niverville Rush soccer team will host a two-session tryout this upcoming March. The first session will take place March 12 at the Niverville Elementary School from 8:00–9:30 p.m., and the second will occur on March 19 at Niverville Collegiate Institute from 6:30–8:00 p.m. All boys born in 2003 and 2004 are eligible.

The Rush play in the WYSA (Winnipeg Youth Soccer Association) league, which runs from the end of April until June, with playoffs taking place in September. The team began as a tournament team in 2016, and in 2017 they played their first season in the WYSA with strong results. This year's squad will once again play in Winnipeg and at select tournaments as a U15 boys squad.

It should be noted that the Rush is separate from Niverville Youth Soccer, which will hold registration this spring for the regular rural league in this age group.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Boys from Niverville and other outlying areas are invited to register for tryouts by emailing niverrillrush@mymts.net. Please include the child's full name, birthdate, soccer position, and contact phone number by March 10. To cover the gym rental, there will be a \$10 fee to try out.

Snowmobile Clubs Take to the Trails

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

It's not an unusual day in rural Manitoba to see as many snowmobiles as there are automobiles in the surrounding countryside. And more often than not, they run in packs like hungry wolves.

Snoman Inc. is a Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) initiative that provides safe trail-riding across the province. Different chapters of Snoman clubs volunteer their efforts every year to place speed and cautionary signage along the snow routes and keep the trails clear of drifting snow.

"Snoman [Inc] is all about protecting the public," says Kevin Stott of the local Snoman club. "If you're riding on a Snoman trail, it should [be an indication] that it's safe."

The trails wind throughout Manitoba like a highway system for snowmobiles. Safety, of course, is important when today's machines can easily reach 150 kilometers per hour and higher, and many of the trails cross busy intersections.

It takes 12 twelve volunteers to erect the local signs and another handful of volunteers to run the trail-grooming tractor throughout the winter. They cover a large area, from Grande Pointe south to the U.S. border, and from the Red River east to Vita.

Stott says he volunteers along with other locals because they appreciate the safety and comfort that a well-marked and groomed trail provides. He says that "ditch banging"—a term used to describe riding on rough terrain—is hard on both your body and your machine.

To use these trails, riders are expected to buy snopasses. MPI collects the revenue from snopasses and uses a portion of it to pay volunteers a fee for trail-clearing. These fees are what clubs use to purchase and maintain the grooming tractor.



Local snowmobilers enjoy Manitoba's extensive trails.

DEREK LOEPP

THE 388 NIVERVILLANS

Another snowmobile club has more recently hit the trails: the 388 Nivervillans Snowcross Team. The club isn't as stately as the name suggests. They impose no membership fees and their only rules are to make friends and have fun. The name, they say, is a play on words and a poke at highly organized sport.

"I started the Facebook group thinking that Niverville had lots of new people that had sleds but didn't know anyone [to ride with]," says Bryan Trottier. "I realized this would work when I put it on the [site] one night that we were going for a ride and 17 people showed up."

The club started in December 2016 with a few members on Facebook and has grown to upwards of 80 members, including the partners of some of the regular riders.

"Snowmobiling is such an amazing sport and it really brings all kinds of people together," says Derek Loepp, a member of the club. "For me, it's really expanded my friend group. That's deepened my relationships with people here in town. I've met some incredibly great people that I might not have met if it weren't for this club."

Trottier says the group can go out as much as three or four times per week. None of the outings are highly organized. If someone feels like riding, they'll post on Facebook and others will join them.

Women, too, join in, sometimes as a passenger on their partner's machine and sometimes on their own.

"Everyone is an equal in our group," says Loepp, "and if I'm being perfectly honest, there's several women that can outride the men."

The destinations are likewise informal. At times they'll just ride where the trail takes them and other times they make a day of it, hitting up local restaurants for breakfast or lunch along the way. Occasionally the group will haul their machines to places like Marchand when the local snowfall hasn't been significant enough.

While it sounds like the kind of sport that would take away from a participant's family time, Loepp says the opposite is actually true.

"Our families are always encouraged to be a part of our lives and our friendships, and in that way our families are definitely involved," Loepp says.

Strong family-to-family connections have been built through

this club, almost as a by-product. Club members take their families skating together or meet up for other activities.

Another spinoff benefit of the club, Loepp says, is having a group that's always got your back. It's not uncommon for Facebook messages and texts to quickly transfer from member to member when someone needs a helping hand.

On the trail, too, travelling in company has obvious benefits. Getting your machine stuck when you're riding off the grid is both a concern and a reality. In company, there's always a few to help get you moving again, which results in stories to share and a good laugh between friends.

Because keeping it fun is the main objective, the club advocates strongly for responsible ridership, being respectful of residents as they travel through towns, and for purchasing snopasses to ensure the safety of the trail system for all.

"The real heroes in the snowmobiling world in this area are those that volunteer significant amounts of time each year in preparing and maintaining the trails for us to ride on," says Loepp. "It's a thankless job but one fueled by the passion of those who do it."

This year, the 388 Nivervillans assisted the Snoman club in erecting signs.

"I have been sledding for 13 months now," says Trottier, "and the first time I went I said, 'Why have I never done this before?' I will never be without a snowmobile again. I find myself enjoying winter more and actually hoping for snow. I thoroughly enjoy spending time outside and meeting new people, [and] this hobby takes care of both. It changed my square footage of living space from my home and my work to an infinite white world."

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OPEN HOUSE

*PR 311 Functional Design
Traffic Assessment and Future Planning*

February 8, 2018
7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Niverville Arena South End

The Town of Niverville will be hosting an Open House on the Functional Design for PR 311. The Open House will feature a presentation by CH2M, consultants hired by the Town to research and prepare a functional traffic design for the future of PR 311.

This meeting will provide insight into the existing and anticipated future traffic conditions, along with design criteria that is being considered for infrastructure planning. Residents are encouraged to attend to share their ideas for infrastructure development.

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Joël Delorme

Joël, a Grade Twelve student at Gabrielle-Roy, plays and excels at a large number of sports. He plays defence for the Gab-Roy Cavaliers hockey team, plays middle-right for the Gab-Roy Les Roys senior volleyball squad, and was captain of the school's fall soccer team. He also stands out on the track-and-field pitch, in running events like the 200-metre, 800-metre, and 400-metre relay. Away from school, he currently plays club volleyball for the Providence Junior Pilots program.

Joël is also a high-achieving student who currently maintains a 92 percent average. This spring, he intends to travel to Spain as part of the school's upcoming enrichment and cultural exploration trip.

As for other hobbies and interests? He says sports keep him so busy that he doesn't have much time for anything else!

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IDC Throws Second Annual Snowman Festival

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

On Saturday, February 3, Île-des-Chênes will be hosting its second annual Snowman Festival, an opportunity for the community to come together and enjoy some great family fun. It all kicks off at 10:00 a.m. at the TransCanada Centre.

The festival's centerpiece is once again the Build-a-Snowman Contest, sponsored by the Île-des-Chênes Country Store. Anyone in Île-des-Chênes or the immediate surrounding area is invited to build their best snowman, then take a picture and submit it for consideration (see below for contact info). The winner will be announced on February 3.

The Snow-and-Shine Sled

and ATV Show will begin at 10:00 a.m. and stay open until 3:00 p.m., when winners will be announced.

Those with a knack for cooking can enter the pea soup and chili cookoff. There are two ways to participate. The first option, Feed the Masses, involves bringing your ingredients to the TransCanada Centre the night before the event, at 7:00 p.m. on February 2, and using the commercial kitchen to prepare your dish. Those who take advantage of this option will have their dish served at the canteen the following day. The second option, Family Bragging Rights, involves cooking at home and bringing your hot and ready dish in a crockpot for the judges to sample. Both

options require a \$20 entry fee. Judges will begin their blind taste test at 11:00 a.m.

Other activities include snowshoe racing (10:30 a.m.), a meet-and-greet with Wildlife Haven's Bird Ambassadors (noon until 2:00 p.m.), and a cribbage tournament (2:00 p.m.). Kids carnival games will be available all day, including face-painting, bouncers, a bonfire, a toboggan slide, and access to Ritchot Fire Department fire trucks.

The day will be capped off with a fireworks display at 6:30 p.m. The beer gardens will also be open throughout the day.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ Email a photo of your snowman to IDCstore@shaw.ca

Gab-Roy Sends Players to League All-Star Game

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Four players from Gabrielle-Roy's Les Cavaliers, who play in the Winnipeg High School Hockey League (WHSHL), were selected to play in the league's all-star game on Sunday, January 21 at the MTS IcePlex. The honoured players were Jayden Bérard (36 points, left wing), Jöel Delorme (23 points, defence), Derik Cook

(28 points, centre), and Tyler Pilon (22 points, right wing).

Les Cavaliers are currently ranked fourth place in the WHSHL's A Division, with 36 points in 20 games. They boast a record of 11 wins, seven losses, and one overtime win.

The coaching staff includes head coach Colin David and assistant coaches Luc David and Danick Morin. The staff were also recognized at the all-star game, having

coached Team Black at the all-star game.

Sending seven people to the all-star game—four players and three coaches—is quite an accomplishment for a smaller school like Gab-Roy, which plays in the same division as much larger schools.

Les Cavaliers have four games remaining in the regular season. The season ends February 9, with the first round of the playoffs slated to begin February 12.

Arts & Entertainment

Playing with Fire

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

An average day on the job for Pedro Balseiro includes dodging flames and remaining stoic in the face of flying blades. It's not the typical Canadian's day on the job, thank heavens, but Balseiro is anything but typical.

Balseiro is a performance artist. His specialty: juggling and fire-dancing. His props: knives, machetes, fire batons, and poi. Poi, he explains, is both the name of the art and the equipment. Performers use tethered weights which are swung in the air in rhythmic and geometric patterns. It can be choreographed to music and, when performed with precision, creates a visual effect that mesmerizes the viewer.

Fire poi was one of his first performing arts. The Kevlar weights at the end of the tether are doused with fuel and set on fire, then spun in clockwise and counter-clockwise circles for dramatic effect. In time, he began to work with glow poi, using LED lights in the weighted end and along the tether. While it's not as perilous, it's equally awe-inspiring as the movement creates astounding after-dark effects, fooling the eye into seeing holographic images in the air.

A fascination with Thailand inspired Balseiro in the art of poi, or fire-dancing. He trained himself through online tutorials and watching the many experienced Thai fire dancers in action. He admits it takes strong wrists and good coordination to become adept at it. A few unfortunate mishaps, too.

"I've burned my hands and arms a lot. I have a scar," he says, pointing just beneath his right eye, "from the fire staff."

He's also suffered a shoulder injury from the constant circular motion required by the poi.

Juggling, for Balseiro, seemed an obvious next step, as he loves to keep himself challenged. He began



Local entertainer Pedro Balseiro.

PHOTO BY PEDRO BALSEIRO

working with knives and machetes only once he'd become proficient with safer objects.

Balseiro met his business partner, Brett Hogan, at the Winnipeg Circus Club where the two had been practicing their skills along with children and young adults from around the province. Hogan was a one-man freak show, walking on glass and driving spikes into his nasal cavities. Together, the pair created a juggling act, adding props and juggling objects to increase the wow factor of their daredevil feats.

The Spark Show, as they call their gig, was busy throughout the summer of 2017, performing at festivals, in parks, and at the prestigious Thunder Bay Buskers Festival, where Balseiro says they were a hit. They were immediately invited back to entertain at the 2018 event.

They've also been invited to perform a new interactive feat of daring—knife-throwing—for corporate events.

"It's kind of a gag that we do," says Balseiro. "We usually get the CEO to stand in front of [a knife-throwing] wall. We blindfold

him and, well, you have to watch the show."

Spoiler alert: you can find them on YouTube to see how it ends.

Like many performance artists, Balseiro's artistic interests are diverse. He's long been infatuated with cinematography, a passion he's had since childhood and rediscovered while travelling.

He started small, purchasing a camera and posting his pictures and videos online. Along the way, he crossed paths with another Niverville man who has worked on film crews for local productions. This new friend hooked him up with the right workshops and soon Balseiro joined the Winnipeg chapter of IATSE, a union supporting workers in all levels of film production. Balseiro then began work on local film sets as a "grip," providing technical support to camera and lighting staff. You have to start at the bottom rung, he says, and work your way up the ladder.

"The film industry in Manitoba is really growing because of the tax credits, so a lot of the productions are coming here," Balseiro says. "Last summer was the busiest

summer in a very long time and they're predicting that this summer will be even busier. The [production companies] hire locals from Manitoba to get the tax credit."

He says filming days can be intense, working 14-hour days for weeks on end. Last year, Balseiro had 60 days on set, working in a variety of conditions and locations.

"I decided to pursue this path because, if I'm honest with myself, I want to do what I'm passionate about," Balseiro adds. "I want work to be fun and to look forward [to it]."

As a young man of only 26, he's already chased after a lot of his passions. Balseiro left his home city of Sao Paulo, Brazil when he was barely out of high school, setting off to see the world that so deeply intrigued him. His journey began in South America and soon took him overseas to New Zealand, Australia, Indonesia, and Thailand.

Extended travel visas allowed him to stay long enough in each location to learn something new. In Australia, he went to school to learn English. In New Zealand, he trained to become a scuba instructor. While his family likely expected to greet him at the airport on his expected day of return, Balseiro wasn't ready.

"Once that day came I just missed my flight because I was having so much fun there meeting new friends," he says. "When you live someplace for a while you kind of create a family there."

While in Thailand, he met the girl who would become his partner, Liz. Liz grew up in Niverville, and it was in Niverville where the two returned to make their home. Balseiro seems settled now, having just received his permanent residency in Canada. While he loves it here, his next goal is to apply for a U.S. travel visa, allowing him to cost-effectively fly back to Brazil and visit the family he left behind.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ www.thesparkshow.com

EVENT GUIDE

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Marpeck Commons, Canadian Mennonite University, Winnipeg, Free.

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Friday, February 9, 7:00–9:00 p.m.
South End of Arena, Niverville, \$36.75

German Choir of Winnipeg 60th Anniversary Gala Dinner Concert

Saturday, February 10, 4:30 p.m.
Victoria Inn and Convention Centre, Winnipeg, \$50.

Valentine's Day Party

Wednesday, February 14, 2:00 p.m.
Pat Porter Active Learning Centre, Steinbach, \$5.

Bannock-Making Workshop

Saturday, February 24, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon
Steinbach Cultural Arts Centre, Steinbach, Free.

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Manitobans Flock to the Ice Castles

By Liz Byron

A new attraction at The Forks in Winnipeg is drawing in visitors of all ages. The Ice Castles are outdoor structures created from over 22 million kilograms of ice and stand as high as 15 meters. The castles are hand-built, too. For weeks, work crews grow thousands of icicles that are hand-placed and sculpted into formation.

Visitors can walk through tunnels and under archways, view fountains and sculptures, sit on a frozen throne, and fly down ice slides. The Ice Castles are particularly spectacular after dark, as the walls are lit up with multi-coloured LED lights.

Utah-based Ice Castles, LLC has built attractions in six locations around North America. However, Winnipeg is only the second city in Canada to host the frozen palaces, after Edmonton.

"As a weather-dependent attraction, we always look for places where the winter temperatures are cold enough to sustain an attraction made entirely from ice," says CEO Ryan Davis.

The decision wasn't entirely based on Winnipeg's frosty temperatures, though.

"As a city that truly embraces winter, Winnipeg was a natural fit," Davis adds. "Winnipeg has a wide variety of family-friendly winter activities, and the atmosphere around The Forks makes it an ideal location."

The Ice Castles are otherworldly, whether by day or night, and crowds have been flocking to The Forks to experience them. It's hard to imagine, then, the humble beginnings



Manitobans walk the ethereal corridors of the Ice Castles.

by A.J. MELLOR

of the towering structures.

Brent Christensen was trying to build an ice cave for his daughter in the front yard of his Alpine, Utah home when he had the idea of spraying a wood frame with water. His daughter referred to the structure as the "Ice Castles," and the idea expanded from there.

The attraction has grown so popular that the company encourages visitors to buy tickets ahead of time online. Tickets are bought for a half-hour window on a specific day. Standby tickets are sold onsite as well, but traffic into the castles is regulated to avoid overcrowding, so if a given time slot is sold out, people who show up to buy tickets on the spot have to wait and hope for spaces to open up.

At present, tickets are on sale through February 10 for every day except Tuesdays, when the attraction is closed.

However, the season will be extended assuming the temperatures stay low enough.

"Most of our locations will remain open until early March," says CEO Davis. "But we can't predict what the weather will do a month out. As we have a clearer picture of the forecast, we can open up additional days and weeks."

Tickets range in price from \$9.95-\$15 for children four to 11 and \$12.95-\$20 for everyone aged 12 and up, depending on the time and date chosen and whether or not visitors purchase tickets in advance. The attraction is free for children under the age of four.

Extra entertainment is also available on the weekends. On Saturdays and Sundays, guests can meet and take photos with enchanted ice princesses from 1:00-4:30 p.m. Later in the day, performers impress audiences

with fire-breathing, fire-spinning, and the hula on Fridays and Saturdays from 7:00-10:00 p.m.

The Ice Castles staff strongly urge people to remember that, while the walls of the castles keep the wind away, it is still imperative to dress warmly. The walkways are made of snow and crushed ice and can be uneven and slippery. People with reduced mobility may struggle, as walking through the castles is more like walking on a sandy beach than a trail of compacted snow. Many parents choose to pull young children in sleds.

"Most people will spend approximately an hour inside Ice Castles," Davis adds. However, he also notes that there is no time limit on how long visitors can stay once they are inside.



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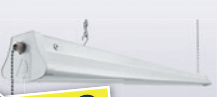
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