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LOCAL NEWS

New Doctor Office to Open in Île-des-Chênes

■ On April 1, Dr. Hughes will open the doors of his long-anticipated expanded medical practice in Île-des-Chênes.

Details on Page 5



LOCAL NEWS

Ritchot Council Ends Seniors Housing/Daycare Project

■ A long-in-the-works initiative to bring seniors housing and daycare spots to St. Adolphe has come to an end, with council citing high risk.

Details on Pages 12-13

SPORTS & RECREATION

Niverville Man Takes on Actif Epica Race

■ Runner João Luiz Holowka celebrated his birthday this year by taking on his most gruelling challenge ever.

Details on Page 20

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Bringing Back the 80s

■ Snake Oil is more than a tribute band—it's a celebration of everything the 80s had to offer, and it's caught the attention of several rock 'n' roll greats.

Details on Page 28

Parents Reassured of Student Safety After Threat

» DETAILS ON PAGES 8-9

EVAN BRAUN

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February 6
**BEYOND THE "PRO-LIFE"
VERSUS "PRO-CHOICE"
DEBATE**
Randall Holm, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Spiritual Formation



February 13
**THE RELIGIOUS IMPULSE
IN U2'S MEDIATED BRAND**
Nicholas Greco, Ph.D., Associate Professor
of Communications and Media



February 20
**PANDORA'S GIFTS:
LANGUAGE LEARNING
THROUGH EXPRESSIVE ARTS**
Elfrieda Lepp-Kaethler, Ph.D., Assistant Professor of TESOL



February 27
**THE BEGINNING IN LIGHT
OF THE END: RE-THINKING
EVOLUTION THEOLOGICALLY**
Patrick Franklin, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Theology and Ethics



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Open House and Public Hearing 2018 Financial Plan

On **March 20, 2018, 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**, west ballroom, Niverville Heritage Centre, 100B Heritage Trail, residents are invited to join Council for their opportunity to review Niverville's 2018 Financial Plan.

Immediately following the Open House, there will be a **Public Hearing at 7:05 p.m. during the Council meeting**, where Council will hear any person who would like to make a presentation, ask questions or register an objection to the 2018 Financial Plan as presented.

A copy of the 2018 Financial Plan is available for review and may be examined by any person during regular office hours at the Town Office, 86 Main Street.

Questions? Contact feedback@whereyoubelong.ca

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The Citizen

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Council Takes Critical Look at Niverville's Main Street



bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

On February 8, Niverville's town council held a public open house at the south end of the arena to introduce aspects of a functional design study proposed for Niverville's Main Street. The study encompasses the section of Provincial Highway 311 stretching from Krahn Road to Sixth Avenue.

Residents who attended the open house were welcomed with a variety of concept plans providing different options for improving traffic management along the busy corridor. The study was performed by CH2M, traffic engineering consultants hired by the town. Engineer Glenn Churchill was on site to answer questions and collect feedback from residents which will be compiled for council's review.

With the strong population growth over the past ten years, traffic has likewise increased. The community has virtually doubled in size since 2006 and is expected to come close to doubling again by 2027. By 2042, studies suggest that Niverville could reach upwards of 10,000 residents. For this reason, council feels it's imperative to take a strategic look at areas of high traffic volume now with careful consideration for the future.

"The purpose of this project is to develop a proactive transportation plan for access management and roadway improvements," says Churchill. "The plan will be developed based on a detailed inventory of existing conditions, a review of current and future land uses, a future travel demand forecast, and an associated operational review of key intersections in the corridor. The functional design and cost estimate will allow the Town of Niverville to identify and implement priority upgrades to the transportation network as development occurs over a 25-year horizon."

While CH2M's plans include a broad scope of strategies to improve Main Street, council and the community at large can view these merely as blueprints for now, some to be earmarked for future construction and others to be ruled out altogether, depending on cost and overall feasibility.

Based on CH2M's designs, a number of potential problem areas were identified, including the Krahn Road intersection to the west of town, as well as the busy intersections of Third, Fifth, and Sixth Avenues.

The engineering team recommended a one-lane roundabout with right lane cut-offs at the intersection



Niverville Mayor Myron Dyck speaks with residents at open house.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

of 311 and Krahn Road, where traffic volumes will only increase as the retail sector expands along the service road east of Tim Hortons and as The Highlands development fills up. The land on the northeast side of this intersection has also been designated residential and a new development will expand into this area shortly, likely increasing traffic on Krahn Road.

A two-lane roundabout is recommended for Sixth Avenue and Main, where traffic flow is expected to increase as the construction of Sixth Avenue is completed. Traffic lights were proposed for the intersections of both Third and Fifth Avenues.

Much consideration was also given to the prolific number of driveways and street accesses onto Main, slowing traffic as vehicles regularly pull on and off. To remedy this, a number of accesses are recommended for closure and rerouting. These include closing off the Fourth Avenue South access and relocating the crosswalk slightly east of its current location.

"This will help with traffic congestion near the elementary school and make the pedestrian crossing safer," Churchill says. "Any traffic that would normally use Fourth Avenue can use Third or Fifth Avenues. Based on the traffic projections, within 25 years the

volume of traffic that will be realized at Third Avenue will require a traffic light. Without the traffic light at this location, vehicles waiting to either cross Main Street or make left-hand turns will be waiting an unreasonable amount of time. Having traffic lights at Third Avenue will also give children another safe crossing location when accessing the elementary school on the north side of Main Street."

Churchill adds that, on its own, the corner of Second Avenue and Main would also be a valuable location for a traffic light due to the hub that has developed here between the credit union, pharmacy, and post office. However, when the study of Main Street as a whole was completed, they felt that adding a third traffic light would be detrimental to overall traffic flow.

On the east end of town, to further improve traffic flow, CH2M recommend extending Bronstone Drive all the way to the Manitoba Hydro building, which would allow for the closure of four more driveways that currently turn off to Maple Leaf Foods and Niverville Concrete.

Main Street, between Fifth Avenue and the railway tracks, also has great potential for improvement. A complete redesign of this stretch could include bike lanes on the north side of Main and

a centre median.

To the west, and in the area set aside for the new high school and Community Resource Centre, access and egress routes are being extensively reconsidered. CH2M recommends closing off the east Main Street access to Church Street and Ritchot Drive and connecting the two streets to create a circle, accessible only from Mulberry Avenue on the west. Mulberry Avenue would also become a one-way access to the school and CRC, exiting at the existing Arena Road. Creating this one-way traffic zone would provide additional safety for students, pedestrians, and busses.

The section between Arena Road and Prairie Trail, Churchill admits, has proven to be a troublesome area due to the railway tracks running through it.

"[This] section is a challenge," he says. "There is a proposed realignment of the intersection of Prairie Trail to match up with Heritage Trail. Mixed into that realignment are the CP Rail tracks, which will likely require gates at the crossing as traffic increases within the town. There is also a need for a proper pedestrian and cyclist crossing at the CP Rail tracks. Compounding the difficulty in that area is the transition from ditches near Arena Road to the curbing and land drainage system which begins at Prairie Trail."

Because the tracks, and a portion of the land on either side of them, belong to CP Rail, council has been actively reaching out to negotiate with the rail company for needed changes—changes that include improving drainage flowing out of town as well as pedestrian access with the new facilities soon to be introduced on their boundary.

"The rail line is a major barricade for water drainage within town, and as such we successfully met with a manager from CP [Rail] and expect to have a culvert go under the tracks this year," says Niverville's economic development officer, Eric King. "The second item we are working with [them] on is what the railroad crossing needs to look like and how it should be improved going forward. The town is hoping to have CP cover all the costs with this upgrade. If not, there are grants available through Transport Canada that we will apply for. [It will] probably be a 2019 or 2020 upgrade, depending on funding and how it progresses through CP's structure."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

You can find the functional design PowerPoint presentation on the town's website: www.wheretheyoubelong.ca.



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Family-Run Pietro's Pizza Opens in IDC

By Sherry Peters

The start of a new year is often seen as an opportunity for change and new beginnings. One of those new beginnings recently came to Île-des-Chênes in a tasty way. In January, Pete and Faye Klippenstein opened Pietro's Pizza at 597 Meadowlark Boulevard, Unit 8.

You may have heard of Pietro's before. The Klippensteins originally opened the pizzeria in Landmark, later moving it to St. Anne's before bringing it to Île-des-Chênes. This family business, run by Pete and Faye alongside their son and daughter-in-law, Ian and Julie, specializes in thin-crust pizza.

Pietro's offers 12 specialty pizzas ranging from pepperoni and mushroom (Pietro's Classic) and ham and pineapple (Pietro's Paradise) to the fully loaded Pietro's Ultimate Plus (pepperoni, ham, beef, Italian sausage, bacon, onion, mushroom, and green pepper) and the more exotic Pietro's Pollo Loco (chicken, BBQ sauce, pineapple, and red peppers).

And what would a pizza menu be if you couldn't have the option of making your own? Pietro's has that, too.

Friday nights have been pizza night at my place for years. Homemade pizzas are great, but they aren't always convenient because there often isn't time to make the crust, or I'm out of toppings.



Julie and Ian Klippenstein with their daughter Ava.

SHERRY PETERS

Frozen pizzas are more convenient, but they're inevitably unsatisfying. The crust leaves a lot to be desired, and the toppings usually aren't the greatest.

Enter Pietro's.

I had the Pietro's Paradise with added mushrooms, and my friends had the Pietro's Pollo Party (chicken, bacon, and ranch sauce). The crust is thin and crispy, but not so thin that it doesn't have substance. It strikes a balance between crispy and chewy. And it most definitely is not greasy. The bottom of the box was still dry after the next day's leftovers

were finished.

There are plenty of fresh toppings, covering the pizza edge to edge. Every bite was filled with meat, pineapple, and cheese, with just the right amount of sauce. I hadn't eaten much all day in anticipation of trying a new pizza. It didn't take long before I was full, leaving plenty of leftovers for the next couple of days.

Pizza is easy to come by. Great pizza, and the friendly local staff you find at Pietro's, is not.

Their pizzas come in three sizes: small, medium, and large. They're open Saturday

and Monday 3:00–9:00 p.m., and Tuesday through Friday from 11:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. We ordered our pizza on a Saturday at 6:00 and our wait time was 25 minutes. If you have to wait a few extra minutes while you're there, they have a few chairs and counter stools for their patrons.

Pietro's is convenient for a quick pick-up dinner on a weekend, or on your way home from work.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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IDC Professional Centre Set to Open Doors

By Brenda Sawatzky

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The Île-des-Chênes Professional Centre, at 430 Main Street, is set to open on April 1 and will serve as the community's newest commercial and residential complex. The two-storey building will provide 4,500 square feet of space both above and below. The top storey will feature four residential rental units, each suite containing an ample 1,100 to 1,200 square feet of living space along with balconies to the back of the building. The main floor will include similarly sized units, each with its own front door access, and will be the new home of a medical clinic, pharmacy, physiotherapy clinic, and lawyer's office.

Dr. Phillip Hughes and his project manager, Arthur Adam, couldn't be more thrilled with the project's progress and its location at the heart of the community. The layout, with the building at the rear of the property, means plenty of parking space out front. Hughes has financed the entire \$1 million estimated for the project.

Hughes' medical practice will move here, along with the Île-des-Chênes Pharmacy, from its current location as soon as the new space is ready.

"The new clinic will be about 1,200 square feet," says Hughes. "There's room for a lab, but unfortunately the lab situation in Manitoba has changed. That's thrown us back, [but] we're hopeful for a lab eventually."

He adds that the clinic will feature three large consultation rooms, more than enough space should the practice expand to another doctor. The reception area will connect directly to the pharmacy, meaning clients won't



Dr. Phillip Hughes and Arthur Adam outside the new IDC Professional Centre. © BRENDA SAWATZKY

have to go outside to pick up prescriptions.

According to Hughes, the remaining two commercial units have already been spoken for. With the addition of a physiotherapist and lawyer, the centre will provide a good balance of professional services. Renters have already been secured for all of the upper suites.

The project has seen a number of bumps along the way, none more discouraging than the numerous rejections by members of Ritchot's previous council. Originally, Hughes hoped for a three-storey building, providing even more rental options for the community and a greater income stream for the centre. Those plans had to be scaled back to accommodate concerns and be approved by council.

Hughes, a 30-year general practitioner of medicine, works part-time from his Winnipeg location at Southdale Medical Clinic and, for the past two years, part-time in Île-des-Chênes. Île-des-Chênes, he says, is where his heart is, having moved there nine years earlier to raise his family in a rural community.

"It's a very nice little town," Hughes says. "I like it because it's close to Winnipeg. My kids all went

to school here. It's a very nice place to bring up children. I like the town I live in and I like to give back, and this is helping the town."

While Hughes loves his practice and has built a solid reputation in the area as the community doctor, he's the first to admit that business is not his strong suit. Adam, his long-time friend, has a keen eye for promising business opportunities and a history of building them up to become profitable and successful ventures. Together, the two form a formidable team.

Adam, the CEO of Plexad Holdings and a self-professed millionaire, made his fortune in business undertakings of his own. Now retired, he works alongside struggling entrepreneurs to provide the support they need to become successful in their own businesses.

"That's who I am and that's what I do," says Adam. "[I] help people to get going in their life and I don't want [anything] in return. I'm not getting paid, because I feel good about what I do. That's my payday."

Adam initially encouraged Hughes to move from his original location in Lorette to Île-des-Chênes, a growing town ripe with opportunity—a town that had no doctor. With Hughes' permission,

Adam began looking for a temporary location for Hughes and found one in the Île-des-Chênes Pharmacy.

"Once I was working in the IDC Pharmacy, Adam [started] going around town looking for land to buy around here," Hughes says. Although there were options, it wasn't the right time—or the right price. "When it was right, he told me and we moved on it."

Adam has long had his eye on the property the new professional centre now sits on. The derelict building there needed to be bulldozed, but the location was ideal. After buying the property, planning the centre, making appeals to council, and finally reworking those plans, the pair can hardly believe their dream will soon be a reality.

Once open, Hughes says he will continue to provide medical service to Île-des-Chênes and the area for four half days per week. Appointments will continue to be made through the Southdale Medical Clinic until reception staff is hired in Île-des-Chênes. He anticipates that his hours and staff will grow to meet local demand.

"First things first," Hughes says. "You develop the business first and then you decide who to hire."

As for his clientele, Hughes adds, "I take people from birth all the way up to old age. I am taking on [new] patients out of this location and I will see booked appointments and walk-ins, but booked appointments will be given priority."

"Look forward to the opening of the new professional centre," says Ritchot councillor and Île-des-Chênes resident Shane Pelletier. "I think it's a great fit for the location. A centre like this will only add to the quality of life in our community."

IN BRIEF



The Citizen Introduces the Property Pages

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Starting this month, *The Citizen* is introducing a new regular feature to our monthly print edition: the Property Pages. As you can see in the March edition, the Property Pages offer a handy full-colour guide to local property listings in the Ritchot, Niverville, New Bothwell, and Otterburne areas. Like all other content in the paper, the listings will also be available to browse online.

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■ If you have a listing you would like to advertise in the Property Pages, contact info@nivervillecitizen.com.

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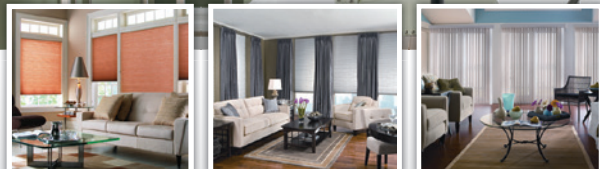
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Ste. Agathe Flying J to Open in Early March

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Construction is nearing completion on the new Pilot Flying J Travel Center along Highway 75 in Ste. Agathe. Although the location was initially expected to open in late January, delays resulted in pushing back the date by a few weeks.

"The Flying J Travel Center in Ste. Agathe is scheduled to open early March of 2018," says Stephanie Myers, spokeswoman for Pilot Flying J. "It will feature full amenities for area residents and the traveling public."

In addition to the full range of services offered at other Pilot Flying J locations, the Ste. Agathe outlet will also include a Subway restaurant.

"Pilot Flying J's continued commitment to connect people and places with comfort, care, and a smile drives our expanding network of stores," says Myers. "[We] take into consideration customer feedback, convenience, and location when planning our network of stores to better serve our customers and guests."



Construction underway on Ste. Agathe's Flying J.

RAY DOWSE

The business, located along the highway in the Riel Industrial Park, has been highly anticipated both by area residents and the trucking community.

"Ste. Agathe is perfectly

located along Highway 75," points out Shaun Crew, Chairman of the Riel Industrial Park. "[It's] the mid-continental trade corridor between Canada and the U.S.A. and is a major trucking route for

trans-border trade. Our proximity to Winnipeg makes it ideal to avoid the higher taxes and traffic congestion found in the city."

Bothwell Cheese Expands to St. Boniface

By Liz Byron

Bothwell Cheese is expanding its operations. The company recently announced plans to open its first standalone retail location in St. Boniface under the name Fromagerie Bothwell. The store, which will be located at 136 Provencher Boulevard,

at the foot of the Provencher Bridge, will feature cheese, of course—blocks, slices, shredded cheese, fresh cheddar, and curds—but also other food items and locally made products.

The company anticipates a spring 2018 opening of the store, once interior and exterior renovations are complete.

To coincide with the announcement, Bothwell Cheese was out in St. Boniface over the February long weekend. The company's cheese was featured in the first-ever cheese-carving competition at the Festival du Voyageur on Sunday, February 18. Six artists each carved 40-pound blocks of aged white cheddar.

The New Bothwell company, which began in 1936 as a co-op of dairy farmers looking for a use for their extra milk, now produces more than 15,000 kilograms of cheese daily and has won countless international awards.

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Medical Researcher Honoured for Contributions to Science

A scientific researcher, born and raised in Ste. Agathe, is leading the fight against antibiotic-resistant infections at one of the world's most prominent medical laboratories.

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

When Dr. Trish Simner was a young woman growing up in Ste. Agathe, she didn't think much about leaving her hometown one day, let alone her province. Yet all these years later, she's more than left Manitoba; she's moved with her family across the continent, where she's achieving big things as the Director of Medical Bacteriology and Parasitology Laboratories at John Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland.

If the name "John Hopkins" sounds familiar, that's because it's frequently name-checked in movies and in television. The world-renowned centre of medicine and scientific research has been the birthplace of many medical specialties. Not only was it the first major medical school in the United States to admit women, but it was the first facility to develop renal dialysis, CPR, and the use of rubber gloves for surgical procedures.

It's the perfect venue for a career in groundbreaking research, and Simner feels right at home. As a clinical microbiologist, she's a specialist in antibiotic-resistant bacteria, a recent phenomenon that's making life difficult for both doctors and patients around the world.

"Currently, we encounter the rare patient that has an infection caused by a difficult to treat organism where there are few treatment options," says Simner. "Luckily this is still a rare event in the U.S. and Canada. The best-case scenario is that we find solutions to prevent the spread of these multidrug-resistant organisms before they become a bigger problem."

Simner says that ideally we need to see a global initiative to restrict the use of antibiotics and employ them more judiciously.

"Inappropriate antibiotic use is the driver of resistance in these organisms," she says. "The organisms are smart and always find ways to evolve to evade even the most potent antibiotics. Thus, we need to restrict the use of antibiotics for when they are really needed. The worst-case scenario would be that we continue to use antibiotics inappropriately... Ultimately, these organisms could spread and become a larger problem."



Dr. Trish Simner, Director of Medical Bacteriology and Parasitology Laboratories at John Hopkins.

TRISH SIMNER

This should be a concern for everyone, as we are all dependent on the use of antibiotics at key points in our lives. In the modern world, we've grown accustomed to being able to easily treat everything from strep throat to pneumonia, urinary tract infections to a host of sexually transmitted infections. Without antibiotics, these conditions would be much more fatal. It was only the invention of penicillin in 1928, and the beginning of its use to fight infections in 1942, that these conditions could be reliably treated. Many forms of surgery, from life-saving organ transplants to more common appendectomies, are only possible because of effective antibiotics.

"It is becoming more and more difficult," Simner says. "When we encounter patients with multidrug-resistant infections, we try our best to find an antibiotic, or a combination of antibiotics, that will help the patient overcome the infection. Furthermore, there are very few new antibiotics being developed, so we need to use the ones we have available appropriately or we might find ourselves in a place where there will be no options for treatment."

According to Simner, it's critically important to use antibiotics sparingly and only in appropriate ways. A good example of this is the common misperception among the public that it's helpful to treat viruses with

antibiotics. Viruses, such as the strain of flu which has been so rampant this winter, do not respond to antibiotics.

"This is a prime example of the inappropriate use of antibiotics," Simner says. "Antibiotics do not treat viruses. Oftentimes people get a viral infection, such as influenza, and they feel horrible and think that antibiotics are the answer. They will go to their physician and demand antibiotics. But the antibiotic is not helpful."

COLISTIN RESEARCH

Simner is at the forefront of research to develop a method of testing the antimicrobial susceptibility of an antibiotic known as colistin against Gram-negative bacteria.

If you have a hard time unpacking this, you're not alone.

"In the Clinical Microbiology Laboratory, we grow and identify the organisms that cause infections," she begins, breaking down the purpose of the laboratory where she works. "For example, if you have a urinary tract infection, we will take a sample of the urine and grow the organism causing the infection. We will also perform antibiotic susceptibility testing, which is a method where we determine what antibiotics the organism will respond to for treatment."

Her research focuses on colistin, an antibiotic of last resort, meaning that physicians will only use this drug if there are no other options available

to them. But they don't want to rely on colistin unless they're quite certain it will work. That's what susceptibility testing is all about: figuring out if a treatment will be effective against a particular infection.

The research focuses on reviving an old method that first emerged in the 1970s: the colistin broth disk elution test. Antibiotic disks—disks impregnated with colistin at set concentrations—are placed in broth to achieve different concentrations of the antibiotic to determine whether the organism is susceptible or resistant to colistin.

"We hope that this method will provide an easy method for clinical labs to be able to test colistin susceptibilities when needed rather than having to send testing out to reference laboratories, which can delay results," Simner explains. "This technique will help fight antibiotic-resistant infections by providing the physicians with an answer on whether they can treat the organism with this antibiotic or not."

Most importantly, this kind of research has the potential to save thousands of lives. And that's something Simner never forgets.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Simner was recently honoured by the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Science, her alma mater, for her contributions to science. She was one of

seven outstanding alumni to be recognized at the February 1 event.

After graduating with a Ph.D. from the University of Manitoba in 2011, Simner spent two years of post-doctorate study at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Afterward she briefly worked as a clinical microbiologist in Winnipeg, at St. Boniface Hospital, and taught in the University of Manitoba's Department of Medical Microbiology as an assistant professor. Her stint at John Hopkins began in 2015.

"I enjoy many aspects of my job," she says of her time at John Hopkins. "I love the fact that I have the ability to work in the clinical lab, perform research, and teach the next generation of medical professionals. The most rewarding part is knowing that my work has the ability to positively impact patient care."

Simner wants young people to know that it's possible to use their passion and interests to achieve ambitious and meaningful things in life.

"Once you've found your passion, set big goals for yourself," she advises. "Surround yourself with a good support system. Apply for the opportunities—summer research awards, getting work experience in your field. And volunteer, get to know your peers and your community. Find yourself a good mentor. This will all be lots of hard work, but it's worth it!"

Perhaps most importantly, she says her career wouldn't have been possible without the support system she had in place throughout her education and early career.

"I want to thank my parents, Richard and Gloria Baudry, for always being there and supporting me. I'm also very appreciative and grateful for my husband, Matt Simner, who has made a lot of sacrifices for my career. Lastly, I want to thank my friends, family, and the community of Ste. Agathe for their encouragement. Being from a small town in 'friendly Manitoba' has taught me to always be nice, approachable, and accepting. I think these attributes have benefitted me throughout my career. I'm a proud Ste. Agathan and have always felt so fortunate to have such a wonderful community that supports me."

Niverville High School Deals with Aftermath of Gun Threat

School division reassures parents of student safety following threat of violence. Police explain that the student didn't have access to any firearm.



On the evening of Tuesday, February 20, a student from Niverville Collegiate Institute (NCI) issued a threat against the school on social media. The Instagram post included an image of a gun alongside the caption "Schools gonna be fun tomorrow."

Shortly after, around 10:30 p.m., the RCMP were notified about the post by multiple members of the public. One person who saw the post was an educational assistant at NCI, who subsequently notified Judith Hinton, the school's guidance counsellor.

Within the hour, four police officers attended the student's home as part of their rapid response. Officers spoke with the student and quickly determined two things. Number one, the gun in the photo was a BB gun as opposed to a real firearm. Number two, that photo had been taken several months earlier and the student didn't presently have the BB gun in their possession.

As part of their investigation, the RCMP also contacted a second person of interest who didn't have a direct connection to the case.

By 11:30 p.m., the RCMP contacted Hinton to confirm that the threat had been neutralized. Hinton then attempted to contact NCI Principal Michael Koester, but she couldn't get in touch with him at such a late hour. She sent text messages and left a voice-mail on his cell phone. Koester, sound asleep, first received the news upon waking early Wednesday morning.

Alarmed, Koester immediately contacted 911 to verify the situation. Because the RCMP had deemed the situation non-urgent, the 911 operator couldn't provide any further details and encouraged him to contact the



Parents gather to hear Principal Michael Koester and Superintendent Randy Dueck address their concerns.

EVAN BRAUN

local RCMP detachment.

Koester then called Hanover School Division (HSD) Superintendent Randy Dueck around 7:15 a.m., bringing him into the loop.

To both Koester's and Dueck's frustration, however, the RCMP detachment could not be reached until the office opened at 8:00 a.m.

"[Koester] was already aware that the RCMP had addressed the situation," Dueck says. "So we knew that the RCMP were on it and were dealing with it. Had this been something really urgent, they would have made more attempts to contact us. That's a little bit of an assumption we were making, but I think it was a fair assumption."

"It is a correct assumption," says Constable Kevin Theriault of the St. Pierre detachment. "If we believed that there was any kind of danger or harm to not just the children, but also the parents, the teachers, everyone—our job is to protect everyone—then yes,

we would have taken further steps at that point in time. We would take extra steps if we believed somebody was not safe. That's what we do on a daily basis."

Nonetheless, Dueck recalls feeling very uncomfortable and nervous as he waited for the detachment to answer their phones in the morning.

"We knew that the RCMP were on it and were dealing with it. Had this been something really urgent, they would have made more attempts to contact us."

Randy Dueck | HSD Superintendent

"I'm pretty certain this isn't actually a life-or-death situation right now," he remembers thinking. "Pretty certain. But I really need to talk to someone at the RCMP to be sure. So I keep on trying."

By 8:10, Dueck was able to confirm that although the investigation was

ongoing, there was no active threat against the school. No one was in imminent danger—but that was about the extent of what Dueck or anyone else at the division knew.

The decision was thus made not to cancel school and to proceed with the day as scheduled while they continued to gather details.

At no point was NCI under a lockdown protocol, although a search was conducted on the student's locker by Koester. A spokesperson from the RCMP has noted that a lockdown wouldn't have been necessary due to the results of their investigation Tuesday evening. In addition, officers were on hand at the school.

Once the details of the incident were confirmed, the school division sent out an email to all parents and guardians of both NCI (at 10:30 a.m.) and the Niverville Elementary School (at 11:15 a.m.). That email provided few concrete details but sought to assure parents and guardians that the



Instagram post containing threat.

RCMP

situation was under control and that the threat had been neutralized.

"In hindsight, there were some preventable communication gaps that resulted in a delay of communication between the school and division, and a preliminary email should have been sent out at 8:10 a.m. (upon official verification from RCMP), with a more detailed explanation to follow," Dueck wrote in a follow-up letter to parents on Thursday afternoon. In this letter, he also detailed the precise timeline of events. "We take the safety and security of students/staff very seriously, but this incident also affirms to us that we can learn from each new experience."

The student, who is a minor, cannot be named. It can be confirmed that no arrest has been made at the time of this writing, although the investigation is ongoing as to any potential criminality behind the events.

MEETING WITH PARENTS

Parents and guardians were invited to attend an impromptu meeting Thursday evening at NCI. At 7:00 p.m.,



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about a hundred parents crowded into the band room as Dueck, joined by five HSD trustees and two members of the St. Pierre-Jolys RCMP detachment, spoke further about the incident and addressed the parents' concerns.

Dueck took a conciliatory tone, admitting that the way the school division communicated with parents could be improved.

"In hindsight, that was a mistake on my part," Dueck said to parents. "We've taken a look and decided that in the future, if there's another such situation, the first thing we will do is get notification out to you [parents] as soon as we are able and to let you know that this is what's happened. I was trying to get more details before speaking with you, but I should have given you the information right at the outset and let you know."

He acknowledged that throughout Wednesday morning, there was a lot of confusion among parents who were receiving conflicting information from phone calls, texts, and social media, much of it inaccurate. For example, some parents heard or read reports that the student had brought a gun to school—something which never happened.

"There was a great deal of alarm," Dueck added. "Hopefully the next time never happens, but we think we can do better at it next time by getting something out to you as soon as we know it's okay. We didn't do that. I apologize for that."

Those in attendance expressed a wide range of concerns and anxieties about the incident.

One parent described a hysterical situation where kids were dragged away from a bus stop and told, "Go home! Go home! There's a gun at school! Go home!"

"The [initial] letter that came out just said that everything was under control," another parent said. "It was very vague and misleading because we didn't know what that meant. It said the threat

was neutralized, and I think it caused panic for us."

"My daughter said that she didn't know if there was someone else involved," said a third parent. "They see all this stuff on the news. Just because one kid was taken care, how did they know that [they] didn't have a partner?"

Others took the opportunity to thank the school division for their transparency in admitting fault, and for some of the positive actions that were taken.

"I, for my part, have been very appreciative of our school," a parent chimed in. "None of my kids called me, and when they came home, they came home very normal. I said, 'So how was school today? I hear stuff went on.' They said, 'Oh, it felt very normal. Teachers talked to us first thing in the morning.' I'm very appreciative that kids were not in school all day not knowing, that [the teachers] took the time in each class to talk to the students."

Yet another parent praised the RCMP for their rapid response. "My main concern is not so much that I'm aware right off the bat, but I want to know that my kid's safe," said one mother. "So for me, I appreciate that the RCMP got involved very quick. Lucky for us in a small town, there were people who could notify them because they saw the post. I believe that the connections we have, we should be grateful for."

PROPOSED CHANGES

Several potential improvements were suggested throughout the meeting for how to deal with the fallout of a similar situation in the future, should one occur.

Dueck pointed out that the division could have used the same telephone alert system that's currently used to inform parents of school cancellations during snowstorms. He acknowledged that the only reason this wasn't done is that no one thought of it in time. Along these lines, several updates are

being made to the division's crisis management protocols.

One parent suggested an increase in the number of lockdown drills conducted at the school. Koester replied that the school currently conducts two lockdown drills per year, and ten fire drills, which is a provincial requirement. The next lockdown drill is scheduled for March 7, and had been scheduled long before the current incident.

While some parents were pleased with the measures taken by teachers to inform kids of the situation first thing in the morning, other parents pointed out that their own kids didn't receive the same assurances. One proposed solution was to either have a set script, per se, so that all teachers convey the same information. Other options include PA announcements or schoolwide assemblies.

One of the proposals which received the most vocal support from parents was for the school to strongly consider cancelling school out of an abundance of caution, even in a situation where the RCMP had determined the school to be safe.

Finally, Koester noted that a psychologist and a social worker were on active duty at NCI on the day of the incident, as well as the following day. The protocol was for a teacher to contact the guidance counsellor or a resource staff member if a student was struggling. It was suggested that it might be beneficial to let the student body at large know that these resources are available to them, so that they don't have to rely on a teacher noticing that they're having trouble coping.

CONSEQUENCES

Other parents urged the school to consider the fate of the student very carefully.

"It just seems like common sense that there would be a zero tolerance policy," a mother pointed out. "Especially in this day and age, especially with something like

what just happened in Florida. To say that the board has to decide, it seems like a pretty easy decision, especially if you have children to think about. I don't know where to go from here. It's ridiculous that it's even a thought that we could bring this kid back into the school."

Dueck acknowledged that it's too early to say what the school division will decide about the fate of the student who posted the threat.

"We're going to be doing a thorough investigation of this before we make a decision as to what is going to happen with this particular student," Dueck said. "The thorough investigation includes a professional safety and risk analysis. We have psychologists in Hanover School Division who have had to do a number of safety and risk analyses, so we've done that a number of times over the last number of years. It's a very high-end, professional document that's done after interviews with the student, interviews with the parents, and interviews with anyone else deemed important to the case. Then the psychologists will make some recommendations to us about how to move forward. I have to bring those recommendations to the board and the board decides... That's the process that will take place. And it's going to take a while."

Although Dueck notes that he's restricted by confidentiality laws at this point and can't offer any specifics, he wants people to be reassured that this will not merely be a matter of slapping a five-day suspension on the student and then letting them back into the school.

"That's not how it will work," Dueck says, adding that until the school board makes a final determination the student in question will not be allowed to return. "I know this is a concern, and I know it's been an expressed concern for a lot of people in the community as well."

IN BRIEF



RM OF RITCHOT

Southeast Home Reno Show Heads to IDC

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The Southeast Home Reno Show is coming to the TransCanada Centre in Île-des-Chênes on the weekend of March 23–25.

"The purpose is to promote local companies in the home and renovation businesses, and promote our region to those within and south of Winnipeg," says organizer John Falk.

The event will feature a home décor boutique and stage presentations from a host of local experts. Women and children under 18 will enter free all weekend. General admission is otherwise \$5. There will also be a romance-themed Grand Prize giveaway.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Some space is still available. If you're interested in exhibiting your business, contact John Falk at 204-898-1343.



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CAO Jim Buys, Mayor Myron Dyck, and CAO-in-training Eric King.

■ BRENDA SAWATZKY

Long-Serving Niverville CAO Plans for Retirement

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Few people have participated first-hand in all of Niverville's incredible change and growth over the past 33 years as Jim Buys. Buys was hired on as Niverville's first chief administrative officer (CAO) over three decades ago, and in 2018 he's decided to complete his leg of the race and pass the baton.

"It's been just a privilege for me for 33 years now to serve the citizens of Niverville," Buys says. "When I think back over all the opportunities I've had to assist council in the realization of their dreams and goals, to work with citizens to make things happen for them so that their quality of life and their ownership of this community becomes a reality, it's been great."

On June 1, Eric King will pick up where Buys leaves off. King currently holds the town positions of finance and economic development. While

this new position will add a whole new dynamic to his already busy workload, King is confident that roles will shift and evolve within the town office to allow him to focus his attention where it's most needed.

"It'll be a learning curve," says King. "From my point of view, you don't replace who Jim is. I don't expect to fill Jim's shoes on day one, but I expect to grow into Jim's shoes [with time]. It's all a balancing act. I have great people around me."

Mayor Myron Dyck has been aware for some time that the town would need an exit plan for Buys. He admits that Buys will be sorely missed.

"I don't know how you can, in a few sentences, describe an individual who has given over 30 years of their life to a community," says Dyck. "He's invested himself, given of his spirit and time, efforts and emotions. Thank you sounds very hollow. I have a great deal of respect for someone who comes with the

passion and dedication that Jim does. It's been thoroughly an honour to have known him for the time that I have."

Dyck says that council began planning for this moment during Buys' lengthy illness in 2015. During this time, council was forced to look closely at the town's administrative functioning, since a bulk of the workload fell on one man's shoulders, leaving the town office somewhat incapacitated during his absence. King was hired during this time to take on the financial aspects of Buys' portfolio, as well as to slowly train in the entirety of the position.

Executive assistant Audrey Neufeld has since become the human resources officer, having learned the ropes after 15 years of working alongside Buys. After Buys returned, town staff were in a position to offer him reduced hours while he made the slow journey to recovery.

Upon retirement, Buys will

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continue to offer counsel to King where needed for another 18 months.

To fully appreciate the scope of a CAO's job description, one has to be aware of the diversity that's required for the position. The CAO serves both council and the community. They are financial administrator, overseer of all staff departments, operations coordinator for all local infrastructure, economic consultant, purveyor of municipal law, researcher, and effective communicator.

According to Buys, his was not an eight-to-five job. Because timing on many opportunities is imperative, a CAO needs to be available to research, consult, and move on an opportunity on a moment's notice, even if it's after everyone else has gone home. The CAO doesn't have the power to make many decisions, but he is required to communicate and enforce the decisions of council whether he agrees with them or not.

"Jim has taken a lot of bullets for decisions council has made and yet he still comes back and wants to be here," says Dyck. "Quality CAOs are hard to come by. When you have [one], you are capable of having a quality community."

When Buys took the job in 1985, the Niverville town office only had

one other half-time employee, and Gil Wiebe was mayor of the day.

"I remember the first day that I walked in here and opened the vault and there were stacks of problems that had to be worked through," Buys says. "I came here for the first three or four months and I would just work through [the stacks of paperwork]."

He remembers putting in long hours, billeting to a house in town so that he could be near the office. Niverville was a smaller commun-

the business park and land west of the railway tracks; the transition in healthcare, going from one doctor running a practice out of an office in the municipal building to the Open Health clinic serving the entire region; the steady growth of the Heritage Centre and working alongside the people who had the vision for it; and the environmental impact of a decommissioned lagoon-turned-wetlands project, one of the first of its kind in the world.

just by thinking of it. This event, Buys says, he is saving to share at his upcoming farewell dinner, planned for June 3.

"That event did something for Niverville that just changed the community," says Buys. "The very essence of who Niverville is. It was an incredible experience."

Buys expects his retirement will include a lot more time with his wife, who's been a patient partner over his years of dedication to the town. Also, his kids and grandkids will be seeing a lot more of him. But he's not a man who's likely to slow down much. His bucket list includes things like furthering his education, volunteering, and doing whatever he can to continue to improve the lives of others.

"Niverville is so blessed," says Buys. "You guys have [councillors and town staff] who are experienced, committed, intelligent, articulate, and visionary. There are communities right across Canada that would give their eye teeth for the council that we have. And I'm looking at this and thinking, 'What a privilege for Eric to have that type of council to work with moving forward.' What a privilege for me to be able to close the door having worked with this type of council."

"I don't know how you can, in a few sentences, describe an individual who has given over 30 years of their life to a community."

Myron Dyck | Mayor of Niverville

ity then, and Buys recalls soon knowing everyone by name. He even had most of their four-digit phone numbers memorized.

Over the course of five mayors and three decades, the community grew beyond anyone's expectations. In reality, the entire fabric of the community morphed and Buys was there to witness it all.

Some of the integral moments, in his mind, have been: the development of Fifth Avenue Estates, leading the way in residential growth; the annexations of

More recently, Buys has been glad to be part of the entire town's transition to a community water system, and to assist in the early stages of a new school and community resource centre.

With the good times also came heartbreak. Buys will never forget his good friend and colleague Jim (JR) Schapansky, and the many years he dedicated to town service before his untimely death to cancer.

But Buys' ultimate highlight is one that moves him to emotion

IN BRIEF

HSD Assistant Superintendents to Retire

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Two assistant superintendents of the Hanover School Division announced on Wednesday, February 7, that they intend to retire. Rick Ardies will step down at the end of the current school year, and Chris Gudziunas will remain on until the end of the year to allow for a smooth transition process. According to the school division, the hiring process is already underway, and it's expected that the positions will be filled by August 1.

Both Gudziunas and Ardies have served in the Hanover School Division for over 30 years, with long careers in education. Both held roles as teachers and principals prior to being named assistant superintendents.

"As individuals and divisional leaders, their contributions to public education in the Hanover School Division are truly remarkable and will have lasting impact," says a statement from HSD. "Their passion for learning and unwavering support of student-centred education has enriched the lives of students, staff, colleagues, and parents in all of our school communities."



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St. Adolphe Daycare and Seniors Housing Initiative Dissolved

Nearly ten years after the initiative took root, Ritchot's municipal council ended the project, citing the high risk of such an enterprise.



BRENDA SAWATZKY

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The seniors housing and daycare project proposed for the site of St. Adolphe's old personal care home (PCH) has officially been dissolved.

At their November 2017 meeting, Ritchot council passed a resolution to decline Niverville Heritage Holdings Inc.'s (NHHI) offer to help create the facility at 420 Main Street, stating in the meeting minutes that, while the concept plans address the needs of the community, "there is too much unknown risk associated with the project at this time."

HISTORY OF PROJECT

The original proposal brought forward by NHHI—a not-for-profit organization holding the assets to the Niverville Heritage Centre campus—would have encompassed three stages of senior living. The first two would have included eight life lease units and 24 assisted living units, all with indoor parking. NHHI would also have entered discussions with Manitoba Housing to integrate a third stage of seniors living: supportive housing in the form of the nearby The Chalet.

Based on the successful Heritage Centre model, NHHI also proposed that a daycare centre be included, in addition to commercial space for a medical clinic, physiotherapist, and other health practitioners. A community café, which could double as food services for the seniors, was also among the early discussions.

"Their decision is a very difficult one because it's a lost opportunity," says Gord Daman, spokesperson for NHHI. "Is it a mistake? None of us can ever judge. There will always be unknown risks



The empty lot at 420 Main Street St. Adolphe, former site of the personal care home.

DUSTIN KRAHN

involved, but that's, quite frankly, the entrepreneurial nature of doing anything regarding social enterprise. You can never go into these arrangements without some level of risk, because if there was no risk there would be a line-up of people wanting to do it. Without risk you'd have all of these senior housing and daycare spots already available. But there's a required commitment from a community to invest in the common good, and there's a cost to that."

The initiative first took root in 2009 when NHHI was able to successfully collaborate with the province for the PCH spots once allocated to St. Adolphe. The PCH building was no longer deemed safe and the community lay within the Red River flood zone,

creating unnecessary risk for vulnerable seniors. NHHI also needed to purchase the condemned building and land that it sat on as part of the agreement.

"This was just something that we couldn't take on for the whole municipality."

Chris Ewen | Mayor of Ritchot

Further to that, NHHI offered former Ritchot Mayor Bob Stefaniuk and his council a promise to assist the community in creating a new seniors and childcare facility, using the many years of expertise they'd gained through the creation of Niverville's model. "It was very much about

honouring our commitment because the RM could have stood in our way and blocked the effort of us rebuilding the PCH here in Niverville," says Steve Neufeld, administrator

of the Niverville Heritage Centre. "Had they done that, all the care home beds would have gone to Winnipeg. So we wanted to do something meaningful [in return]."

Numerous ideas and proposals came forward between Stefaniuk's council and NHHI. It was agreed that NHHI

would provide leadership throughout the planning and creation process. The derelict building was to be removed at NHHI's cost. The RM was then to participate in the detailed design of the facility, tender the build to the construction company of their choice, and handle the mortgage. NHHI was to aid council in setting up a governance committee and provide guidance for its governance if needed.

"Our [NHHI] board would not undertake the initiative directly," says Daman. "Not because there was significant risk, but simply because we had our hands full [with the Heritage Centre]. We wanted Ritchot to effectively create their own Heritage Holdings or use their Community Development Corporation to help them to do that."

The two parties shook hands on the deal. Neufeld and other Heritage Centre staff went to work over the course of the coming years applying for government grants available at the time for affordable seniors housing and daycare spots.

They were able to secure funds from Manitoba Housing to the tune of \$780,000 toward the building of 12 units. This meant that 12 out of the 32 suites would be designated as subsidized housing for lower income seniors.

Another government grant of approximately \$590,000 was attained for the construction of a 90-spot daycare, along with the promise of operational funding after it was built. This would have made it a fully licensed and subsidized daycare facility.

The funding was contingent on finding a licensed daycare provider to run it. The existing St. Adolphe daycare was approached to take on these extra spots. They turned them down, citing that they were too small an entity to manage the extra spots. NHHI then approached Growing Minds, a licensed daycare provider in Niverville, who agreed to run the spots from the St. Adolphe facility. Eventually, with a change in board members, they also withdrew from the project, but NHHI was able to hold these spots and actively began seeking another operator.

The almost \$1.4 million in secured grants meant that about one-fifth of the facility's costs were already covered. With the potential for revenue to be generated from the seniors housing units, daycare, community café, and leasable space, the NHHI was confident this project could have a breakeven outcome for the community.

Stefaniuk eventually retired from his position and Jackie Hunt was elected the



The old nursing home in St. Adolphe.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

new mayor. Negotiations continued through Hunt's years in office. This council agreed to share the interest costs with NHHI as they financed the demolition of the old PCH. In return, NHHI agreed to transfer the land back into Ritchot's hands for the remaining cost of the demolition. Hunt's council requested that NHHI work together with the consultants they'd hired for the community's Main Street revitalization project to ensure that the project lined up with the rest of the plans for the community.

LOSING GROUND

With the dissolution of council in the summer of 2017, the project lost ground. The seniors housing grant was contingent on an April 1, 2018 build. Plans were now on hold.

NHHI quickly called a candidate's meeting before the July election, providing a complete overview of the project to the candidates.

After the election, NHHI met numerous times with the new council, reiterating the need to act quickly if the build was to happen in time.

For this new council, the project felt altogether overwhelming.

"I don't know too much about prior council's decisions," says Ewen. "Essentially, the NHHI project offered a great presentation and a great project. [But] it was in the millions of dollars [and was a] project that would just back up our debentures and restrict us from any future development other than this one project. This was just something that we couldn't take on for the whole municipality, especially just one area. Maybe in the future we'll be able to do something like that but us, as council, were not willing to risk all of that money on a [seniors housing] project that still costs the

person to move in."

NHHI was in shock. Come December 2017, as it became apparent that council stood firm on their decision, NHHI was compelled to give up the \$780,000 grant.

"What that meant was that we had to disengage from the affordable housing initiative and the St. Adolphe community lost the 12 spots," says Daman. "So we informed the province and they were profoundly disappointed... Those 12 spots have now been reallocated to other projects in the province and so they are gone."

"[The seniors housing spots] have always been NHHI's spots and originally the daycare spots were the Growing Minds spots," says Ewen. "Does it concern me? I don't know because I wasn't a part of the initial deal, so I'm not too familiar with it."

While the spots had in fact been awarded by the province to NHHI, Daman clarifies that the province awarded them on the condition that they be built in St. Adolphe, recognizing the growing need for seniors housing and daycare in this community.

"It was NHHI applying on behalf of the community of St. Adolphe, in cooperation with previous Ritchot councils, as no other group came forward to develop the site locally for seniors housing or daycare," says Daman.

FUTURE OF DAYCARE

Although Ewen's council had decided that the proposed facility, as a whole, was too great a risk, they weren't willing to give up the 90 daycare spots NHHI was holding for them.

They queried NHHI on the feasibility of utilizing their expertise in building only a daycare on the old PCH lot. But without the financial supports of the seniors housing and leased space, NHHI



Demolition in May 2017.

GORDON DAMAN

discouraged this route, calling it unsustainable.

A building such as this becomes an expensive venture due to the provincial building codes that come into effect when infant daycare is introduced. Also, the subsidies provided by the government aren't enough to support the mortgage on a standalone facility. NHHI had seen this already in Niverville, and had been integrally involved in providing space for Growing Minds in the Heritage Centre, combining the daycare with a facility that had other revenue-generating components. Without this model, NHHI was no longer interested in being involved.

The property of 420 Main Street has since been put on the market for sale.

MLA Bob Lagassé, a proponent of daycare in the community, called a meeting on February 20, desperate to make certain that the 90 spots wouldn't be lost to St. Adolphe. Lagassé, Ewen, Daman, Neufeld, and provincial Minister of Families Scott Fielding were all in attendance. Fielding agreed to transfer the daycare spots out of NHHI's hands and into Ritchot council's, thus allowing council to proceed with finding a means to utilize these spots without NHHI's oversight.

"One of the things I have heard overwhelmingly from my constituents, many of whom are families with young children, is that there is a real need for more daycare spaces," says Lagassé. "To have the proposed spaces in St. Adolphe put in jeopardy was very concerning. As MLA,

it was important to me that we did everything we could to find a way to meet the needs of families in our area. I'm glad to have helped find a way to make these daycare spaces a reality."

Council will have to move quickly to find an appropriate space and licensed operator willing to take on the new daycare spots.

"April of 2019 is when we have to start digging," says Ewen, citing the province's withdrawal of the spots after that date. "That's why we need to jump on this quickly, because it's really not that far away."

Ewen says council is in discussions about creating a taskforce to make this happen.

"We're not sure who's going to be on the taskforce," Ewen says. "I definitely would like to be a part of it. I would like to see our economic development officer a part of it [as well as] a member or two from the daycare, our financial officer, and someone from the general public."

As to the loss of the Main Street property, Ewen says, "I'm disappointed that it happened like this, because essentially we'd have to buy it back. Is that the only option? I could say yes, but we haven't even started our taskforce [initiative]."

Ewen hopes that the same taskforce will also eventually work on a seniors housing initiative.

"We have initiated a taskforce committee on what the next step is for all of that stuff that should have been there. I don't know what the future will hold with that."

CITIZEN POLL

THIS MONTH'S QUESTION:

Do you agree with Ritchot council's decision to end the seniors housing/daycare project that had been initiated alongside Niverville Heritage Holdings?

- ☐ **YES.** The risk of the project was too great, and hopefully better opportunities will arise in the near future.
- ☐ **NO.** Some risk is unavoidable, and these seniors housing and daycare spots were badly needed by the community for the years ahead.
- ☐ **UNSURE?** Let us know what you think.

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LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

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.

68%

NO. Band, in particular, is one of the NCI's most successful programs and needs to be accommodated immediately. The students deserve better.

27%

OTHER. Let us know what you think.

5%

YOUR COMMENTS:

A community will always suffer when its children are forced to do without. They are the ones who will feel the pain of an inadequate education. How many children will be negatively affected by the time the long-term gain of improved facilities takes place? Maybe that is the greater cost to be considered here!

I can see costs will go up or the delay be extended. Officials say it's to allow time to apply for more funding. However I am not sure that is the case. Was there not funding opportunities available before? Don't be surprised if cuts occur.

I think that construction happening WHILE kids are in class will be very disruptive. Would it not make more sense to just get it done?

Yes, although band does need to continue throughout the construction phase!

Short-term sacrifices presented by this option are by far outweighed by the future benefits.

Heritage Centre Offers New Services, Restructures Management

Changes at the Heritage Centre in Niverville designed to strengthen its operations and improve communications to public.

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Never in the history of Niverville has a dream grown and evolved more than the Niverville Heritage Centre campus. Since its humble beginnings as a banquet centre in 2000, this community-funded facility has morphed and spread out over a full ten acres to become what it is today: a complete aging-in-place campus, restaurant, medical centre, and daycare.

More change is on the horizon. The medical centre's move to its brand-new facility has freed up pockets of space in the original building. Renovations are also well underway on the area once occupied by the medical lab.

"The plan here is to develop an incubator, economic-type of an environment where if there are people who have home-based businesses that want to grow, they can rent office space," says Steve Neufeld, Chief Officer for Community and Development. "We can provide internal telephone service, internet, and support, like reception, faxing, and printing, to help nurture their growth."

Neufeld envisions the roomy offices being utilized by accountants, consultants, counsellors, and the like. The option of opening up the spaces to independent businesses, he says, is Plan A. Plan B, should the opportunity arise, would be to rent the whole space to a single business entity.

The second-floor area once occupied by Chris and Mairi Burnett's medical clinic has been transformed into office spaces for the administrative team of the regional health authority.

Another wall has been removed to create a 600-square-foot community classroom, an idea Neufeld is especially proud of. This large meeting space can easily accommodate 15 to 20 people around tables. White boards line one wall and projectors are available for rent. Neufeld anticipates this classroom will be well-utilized by local organizations for planning and brainstorming sessions, by businesses for training seminars, and community groups for regular meetings.

A series of other second-floor offices now provide a consolidated



The Heritage Centre's new executive team: Rob Manchulenko, Steve Neufeld, and Wes Hildebrand.

✉ BRENDA SAWATZKY

space for the Heritage Centre's executive team. Prior to this move, they were spread throughout the facility, some in the PCH and others in the Niverville Credit Union Manor, conceivably in every available nook and cranny.

Plans are moving forward for the inclusion of a visitor centre to honour the community and its vast history. Alcoves along one wall will provide areas for large-scale historical displays. The Heritage Centre has already acquired models of Niverville's original church and grain elevator. The actual piano which once belonged to the town's first community hall in the 1920s also resides here. Future plans include adding a touchscreen monitor that will allow visitors to scan through a collection of photos taken of the community over the decades.

RESTRUCTURING THE MANAGEMENT

The building isn't the only aspect of the Heritage Centre to see significant transformation this year. The previous leadership model—with a

Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Vice President, and variety of department heads—has been restructured to form an executive team, with everyone on the same level of leadership but each carrying out different management roles based on their strengths.

"Honestly, we are going to make Niverville a destination for wellness."

Steve Neufeld | Chief Officer for Community and Development

Neufeld, once CEO of the entire facility, now manages only aspects of it under the title of Chief Officer for Community and Development. His new role has him overseeing the management of the PCH, business development, the volunteer program, and fundraising. He also acts as a liaison between the community, government, and regional health authority.

"If you make and sell windows, you can hire a person to do that," says Neufeld. "But we're so diversified here. As the former CEO, I am

very supportive of this. I'm excited because it will free me up to do some of the leadership consultation with other communities, developing housing and health services. Honestly, we are going to make Niverville a destination for wellness at some point and we can accommodate those efforts through a new organizational structure."

Rob Manchulenko is the second of the three-person executive team, acting as Chief Officer of Hospitality and Support Services. He will be responsible for the event centre, restaurant, food services, maintenance, and housekeeping.

Finally, Wes Hildebrand rounds off the trio as Chief Officer for Finance and Human Resources. In these capacities, he'll oversee the majority of the centre along with client services at the Niverville Credit Union Manor.

"We've got over 200 employees and now we have a focused human resource team," says Neufeld. "Revenues are up there in the millions of dollars. And even though it's very, very tight, you need to have focused financial [planning]."

Neufeld says these changes came about after he and the board members of Niverville Heritage Holdings Inc. (NHHI) engaged in a strategic planning exercise last year to identify its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A survey was sent out to approximately 70 stakeholders, including Heritage Centre staff, Southern Health officials, town council members, and a variety of previous donors.

This led to the creation of a strategic compass, a four-directional guide to where the HCC will go into the future. These new directions include the pursuit of social enterprise, the development of a strong team, building a strong community, and providing vision and leadership.

"We weren't doing a good job, for example, of communicating back to the community some of the things that were happening [here]," says Neufeld. "So now we have it on our strategic compass and this is a very strong commitment that we are making to [our community]."

Having worked in a variety of positions at the Heritage Centre since 2001, Neufeld has learned a thing or two about the vision and hard work it takes to make a dream like this a reality. He has since taken on a consulting role for other communities wishing to model Niverville's unique facility, providing yet another income stream to sustain the whole campus.

"Increasingly, we are being provided with opportunities to do consulting work with other communities," Neufeld says. "For example, Dominion City built a home called Abbeyfield House and they've engaged us in a management contract where we can provide advice on menu planning, preventative maintenance, accounting, payroll, marketing, etc. There's so many things we've learned about running [this kind of a] facility."

"If anyone ever asks, 'Who is the Niverville Heritage Centre?', it is the people," says Gord Daman, spokesperson for NHHI. He says it's the seniors who get to stay in the community, the young people who get their first job here, one of the hundreds that are employed here, and everyone who enjoys its many services day in and day out.

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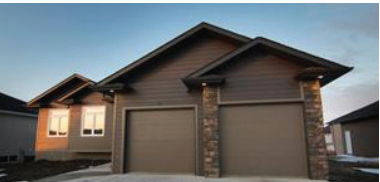


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Commentary

An American Problem Comes Visiting

By Greg Fehr

When we look globally, or at least at the Western world, the issues of gun control is largely an American problem. Our fine neighbours to the south have taken gun culture to levels that are unrivalled anywhere in the developed world. Citing the Second Amendment, the 200-odd-year American grudge against tyrannical leadership has fostered a race for citizens to arm themselves with increased firepower.

While it's an American problem, it has become a Canadian issue, too. Like many American failures and successes, due to the influence of our neighbours both directly through policy and through example and media, Canadians must wade into the discussion.

Case in point: the recent incident involving Niverville Collegiate Institute. The local reality is that gun control laws and a moderate approach to civilian-owned firearms has resulted in some of the lowest statistics of gun violence anywhere in the developed world. But when mass shootings are seen on the media, their example provides a template for young individuals seeking attention. Whether a joke made in extremely poor taste or a cry for help, people are creating "shock value"—and throwing firearms



DEPOSITPHOTOS

into the mix.

It's very un-Canadian. As the True North, our national expression with firearms has always been—and always should be—tied to our battle with the elements and wildlife. The gun culture that has existed here is rarely about self-defence. Rather, it's about filling out a tag next hunting season and a freezer full of venison.

The influence is also seen in the community as heightened sensitivities give way to reactions we've never seen before. The authorities are having to develop policies that are prudent, wary, but likely somewhat out of step with the actual realities of our Canadian situation. This is not to say that it's wrong—better safe than sorry—but we should remember that this is driven less by local realities and more by the international examples we see.

So we wade into the discussion.

The facts are correct in that guns don't technically kill people (people kill people), but firearms, especially assault-style rifles or modified semi-automatics, allow these people to kill with lightning efficiency and maximum carnage. The right-wing solution is to put more arms in the hands of good people, because the idea of restriction is an assault on the sacred cow of the citizen's right to arms. It's akin to two competitors progressively reducing their prices to take market share, and ultimately both companies shut their doors for lack of profit. An arms race is a race that is never won. The Cold War taught us this, too.

So we ask, why allow these assault rifles to be sold? The answer is clear and simple: this is not a matter of civil defence but

entertainment, pure and simple. Given the chance, I suspect many of us would enjoy firing off some automatic rounds at a gun range and seeing the targets get blown to bits. Like our love for action movies and fireworks, we're entertained by destruction. There are even destruction rooms popping up where, for a fee, you can spend time bashing stuff with a baseball bat.

Entertainment, pure and simple... but not self-defence.

Once we recognize that the argument for these types of guns is just that—"for the fun of it"—the discussion about control becomes less taboo.

The invention of the modern firearm was a huge advancement in technology. Guns have enabled many families to put food on their table and settlers to tame a wild frontier. But humans are unique in their ability to take a tool of good and find the most destructive way to use it. I have hope that common sense may come back into the discussion by lawmakers in the U.S. Congress. A reasonable stance can be found.

But as long as the American public allows their politicians to use the people themselves as tools, and gun control as a wedge issue for political gain, votes and influence will continue to be bought with the blood of human lives lost.

Look on the Bright Side: The Illusion of Balance

By Jan Kendall St. Cyr

We all struggle to obtain a balance in regards to family, work, and our social and personal lives. We believe that reaching a perfect point of equilibrium, symmetry, and stability will curb some of the chaos we encounter while giving us a greater sense of control.

But maybe it's the misperception of our need for balance that actually throws us off-kilter and leaves us feeling a bit wobbly.

I started off the year thinking that my life was a little precarious, so I endeavoured to make some changes. I thought that if I made a greater effort to distribute my time and energy equally, I would feel more in control and therefore more content. Instead I was left exhausted and discouraged. Only when I uncovered the true meaning of balance did I realize that I'd been chasing an elusive state, a false perception of what managing life is really about.

Through further study, I came to understand that it would take great effort and concentration to maintain this static position, this sense of stability I thought I needed. Obtaining this kind of balance would require me to divide my life into equal parts of equal weight.

This immediately became an unrealistic goal, one that could only be achieved for a few fleeting moments at a time before the natural forces of life flowed back in.

Life is never lived in balance. It's in constant flux, constant motion, so what matters more is learning to define our priorities and find our happiness within these ever-changing seasons. We must be willing to shift our position when our priorities conflict, enabling us to keep moving forward.

One of our greatest human strengths is the ability to let go, adapt, and thrive in life's constantly changing landscape. When we strive to create a level playing field by preventing this natural ebb and flow, we end up stagnating.

"Life is like a bicycle," Einstein brilliantly observed. "In order to stay upright, we must keep moving."

So I've decided to hop on mine and take this amazing life for a spin!




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Sports & Recreation

Niverville Runner Challenges Himself to Finish Actif Epica

By Liz Byron

For his birthday, João Luiz Holowka decided to give himself an unusual gift: the chance to spend a weekend running over 150 kilometres across southern Manitoba in a gruelling outdoor race.

"It was my gift to myself, to celebrate my birthday," he says. "To celebrate my health and everything I have in my life."

On the evening of Friday, February 16, the Niverville resident set out from the small town of Ridgville, Manitoba and kept moving for the next day and a half until he arrived, on foot, at The Forks in Winnipeg around 8:30 a.m. on Sunday, February 18.

The next day, he turned 46.

Holowka was participating in an outdoor event called Actif Epica. Following the historic Crow Wing Trail, Actif Epica is an ultra-endurance event that aims to promote health benefits associated with sport and outdoor winter activities. Participants can choose to run or cycle one of two distances, 120 kilometres or 162 kilometres, and there's a 200-kilometre option for cyclists only.

The race is intense. Participants have up to 35 hours to complete their course, and stop only briefly at check-in stations in towns along the route, with no pause for sleep.

But while the distance may seem daunting, Actif Epica's real claim to fame is its challenging conditions. The trail crosses relatively flat terrain, but racers face rugged, ice- and snow-covered trails, bone-chilling temperatures, and gusting winds across open prairie.

Adding to the challenge is the fact that Actif Epica is a self-supporting race, meaning that participants must carry everything they need with them, leaving nothing behind and picking up anything new between the start and finish lines.

"My backpack was just under 20



João is greeted by his family at the end of the race.

JOÃO LUIZ HOLOWKA

pounds," says Holowka. "You have to carry food, clothes, everything. It was brutal. Those 20 pounds felt like a lot more by the end."

Holowka adds that although the physical aspect of the race is incredibly difficult, he finds the mental challenge even harder.

"You doubt yourself, you think you're not going to make it, you're going to die out there," he recalls. "You can't let those negative thoughts in. So you think about one step at a time, thinking about all the things you have in your life, all your blessings."

Holowka says that while he ran, he reminded himself that not only

did he participate voluntarily, but there was an end in sight.

"You remember that there are millions of people who are suffering, without a choice, and for me the pain will be done tomorrow, but for them it's for life. I run because other people can't, and to remind myself of how blessed I am."

At a particularly challenging moment, Holowka was given a morale boost that he says helped him more than any physical rest could have.

"As you get toward the stop in Niverville, you're just a bit more than halfway, and it's one of the

hardest points. When I got there, there's this group of people coming toward us."

Greeting him just before he reached the check-in at the Niverville Arena was a group of about 20 people—his family and friends, there to cheer him on.

"For them it was probably 30 to 60 minutes out of their day to cheer on this crazy guy, but for me it was everything I needed to keep going." And so he kept going for the equivalent of another full marathon.

Despite what most people assume when they hear about his ultra-marathon experience, Holowka doesn't have a long history of running.

"I started three years ago with a five-kilometre," he admits. "After a couple of those, I thought, okay, I wonder what the ten-kilometre is like... so I did a couple of ten-kilometre runs. Then I thought about the fact that a half-marathon is just two ten-kilometre races. Then the same thing with the full marathon."

For him, each new goal means a chance to see what else he can do. Holowka thrives on the challenge of pushing himself, and encourages those around him to find their own version of a 162-kilometre race.

"Those challenges, they're never really about running. Running is just the vehicle that takes me to that next level, but it could be anything that challenges you. There are a lot of times in life that you have emotional, physical, and mental challenges that you think you can't handle, but the body and mind are so much stronger than you think. Sometimes it takes something like running to expose your potential."

The runner says he isn't sure if he will tackle the Actif Epica race again next year, but he has no regrets about doing it this year. Maybe, he says, next year will bring a new challenge.

IN BRIEF



The Elks Pee Wee hockey squad.

ROD BLAHY

Elks Girls Gearing Up for Rural Provincials

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

As the current hockey season starts to wind down, the Île-des-Chênes Elks have rostered a girls team to compete in the Rural Pee Wee B Provincials, to be played in Neepawa from March 16–18.

The team, made up of players from nine different squads throughout southeastern Manitoba, including Île-des-Chênes, St. Adolphe, and Ste. Anne, as well as players from the Southern Steelers Minor Hockey Association and Rat River Minor Hockey Association, has come together to play as one roster. The players range from Atom A, Pee Wee C, and Pee Wee A.

"We played in the Springfield tournament on Louis Riel Day for the first time as a team," says Robyn Waddell, team manager. "And we have an exhibition game versus the Lorette Comets on February 25."

The team has been practicing mostly out of Île-des-Chênes, with coaches hailing from Île-des-Chênes, St. Adolphe, and Ste. Anne.

"We wish them luck in their provincial weekend," says Waddell. "Go, Elks, Go!"



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Chamber News

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Updates from the Ritchot Chamber

The first Ritchot Chamber board meeting of the year was hosted at the RM offices in St. Adolphe on February 8. The meeting set an ambitious year in motion, including a renewed commitment to the June golf tournament, with a mid-June date to be announced soon, and the annual Chamber Business Awards and Gala later in the fall. But that's not all...

Rural Business Finance Forum - April 17 - Save the Date

A new initiative for 2018 will be the Rural Business Finance Forum, which features a panel of local finance experts who will each offer a 15-minute presentation on how to access their finance solutions. Startup and experienced business owners are invited to attend. The event is free to Chamber members and \$20 for future members. It will be hosted on April 17, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. at Lucky Luc's in Ste. Agathe, followed by an open Q&A session with the presenters. There will then be an opportunity to network with other business owners. Panelists will be announced shortly.

Southeast Home and Reno Show

With its arrival of March, everyone is looking forward to some fresh ideas offered by our local construction and trades community at the Southeast Home & Reno Show. Come visit us at the Chamber booth, March 23-25 at the TransCanada Centre in Île-des-Chênes.

Preferred Chamber Partners

A key benefit of belonging to the Chamber as a business owner is access to Affinity Programs that help you make efficient business decisions while saving costs. Our preferred affinity partners can help you get the insurance you need, make it easier to take customer payments, provide marketing tools for your business, and generally help you to save on overall business costs. Check out a full list of member benefits here: <http://www.ritchotchamber.com/member-benefits>. These programs are designed with an understanding of business owners' needs in mind, offering you both personal protection and resources as well as solutions to retain valuable rural employees.

Growing Strong

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

- Debbie Dandenault, Branch Relationship Rep with Global Payments Canada (a Ritchot Chamber preferred affinity partner), taking care of all your business payment needs.
- Gilles Lambert of Gilles Lambert Pest Control Services Inc, local pest control and problem-solving service provider.

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Scorpions Elite Cheer, in its eighth competitive season, has almost 100 athletes in its ranks.

■ NATALIE BATKIS

Scorpions Elite Cheer Delivers the Sting at First 2018 Competition

By Natalie Batkis

Scorpions Elite Cheer (SEC), located in Steinbach and featuring participants from throughout the southeast, hosted the first Manitoba Cheer Federation competition of 2018. The Double or Nothing competition took place on January 28 and saw 420 athletes compete with over 30 routines from individual, duo, stunt, and group routines. The competition was held at the Investors Group Athletic Centre at the University of Manitoba.

Scorpions Elite Cheer had two groups performing non-competitive routines: Tiny Pinchers (ages three to

five) and their recreational team, Black Out.

The Mini Stingers (ages six to eight) took home first place in their level. The Junior Level 1 team, Black Venom (ages nine to 14), took home first place and were Level 1 Division Champs. The Senior Level 4.2 team, Immortals (ages 15 to 18), were Division Champs and Overall Grand Champs. It was a clean sweep for this exuberant team of ambitious athletes.

SEC's Open Co-Ed team, Emperors (ages 17 and over), plan to perform at the next competition.

"We are so proud of all our teams. They train so hard and work on doing their own

personal best," says Tiffany Reckseidler, owner of SEC. "We could not have done this without the amazing support of all the athletes, family, and friends. We feel truly blessed to work with such amazing people."

The sport of cheerleading has grown tremendously in Canada over the last decade. With the International Olympic Committee recently granting cheerleading provisional Olympic status for the 2020 Games, the expectation is that the sport will continue to flourish. Athletes from Canada recently joined the Global Cheerleading Supporters Initiative, supporting athletes and raising awareness of the

sport at the Olympic Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

SEC is currently in its eighth competitive season. With almost 100 athletes ranging in age from three to over 30, this elite team has held the title of Provincial Champs multiple times. They also hold national titles. SEC has five competitive teams and a recreational program. They believe in offering an elite program while focusing on safety, fitness, and love of the sport.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ www.scorpionscheer.com

Local Coach Pushes Leadership and Teamwork

By Liz Byron

In his role as a basketball coach, James Bartlett is focused on teaching his athletes about more than how to shoot hoops.

"Basketball is important," he says. "But not that important. For me, the most important thing is helping these guys grow into responsible, respectful men."

Bartlett and his family have lived in Niverville for five years, and this year he's been coaching the junior varsity boys basketball team at Collège Régional Gabrielle-Roy in Île-des-Chênes.

This isn't his first coaching role. Over the years, he has acted as coach for multiple sports. Partly, it's because of his seven children.

"As my kids grow up, I try to stay involved in their lives," says the father of seven. His oldest son, Noah, is on the junior varsity team at Gab-Roy.

But Bartlett also wanted to be involved in coaching because he sees it as a way to help the community and the kids in general.

"The leadership skills that people learn through sports are awesome," the coach says. "As coaches, we can help them develop as leaders, good sports, and respectful people."

Bartlett was proud that his team recently made a midgame comeback to defeat the top-seeded Niverville team, advancing their hopes of earning the school's first basketball banner since 1991. But his proudest moment of the season was when he was contacted by a player's parent.

"We got a message from [a

parent] saying that on the way home from a game, their son thanked them for their support and sacrifices to allow him to play on the team," he explains.

Bartlett speaks to his team frequently about respect, and tries to remind them that playing on a team is a privilege, not a right. To earn this privilege, all team members had to sign a contract committing to maintaining passing grades in all classes at all times, as well as being respectful and responsible representatives of their school.

In talking about his role as a coach, Bartlett is quick to praise the team members, and even quicker to share the credit with others. He is always aware of the time and effort families put into supporting their student athletes, and he speaks glowingly of the dedication of teachers in school sports—particularly, of course, his co-coach, Bernard Poirier.

Noah says that his dad has always pushed him and his teammates to do their best both on and off the court.

"He expects a lot from us," the 15-year-old says. "He expects us to be good at sports, to be good kids, to pass our classes—and he won't let me get passed with a low passing grade. He wants the best out of all of us."

When asked if they feel any stress about living in Niverville but playing for Île-des-Chênes, both father and son laugh. Bartlett points out that while his son plays against Niverville in basketball, he plays for Niverville during baseball season.

As for Noah, he thinks it's great to have friends on both sides of the court.



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Cross-Country Ski Trails Open in Ritchot

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By Amber Mamchuk

The RM of Ritchot is ready to announce the opening of two new cross-country ski trails. While the cold weather and low snowfall has made it difficult to groom ski trails, the municipality has managed to gather enough snow for a couple of short loops in Île-des-Chênes and Ste. Agathe. The municipality will groom the trails each Friday, unless otherwise posted on their website.

Cross-country skiing is ranked as one of the best forms of cardiovascular activity. The low-impact sport involves all major muscle groups, making it accessible to all ages. Not only will you become more fit by skiing, but you'll also reap the benefits of being outside during what feels like an endless winter. Manitoba is full of beautiful ski trails to explore!

There are two main types of cross country-skiing: classic and skate skiing. In classic cross-country skiing, you propel yourself using skis and poles on opposite strides. Classic cross-country skiing is a great introduction to the sport, as the alternating movement mimics walking. Skate-skiing employs a skating motion, with you propelling yourself with both poles at every stride. Each type of skiing requires different equipment and a different type of trail grooming. Ritchot's trails are being groomed



Cross-country ski equipment along one of Ritchot's new trails.

AMBER MAMCHUK

to be classic ski trails.

Cross-country skiing equipment is available in sizes for kids as young as three years old, and once you've stopped growing your equipment can last for decades. Many ski shops offer trade-in options for youth sizes, providing discounts for returned gently used equipment. You can also rent equipment at almost every ski shop in Winnipeg.

If you're interested in purchasing cross-country ski equipment but don't want to invest a huge

amount on gear, the Windsor Park Nordic Centre hosts a gear swap every year in November where you can purchase older models and used equipment. I personally bought my skis, boots, and poles at this sale seven years ago and feel that it's one of the best recreation equipment investments I've ever made.

If you're interested in learning more about cross-country skiing, and even giving it a try, Ritchot Recreation, in partnership with Sport Manitoba and the Ste. Agathe

CDI (Community Development Inc.), will host a free cross-country ski clinic at Cartier Park, Ste. Agathe on March 10 from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon. Equipment will be provided for those who register by March 5.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ To learn more or download the registration form, visit www.ritchot.com. Check out "Parks and Trails" under the Recreation tab. Or you can call 204-803-6115 or email recreation@ritchot.com.

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THE MONTH



**Liam
Chandler**

Eight-year-old Liam Chandler got to curl for the first time this year in the Niverville Curling Club's junior curling program. His favourite part was being able to throw the rocks down the ice.

Liam is in Grade Three and enjoys playing soccer, the Boy Scouts, Pokémon Club, playing Lego, and attending his Awana Club. He also loves watching most sports on TV, especially the recent Winter Olympics.

NCI Basketball Heats Up

By Ron Limpricht

The NCI Varsity and Junior Varsity basketball teams are having great seasons this winter and are getting ready for playoffs.

The Varsity Boys are riding a wave as the number one AA team in the province. They are heading to the Zone finals undefeated against all their AA competition. They recently defeated second-ranked Carman by 25 points in

tournament play.

They now have their sights set on provincials, to be held in Gretna from March 15-17.

The Varsity Girls are also headed to the Zones championship after a come-from-behind 32-31 win over Green Valley in the AA South finals. Although the girls are currently ranked ninth, they'll be sure to climb the rankings after their recent victory over third-ranked Warren (AA) and

third-ranked Westgate (AAA) at a tournament in Morris. The Girls Provincials will be held in Dominion City.

Both Varsity teams are expected to be very competitive at their provincials.

The Junior Varsity boys are ranked fourth place in the A/AA rankings, while the girls are ranked sixth. The boys have a 7-1 record in A/AA competition, with the girls at 4-1.

The girls recently won the Northlands Parkway Tournament in Winkler and the Immanuel Christian Tournament in Winnipeg. In their last tournament of the season, the Junior Varsity boys made it to the finals of their tournament in Stonewall.

Both Junior Varsity teams are entering the playoffs in an effort to earn a berth in their provincial championships, held from March 9-10.

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Jets Acquire Paul Stastny from Blues

By Nicholas Anderson

When Mark Scheifele went down on December 27, the Jets were supposed to experience some sort of setback. But at the time of Scheifele's return on February 9, the team had won seven of its last eight games, including a victory over the league's best team, the Tampa Bay Lightning. The Jets were also fourth in the league in unblocked shot attempts, attempting nearly eight percent more shots per game than their opponents.

Unfortunately, Scheifele's return was spoiled by St. Louis, as the Blues toppled the Jets 5-2, and in his second game back they were bested by the New York Rangers, handing the Jets consecutive losses for just the fourth time this season. While no one was necessarily accusing Scheifele of ruining whatever good thing the Jets had going, it was a little odd to see the team drop back-to-back games as their top centre returned to the line-up.

But on February 13, with Valentine's Day imminent and

the love of hockey in the air, Scheifele flipped the script. Looking to avoid dropping three straight games, Scheifele opened the scoring against the visiting Washington Capitals, notching his first goal since returning. Though it won't go down as one of Scheifele's nicest goals, it was just enough to get him going. Scheifele went on to tie that game with 15 seconds remaining, and it was Scheifele again who set up Tyler Myers for the overtime winner.

Since then, Scheifele has been on a tear, scoring four goals and adding six assists to give him ten points in six games. His performance didn't go unnoticed by the league, who gave him third star of the week honours.

But Scheifele wasn't the only addition to the Jets line-up in February. On trade deadline day, the Jets acquired centre Paul Stastny from the St. Louis Blues in exchange for 2015 third-round pick Erik Foley, a conditional first-round pick in this year's NHL entry draft, and a 2020 fourth-round pick. Stastny, 32, is a pending unrestricted free

agent with a cap hit of \$7 million dollars; the Blues, however, retained 50 percent of the veteran's salary.

In 63 games this season, Stastny has tallied 12 goals and 28 assists skating on the Blues' second line.

The deal caught many in the hockey world off-guard, and even generated some questionable tweets from a player in St. Louis, but it's safe to say the Jets are excited to have added the crafty playmaker.

What will Stastny bring to Winnipeg? At 32, it's safe to say the Quebec City native's best days are behind him, but that's not to say he can't bring extra offense to the league's fourth highest scoring team. Just where he'll fit into the line-up remains to be seen, but his addition could be just what the Jets need to push them over the top.

Stastny doesn't play an overly flashy game. He's a pass-first player, with silky hands, high hockey IQ, and a good shot. Though he'll likely slide behind Bryan Little on the depth chart, the deal certainly gives head

coach Paul Maurice plenty of flexibility.

"We are very pleased to get a veteran centre iceman, which is hard to do in today's league," Maurice said of the trade. "He's a player that fits our game how we try to play, can play the power play, kill penalties, and plays against the other team's best. He has very nice vision and creativity, and he's very versatile."

When asked who Stastny will play with, Maurice gave very little idea: "We've talked about three potential line combinations."

Perhaps what makes the deal most interesting is that Stastny had a full no-move clause. It's often said around the league that free agents don't want to move to Winnipeg. What this deal tells fans—and the league—is that Winnipeg is a legitimate contender for the Stanley Cup.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ For more on Stastny, and how the Jets made out on the trade deadline, head to our website: www.nivervillecitizen.com.

IN BRIEF

Junior Selects Prepare for Playoff Push

By Maurice Gagnon

The Eastman Junior Selects, of the AAA Midget City League, are getting ready for a big playoff push. With a record of 23-12-1, the team is currently tied for second place.

The Selects boast a roster of 19 players, including two former Niverville Clippers, Micah Funk and Denis Gagnon. Other players hail from Île-des-Chênes, Lorette, Dominion City, Steinbach, Grunthal, Oakbank, Ste. Anne, Ste. Agathe, and Lac du Bonnet. All players were born in either 2001 or 2002.

The Midget City League consists of six teams, four of which are from Winnipeg. The only other rural squad is the Interlake Lightning.

The team is led by head coach Jon Lawrence and assistant coaches Ben Townsend and Hub Blanchette, all from Steinbach, which also serves as home ice. They practice twice a week in addition to dryland training.

For the playoffs, all games will shift to the Iceplex throughout the month of March.

On January 15, seven players were selected for the Midget AAA All-Star Game, held at the Winnipeg Iceplex. These include Cole St. Laurent, Denis Gagnon, Ethan McColm, Maddux Mateychuk, Kade Runke, Drayden Kurbatoff, and Riley Plett.

In addition to the all-star game honour, these seven players have all been drafted or are currently on a team's protected list in the WHL (Western Hockey League) or the MJHL (Manitoba Junior Hockey League).

Once playoffs are done, the next step for these players will be getting ready for those teams' spring camps. From there, they'll be notified whether they've received an invitation to attend the main camp come fall.

If players aren't invited to the fall training camp, they'll be assigned back to their AAA regional team for further seasoning. Lots of commitment is needed from these kids while still maintaining good grades at school.

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The Atom A Clippers at centre ice at Bell MTS Place.

JASON HUDSON

Playoff-Bound Clippers to Play for Banners

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

It's playoff time for the Niverville Clippers, with several teams chasing championship banners after a successful regular season run.

Among the playoff-bound squads are Novice A and Novice C Blue, representing the ages seven to eight group.

Atom A and Atom C1 are also in the hunt for titles. In addition to their busy playing schedule, the Atom A team recently had the honour of playing a game at Bell MTS Place, where they took on the St. James Canadians.

Pee Wee A has a great chance at taking home the top prize, having finished the season in first place. They will start off the playoffs by facing down last-place Ste. Anne. Pee Wee C and C1 also finished in the top four of their division, securing themselves a chance to raise a banner.

"We would like to congratulate the teams that have a chance to win a banner," says Travis Mason of Clipper Ice Sports. "Your hard work has paid off and will propel all players into the playoffs."

NOVICE HOME TOURNAMENT

The Clippers hosted a Novice tournament in Niverville at the end of January. Unfortunately, the home teams didn't fare well, with none of them managing to reach the gold medal finals.

The Novice A final saw the Seven Oaks Raiders beat the MacDonald Lightning by a score of 4-2. Altona came out on top in the Novice B final, defeating Grunthal 7-4. In the Novice C championship, the Kenora Hounds beat the MacDonald Lightning by a whopping five goals.

Although Niverville didn't have the best results, one thing was sure to be found all weekend: children with huge

smiles on their faces, running around the rink. Clipper Ice Sports extends their thanks to the tournament committee for the successful event.

COACHING EVALUATIONS

"The CIS Executive would like to remind all parents to fill out the coaching evaluation survey that was emailed out February 19," says Mason. "We have received a few responses, but it would be great to capture everyone's opinion."

He adds that a focus next season is going to be hockey development, to support the local coaching staffs.

"We would also like to inform our membership that the annual general meeting is set for April 4 at 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the ballroom at the Niverville Heritage Centre. The Executive would like to extend an invite to all members to join them as they look for feedback on the season."

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Send your vote to: chamber@niverville.com with reasons for your choice. Deadline for voting **5:00 p.m., March 19**. Award will be presented at the chamber's annual meeting, April 11 at the Heritage Centre. All are welcome.

The Niverville Chamber of Commerce encourages sustainable economic development through advocacy for and support of local business.



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I-CAR GOLD CLASS

Taking Fitness to the Barn

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

It may not be the first place you'd expect to get toned up and de-stressed, but the barn at Whitetail Meadow is, in fact, quite the idyllic spot. Since early January, participants have been rolling out their yoga mats for instruction in Yoga Fusion, led by certified fitness instructor Janice Burnett.

Burnett describes Yoga Fusion as yoga-inspired fitness, combining yoga techniques with Pilates and traditional strength training to create a unique class that provides constant variety, limited only by the imagination.

"I've always kind of created my own classes," says Burnett. "We'll do a whole set of squats, for instance, and then I introduce a yoga stretch to recover from that, so it's almost like intervals. Body weight training can be very difficult because [you're using] your whole body, so we might have four minutes of planks, then you'll stretch it out for three minutes."

Every class, she says, starts with stretching, breathing, and range-of-motion warm-ups. Without the use of weights or props, Burnett then guides the class into strength training, using the body's weight to build muscle and stamina. She closes each class with some deep stretching or guided relaxation. Each class lasts one hour.

Burnett loves Whitetail Meadow not only because of its centralized location between Niverville, Ste. Agathe, and St. Adolphe, but because of its perfect ambience. Participants gather on their mats in front of a roaring fire in the great room's stone fireplace. Lights are dimmed and music is pre-selected to create the desired mood, whether its relaxation or pumping



Yoga instructor Janice Burnett in the great room at Whitetail Meadow.

✉ BRENDA SAWATZKY

it up a notch.

Evidently, yoga enthusiasts love the venue, too. On January 9, Burnett held her first class. As a special introductory class, it was free of charge—and more than a hundred people showed up. About 60 people enrolled for the eight-week session following, along with a number of drop-ins each night that came to check it out.

Burnett takes little credit for the class's success, but her years of experience speak for themselves. Certified by the Manitoba Fitness Council since 1991, Burnett has taught a variety of fitness styles, including aerobics, resistance

training, kickboxing, belly-dancing, and boot camps. She's been teaching yoga for the past 13 years.

Her history is as varied as her styles. While much of her career was spent teaching out of fitness centres like Shapes, she's also taught in Montego Bay, Jamaica, and hosted her own Shaw Cable show for ten years called *Take Shape with Janice*.

Since 2015, Burnett has served as the resource coordinator for Ritchot Senior Services and has been leading a variety of seniors fitness classes out of her Main Street location in St. Adolphe.

"I love my seniors and I work

with them four days a week," Burnett says. "I teach 50-plus classes all the time. [The idea of teaching at Whitetail] was exciting because I get to come out and change up my music to a little more top 40 and add a little more of an aggressive workout. It's fun to get out and just let loose a little."

Yoga Fusion takes place every Tuesday night at 7:00 p.m. Drop-ins are welcome. The next eight-week session will begin in late March.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ To register, email yogabarn@outlook.com

IN BRIEF



The Aurora Ice Synchro Team.

✉ LESLIE BARDAL

Niverville Synchro Team Makes Skating Debut

By Cara Dowse

On Saturday, February 3, the Niverville Skating Club attended Eastman Regionals in Hazelridge, Manitoba. Five of the club's figure skaters competed in Star 2 and Star 3 individual free skates, improv and elements, as well as team elements.

It was also the first competition for the club's new synchronized skating team, Aurora Ice, who competed in Beginner 2 and received silver. Synchro skating requires a minimum of eight skaters who perform group elements and challenging footwork as a team.

The Niverville Skating Club's year-end ice show will take place on Friday, March 9 at 6:00 p.m. at the Niverville Arena, with awards and report cards to follow at 7:00 p.m. in the south end, entry by donation. The theme of the event is Circus. Popcorn and cotton candy will be available for purchase.

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Arts & Entertainment



Snake Oil poses with Dee Snider from Twisted Sister.

TRISH PALUD PHOTOGRAPHY

Snake Oil Brings Back the 80s

More than a tribute band, Manitoba group honours the greats of rock music—and sometimes even plays with them.

By Liz Byron

Even in 2018, lots of people love 80s rock music—AC/DC, Queen, Def Leppard, and the like. But Niverville-based musician Art Desaulniers doesn't just love the music; he gets to live it onstage.

About four years ago, Desaulniers joined up with a few other musicians in what started as a cover band for music from the 70s, 80s, and 90s. Eventually they decided to focus on the 80s and tried to recreate the experience of going to a big rock show.

The band, called Snake Oil, isn't a traditional tribute band.

"We don't pay tribute to just one act, it's more of an all-around 80s show," says Desaulniers. "We give you a taste of all those 80s favourites you had back then. We try to replicate exactly what you would have seen back then."

They perform music from classic groups like KISS, Alice Cooper, and Van Halen. But they also take on the personas of original band members.

"We learned their moves and mannerisms, so we could live and breathe these characters on stage," Desaulniers adds.

And of course, there are the costumes.

"We dress up with wigs, spandex, platform boots, make-up," he laughs. "Sometimes the guys and I are in the dressing rooms and look at each other and say, 'Did you ever think you'd ask another guy about his mascara?' But the 80s was all about hair and make-up!"

Over the years, the band has really built up a following. In the early days, they would open up for other acts, but eventually they discovered they could more than attract their own crowd; they could sell out venues, including the 1,638-seat Burton Cummings Theatre in Winnipeg.

Nowadays they perform all over Canada and the U.S., playing to wildly enthusiastic audiences at festivals, state fairs, and theatres.

For Desaulniers, some of the highlights of the band's career have involved the very 80s rock icons they portray onstage.

"Last year we had Dee Snider from Twisted Sister come out and do some songs with us onstage," he says. "He was blown away by our show, so that was very cool."

That wasn't the only time Snake Oil has received positive feedback from original 80s rockers. Once, they ran into Jack Russell from the band Great White during a music festival in Arizona. They all spent the rest of the night talking about life and music, and Desaulniers' fears that the 80s icon would be unimpressed turned out to be unfounded.

"He told us he really appreciated what we're doing for the genre, because all the original guys are too old, or dead, and so for us to bring it back to life and pay tribute, he thought that was amazing."

That's a big part of the appeal to the members of Snake Oil: keeping the music alive. The rock music of the 80s, even now, draws in audiences of all ages. Desaulniers has friends whose teenage kids love the music as much as their parents do, and adds that they get fans of all ages at their shows.

Music, and not just 80s rock music, has always been a part of Art Desaulniers' life.

"I've played music my whole life," he says. "I did it for a living for a long time."

He spent years touring across

North America, living on a tour bus going from show to show. He loved the music and the experiences he gained from his travels, but life on the road started to wear on him.

"My friends at home were moving on and having kids, and after a while I felt like I was missing out on things."

So he settled down. But what brought him back to the limelight?

"The 80s were the last, biggest era of rock music," he argues.

He always loved the music, and now, years later, getting to play the characters and live the experience of being in an 80s rock band is like living a dream.

Furthermore, joining Snake Oil was a step back for him, as far as time commitment goes. Performing with the band is a part-time gig; he has a day job in telecommunications. In fact, without the costumes, wigs, and make-up, and with all his tattoos covered by a suit, few people who meet him during the day would ever guess about his rocker alter ego.

The father of two has another identity, too.

"I'm also a real small-town guy," he states.

Five years ago, he and his wife decided to leave Winnipeg and find a quieter place to live. Their real estate agent was the one who suggested Niverville.

"We asked how far it was, and he said it was an easy commute, so we came out. We turned onto 311 and I thought, 'That's not bad at all, actually.' So here we are!"

It was a good choice for his family. His wife works in town and he commutes to the city for work, but he's always happy to come home at the end of the day.

"I love the loud rock music while we're performing, but I also really like the peace and quiet, being able to snowmobile, having a yard, being involved in my community. I love it here."

Snake Oil will next be playing in Manitoba on Friday, May 11 at Nashville's on Regent Avenue in Winnipeg, and then on Saturday, June 30 at Dauphin Country Fest.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ www.snakeoilrock.com

Niverville Fair Charts a More Sustainable Course

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The Niverville Fair Committee has undergone a restructuring this year in order to ensure that the annual Olde Tyme Country Fair can continue to draw crowds—hopefully for years to come. The reality is that several consecutive years of poor weather had put the fair on precarious financial footing.

“After another less than great weather year, we were forced to make changes,” says organizer Dustin Krahn. “There was really a need to set things in a sustainable direction with a budget that isn’t as dependant on weather. And we feel that we will be able to maintain the quality of the event that people are used to—mostly by being a bit more creative with some of the things we do.”

Krahn adds that most fairgoers aren’t going to notice a huge change. There will still be concerts, street entertainment, games, and the street market people have come to expect.

The most visible change is the possible omission of the fireworks show. Not only is it among the largest expenses, but Krahn points out that it’s also the hardest part of the fair to recuperate costs for.

Unlike a concert or acrobatics show, fireworks are easily

visible from a long distance away, allowing people to enjoy the show without having to enter the fairgrounds.

“It’s not to say everybody is cheating, but it has presented a challenge for us,” says Krahn. “We absolutely encourage people to enjoy the fireworks from anywhere they want, but we only ask that if they enjoyed the show and liked what they saw, that they pitch in to cover the costs so that we can keep doing these kinds of things.”

The big Saturday night concert is still a go. While the fair committee isn’t yet ready to announce the headliner, Krahn says the act has been secured. This artist has been nominated multiple times for Junos and Canadian Country Music Awards, with many singles cracking Canada’s top ten.

One potential benefit to fairgoers is that the new structure will allow the committee to offer cheaper admission.

For those who wait to see the weather forecast before walking up to the gate, the prices aren’t going to change (except that kids 12 and under will now pay just \$5). But for those who buy online tickets in advance, they’ll be able to purchase a weekend pass for half the gate price.

“We have always understood that the fair can be an expensive venture for a family,”

says Krahn. “The purpose of this is to sell tickets and get revenue flowing before the fair begins. Using a family of four, with two kids under 12 as an example, it turns the fair from a \$100 weekend into a \$40 weekend. We think that is pretty significant and hope that it helps more families to enjoy the weekend.”

While some might point out that it’s possible to lose some revenue by lowering the gate price, the committee sees an opportunity to attract more people with more affordable rates, particularly families.

“At the end of the day, things cost what they cost,” Krahn says. “Our current situation really highlights the fact that we have never ‘made’ money by charging people what we have in the past. It’s always a delicate balance between getting world-class entertainment and keeping the costs reasonable.”

Krahn adds that the fair is always looking for help. The committee is surprisingly small, considering all that has to be done.

“The term ‘many hands make light work’ really rings true for an event like ours. More people would undoubtedly make it a way better event, allowing people to narrow their focus and really concentrate on their particular tasks.”

Providence Stages The Mousetrap

Providence students and special guests have been busy brushing up on their British accents ahead of next month’s production of *The Mousetrap*.

The theatre classic, written by Agatha Christie and performed more than 27,000 times in London over 65 years, is the second major production staged by Providence since a theatre revamp in 2017.

“*The Mousetrap* is an institution and clearly a favourite among theatre fans,” says Marc Moir, Instructor in Theatre at Providence. “As Providence strives to rebuild its theatre program, *The Mousetrap* seemed a logical way to get back in the game with one swing.”

The play, which debuted at Theatre Royal in Nottingham City Centre in 1952, is a murder mystery rich with suspicion, suspense, and

charm and keeps the audience captivated until the end, which may or may not consist of a twist or two.

“Our actors have all done a wonderful job of adapting to this style of piece,” says Moir. “Everyone’s British accents are top-notch, and it’s always fun to do a period piece.”

Moir points out that Laura Moir, his sister-in-law, who plays Mollie Ralston, is one of the best actresses he has “ever seen or worked with” and delivers an exceptional performance. The audience will also be treated to a performance by Jon Ted Wynne as Major Metcalf.

“Jon Ted Wynne is a dear friend and colleague,” explains Moir, adding that the long-time actor and filmmaker studied at the prestigious Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. “Ted also taught theatre for a short

time at Providence. He is my mentor in theatre and it has been wonderful to have him on the team to help coach and mentor our actors.”

Another touch the audience can look forward to is a collection of props that have been used in productions of *The Mousetrap* by London’s St. Martins Theatre.

The Mousetrap will open at Providence on Thursday, March 15 with a 2:00 p.m. matinee for local high school students. The general opening will be that night at 7:00 p.m., followed by performances on March 16 (7:00 p.m.), March 17 (2:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.), and March 18 (3:00 p.m.).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ Tickets are available at the door (rush seating) or online at www.brownpapertickets.com.

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Lounge FM Prepares to Release Debut Album

By Liz Byron

"Friday night bath music. Relaxed but not boring." That's how the musicians of Lounge FM describe their music.

Guitarist and vocalist Corey Wohlgemuth says he struggles to put the band's sound into words.

"We've said jazz pop, we've heard indie R&B," he says. "This is always a tough question for us."

Indeed, their music doesn't fit into a single, obvious genre. It is perhaps easier to listen to some of their tunes online than it is to imagine what "Friday night bath music" might mean.

Bandmates Wohlgemuth, Matt Klippenstein, Joel Braun, Will Neufeld, and Adam Pauls were all born and raised in Niverville. In the spring of 2016, Wohlgemuth had been doing some song-writing and got together with fellow musician Jarred Lawrence to put some tracks together. The two felt they were on to something and decided to seek a bass player, and then a couple more musicians, to really round out their sound. When Lawrence left the group in October of that year, Adam Pauls replaced him, and Lounge FM was formed.

A year and a half after cementing their line-up, the band is preparing to release its first album, *Love Will Let You Down*, at the end of March.

"It was pretty relaxed," Wohlgemuth says of the recording process. "Adam went to school for [sound] engineering in Vancouver, so he pretty much took on this whole thing."

Being able to create the album on their own meant that the group could go at their own pace and ensure that they did everything how they wanted.

"It took a lot longer than expected, but we're really happy with it," adds



Adam Pauls, Will Neufeld, Matt Klippenstein, Corey Wohlgemuth, and Joel Braun of Lounge FM.

by MICHAELA POLL

Wohlgemuth.

Aside from working on the forthcoming album, the members of Lounge FM have spent time performing at venues around Winnipeg. Although they enjoy playing anywhere with a good audience, a few places have really stood out. Last July, for example, they played an outdoor show on the Cube Stage in Old Market Square as part of the twenty-ninth annual Winnipeg Fringe Festival.

"Being outside, playing music in

the heart of downtown, was something pretty cool to experience," recalls Wohlgemuth.

As far as indoor locations, he says, they have several favourites.

"I think collectively we like The Handsome Daughter the most. We seem to have great turnouts there," Wohlgemuth says of the bar, restaurant, and music venue in Winnipeg's West Broadway neighbourhood.

Other favourites include The Cavern in Osborne Village, The Good

Will Social Club on Portage Avenue just west of downtown, and The Park Theatre on south Osborne.

Finding venues to play hasn't always been easy. Since all of the band members grew up in Niverville, they didn't have the same connections to the Winnipeg music scene as bands from the city. Like so many industries, the music industry relies heavily on networking.

"If you want to play live shows, you have to go out there and connect

with new people and new bands," says Wohlgemuth. "If people don't know you, they're not gonna call you."

So Lounge FM has had to work hard to make themselves known and to forge relationships with people who book music venues. But the hard work is paying off, and they're finding their place in the local music scene.

While growing up outside the city created challenges, it's also had its advantages. Niverville is home to a lot of musicians, and Wohlgemuth says this helped the band members get to where they are.

"It was pretty cool growing up there, because I think everyone is a musician," he explains. "So we got to grow up watching cool bands and learning from that."

On Friday, March 30, the public will be able to see the results of all the inspiration and hard work at Lounge FM's album release show at The Handsome Daughter at 61 Sherbrook Street in Winnipeg. The doors open at 9:00 p.m., with the show starting at 10:00 p.m.

The show kicks off with local artist JayWood. Wohlgemuth describes the opening act as "really good, dancey pop songs." Then another local band, Odd Outfit, hits the stage. "Experimental jazz stuff," Wohlgemuth says. "It will blow your mind."

Lounge FM will head onto stage next to play a set. The event will finish off with the members of Lounge FM spinning some of their favourite records on stage until the end of the night.

Tickets for the release event are available from any of the three bands performing, or at the door at The Handsome Daughter.



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