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## LOCAL NEWS

### All Are Welcome Here

■ A local citizenship judge presides over a unique oath-taking ceremony this month, and muses on what it means to hold Canadian citizenship.

**Details on Page 4**



## LOCAL NEWS

### Niverville Celebrates 50 Years

■ Fifty years ago, the village of Niverville incorporated, separating from the RM of Hanover and becoming an independent local government. To mark the anniversary, The Citizen delves into the history vaults to learn how and why.

**Details on Pages 11-12**

## SPORTS & RECREATION

### Baseball Tourney Seeks to Strike Out PTSD Stigma

■ Local tournament raises money and awareness about the effects of PTSD on our local first responders.


**Details on Page 20**

## ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

### Author Receives Coveted Mentorship

■ Author Brenda Sawatzky reflects on her recently completed mentorship with the Manitoba Writers Guild.

**Details on Page 24**



**Here's to the Last Graduating Class of NCI**

»» **DETAILS ON PAGES 3, 15**

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## NCI Marks the End of an Era

By Brenda Sawatzky  
bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Students, teachers, and administrative staff filled Niverville Collegiate to capacity on June 14 to celebrate the end of one era and the beginning of a new. This fall, the school's students and teachers will branch off. Some will fill the new classrooms and halls of Niverville High School while others will return to the same building with a new name, Niverville Middle School.

The NCI Parent Advisory Council chose to commemorate the change with a one-hour event, carrying the theme of past, present, and future. A barbecue lunch followed on the school grounds.

"The NCI farewell was born from a suggestion of one of our parent members... who was interested in seeing a Grade Eight farewell, as those students would be leaving the building," says PAC chairperson Tanya Pomaranski. "The idea and discussion lent itself to the consideration that all students and staff were experiencing a change this year. Between council and administration, we quickly got on board with an overall NCI farewell."

Stories and memories were shared by the principal, teachers, student council members, and PAC. The event also served as the reveal of the middle school's new colours, team mascots, and logos.

"A part of the [new beginning] is getting a new identity for each school," said Vice Principal Craig Cumming. "That involves colours, mascots, logos, and even the school culture. That process is not an easy one... but at the end of the day, it's an opportunity to move forward and to [create] something fresh and new."

Hundreds of students provided a collective drumroll as the big reveal took place. In the end, both schools will maintain the Panthers mascot in its colours of red and black. Each school logo is designed with a new variation on that theme.

Principal Michael Koester paid tribute to four teachers retiring at the end of this school year: Tim Sawatzky, who has been teaching in Niverville since 2008; Gerald Negrave, who in 2004 received the Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Teaching; Helen Schapansky, a 23-year veteran of NCI; and Pat Fast, who has spent his entire 30-year teaching career at this school.

Teachers Deanna Wiebe and Ron Limpright took the gathered crowd on a journey into the past, covering the school's legends and losses over its many years.

Legendary teachers of the past



The new logos for Niverville Middle and Niverville High Schools. HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION

were acknowledged, including the school's long-time Phys Ed teacher Don Dulder, who brought many a team to the finals during his 37 years at NCI. Band teacher Fraser Linklater eventually left NCI for a new career as a high-profile music professor at Brandon University. Dennis Fast served as school principal for many years and retired from the position to pursue his passions for birding and photography, winning numerous awards for his work since that time.

"We had some legendary janitors [too]," said Deanna Wiebe. "Peter Friesen, also known as Popsicle Pete, prevented students from climbing on the roof by putting boards with nails [in them] on the landings spot at the top of the ladder."

Wally Shepert, a custodian known to the students and staff as The Crooner, was the country karaoke superstar, willingly sharing his voice at many of the school's talent shows.

Incredible losses are also part of the school's long history. John Kipe will be remembered by parents and NCI team members as the outstanding varsity basketball coach who died of a heart attack in 2010. His life is still celebrated every year with the John Kipe Memorial basketball tournament.

In 2012, beloved teacher Dana Dueck died in a tragic motorcycle accident at just 30 years of age. Another long-time and much-loved teacher, Ivy Friesen, was taken by cancer just a few years ago. (See page 9 for more information about Dana Dueck).

Wiebe and Limpright regaled the students with stories of NCI life some 30 years prior.

"Students today don't know the struggle," said Limpright.

Typing, they said, was done on a typewriter with no autocorrect options. Research was performed in the library with the use of encyclopaedias, and papers were written by hand in strictly cursive writing. Messages sent to a friend moved by way of a folded piece of paper circulating from student to student. Secret initiations took place when you joined a sports team and Sadie

Hawkins Day was celebrated every November.

"Emergency drills consisted of hiding under our desks in case someone in Russia hit the red button and set off an atomic bomb," mused Wiebe. "That desk was [supposed] to be the lifesaver."

Principal Koester also took the students on a reflective journey back to the school's roots in the late nineteenth century.

The first Niverville school was created in 1884, built at a cost of \$560 on land purchased for \$83. The Department of Education named it Niverville School District #315.

In 1912, the school was replaced by a larger cement block building and served the community until 1928. In 1942, as space became squeezed, a large house was moved in and remodelled for school use.

By 1947, a new four-room school was built on a site between Main Street and the formerly named Mary Street. In December 1960, that school burned to the ground, as well as two of the three bungalows that had been rented as temporary classrooms.

In great haste, five new bungalows were built and placed on the lot so children could go back to school in January.

The consolidation of school districts was on the province's agenda around that time, and residents within a 25-mile radius of Niverville, including St. Adolphe, joined the Niverville School District #315. A new six-classroom school was built at a cost of \$135,000. With the larger school district, educational supplements were provided for farm families to get their children to school.

The Hanover School Division officially opened the brand-new NCI in November 1961. By 1967, a vote was held to terminate Niverville School Division #315 and consolidate with the Hanover School Division.

Today, NCI has 642 students in 15 classrooms and 12 portable huts. Approximately 300 of these students will be moving on to the new Niverville High School.

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# All People Are Welcome Here

*As we celebrate Canada Day, a local judge reflects on her career and the meaning of Canadian citizenship.*

By Lesley Gaudry

Suzanne Carrière is well known in Otterburne and St. Adolphe, where she grew up, for her roles as a youth curling coach, volunteer, and loving wife and mom to three kids. What many don't know is that she is Canada's first Métis citizenship judge.

Since her appointment to the role on June 11, 2018, Carrière has dreamed of presiding over a first-of-its-kind citizenship ceremony, one in which all the ceremony officers and distinguished guests are Indigenous. In such a ceremony, those with ties to the very first citizens of this land would welcome new citizens.

Carrière met with Immigration Partnership Winnipeg (IPW) in January 2019 to discuss her idea, and then she approached APTN (the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network) to see if they could make it happen.

The vision came true on June 22, as part of APTN's Indigenous Day Live event. On that day, Canada welcomed 50 new Canadians from 16 different countries.

Joining Carrière were elders Barb and Clarence Nepinak, of Pine Creek First Nation; Dr. Winston Wuttunee, of Red Pheasant First Nation; MP Robert Falcon Ouellette, of Red Pheasant First Nation; MLA Wab Kinew, of Onigaming First Nation; Caroline Taubensee, of APTN; Lt. Col. George McLeod, of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation; and Sergeant Alex Bear from the RCMP, of Peguis First Nation. The ceremony was clerked by Sharon Fletcher of Fox Lake First Nation.

## PURSUING LAW

Carrière pursued a Bachelor of Arts with a double major in Criminology and Psychology and then applied to law school in Calgary.

"Law was definitely not something I thought of for years and years," says Carrière. "But it did seem true that it would open up more doors for me than what my plan was at the time."

Her decision to pursue law was founded on the notion that she'd be able to give back on social issues that were close to her heart.

"Sue is the most real kind of person you can get," says Anne Pruden, a co-worker and friend. "Her ability to connect with people is one of her many strengths. She is one heck of a lawyer."

Carrière is now one of ten judges across Canada who perform the following responsibilities: reviews case files and makes decisions on citizenship applications, presides



Suzanne Carrière, third from left, presided over a citizenship ceremony on June 22 as part of Winnipeg's Indigenous Day Live.  SUZANNE CARRIÈRE

over citizenship ceremonies where the judge administers the oath of citizenship, emphasizes the rights and responsibilities of Canadians, and distributes citizenship certificates.

## MEANING OF CANADIAN CITIZENSHIP

Most people don't think about it much, but being born a Canadian citizen is a bit like hitting the citizenship jackpot. Canadian passports are considered the world's fifth strongest. Canadians can travel to 56 countries without restrictions just because they were born in Canada. The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms reflects our national commitment to freedom, equality, inclusivity, and fairness. Many newcomers are beyond proud to receive their citizenship because of the Charter.

So what does it mean to be a Canadian citizen, and what are the responsibilities that come with that?

"It means being engaged in your community," Carrière says. "It means giving back. It means volunteering. It means helping your fellow neighbours. It means voting. It means taking care of your family. It means obeying the laws, and everything it takes to be a good citizen. There are certainly a lot of rights that go with being Canadian, but there is certainly responsibility as well. It's a two-way relationship."

She adds that the value of diversity is being challenged in the world today, and she takes every opportunity to reinforce the message that diversity is good for this country—that it makes us better and stronger.

"I want to share that people are welcome here," she says. "And if they want to contribute to this country's success, then I want to help them where I can in this role and by being and teaching what it means to be a good citizen."

## CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Carrière has presided over 156 ceremonies in Winnipeg, Brandon, Steinbach, Winkler, Thompson, Saskatoon, Calgary, Thunder Bay, and Windsor. Her largest ceremony welcomed 253 new citizens at HMCS Chippewa, an event that was accompanied by a full marching band, honour guard, and colour guard. The smallest was a private oath-taking for one in her office, done on an emergency basis so that the new citizen could travel to his homeland to say goodbye to a dying parent.

Prior to becoming a citizenship judge, Carrière gained valuable experience working as a Department of Justice lawyer and with the Independent Assessment Process, a dispute resolution process that was established to resolve claims of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse suffered at Indian Residential Schools. In that role, she heard approximately 200 firsthand accounts of abuse at the schools from survivors.

Carrière says that the work was eye-opening and life-changing. She knew about residential schools before she got involved in the work, but hearing the actual stories, in the words and in the voices of survivors, gave her a new perspective of how destructive the schools really were.

Mostly, she says she feels incredibly privileged to have been part of such important and historic work. To this day, she remains grateful to all the survivors she has met over the years for trusting her with their stories.

At a ceremony in April, Carrière had the privilege of engaging in a first for Canadian citizenship ceremonies—a marriage proposal between two new Canadians.

"During the presentation of citizenship certificates, two Middle Eastern men were called up to receive their certificates," she says. "I had a

quick chat with them, as I do with all new Canadians, but as they started to walk away, one of them quickly whispered in my ear that he wanted to propose to the other. He asked if that was possible, and I assured him it was. I wasn't going to pass up an opportunity like that!"

Once the presentation of certificates was complete, Carrière called him up to the front. In order not to give anything away, she explained to the crowd that he wanted to share with the group what this day meant to him. He came up and then asked his partner to join him.

Still unsuspecting, his partner obliged.

Then he got down on one knee and proposed.

"His partner said yes, and the crowd went wild!" Carrière recounts. "There wasn't a dry eye in the house! It was so incredibly special and moving."

Carrière later found out that the two men had been persecuted in their home country because of their sexuality, so they'd fled and come to Canada as refugees. To Carrière's knowledge, it is the first time someone has proposed at a citizenship ceremony. It's a moment she says she will never forget.

## RECONCILIATION

The June 22 ceremony, part of this year's Indigenous Day Live events, was preceded by discussion forums in which the new Canadians discussed what it means to be a Canadian citizen on treaty land and what reconciliation means. The forums were organized by IPW and the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba.

Carrière believes in reconciliation and communicates this in her ceremonies.

"Senator Murray Sinclair, before he was a senator, when he was the

chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, [said] 'Reconciliation is a very simple concept. I want to be your friend and I want you to be mine.' It's very simple and it's something that everyone can understand."

At one point, she recounts that Senator Sinclair was asked how newcomers to Canada fit in with the larger story of reconciliation. After all, many newcomers won't necessarily feel connected to the history of the Indigenous people and how that relationship has evolved.

"His comments back were, 'Even if someone is not connected to the past history, anybody who has any interest in Canada's future needs to care about reconciliation,'" she says. "That's something that I feel passionate about and something that I talk about whenever I can in this role and with this work."

## THE NEIGHBOURS

In October 2018, Gurjaspal (Jessi) Singh and Manpreet Dulay attended their citizenship ceremony after having been permanent residents for five years. Husband and wife, both employed in the IT sector, they had to wait four years before applying for citizenship. In their home country of India, their Sikh faith is considered a minority. They were fined in school for speaking their mother tongue of Punjabi rather than Hindi or English.

As soon-to-be Canadians, they had no idea who would preside over their citizenship ceremony. Likewise, as a citizenship judge, Carrière has no idea ahead of time who the new citizens will be.

When Jessi and Manpreet came forward to receive their citizenship certificates at the ceremony, it was a pleasant surprise for Carrière. After all, the couple were her neighbours.

"We were happy and proud," the couple says. "We finally feel connected. We have a place to call home. We can happily say we are Canadian and are included. We can vote now. It was quite emotional."

Since receiving his citizenship, Jessi, on top of working full-time and pursuing an MBA from the Asper School of Business, has put his name forward to be interviewed to join the Canadian Armed Forces Reserves. He is currently awaiting his security clearance.

"I want to serve the country and to give back to society," Jessi says. "Canada has done so much for us. It has given us a place to call home. Even in the way Canada as a country has treated Sikhs—like Canada has made a Sikh the defence minister—it is the minimum that we can do."

# New Before- and After-School Childcare Coming to NES

By Brenda Sawatzky

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With the Right at School program coming to a close just one year into its operations, working parents with children at Niverville Elementary once again find themselves scrambling for before- and after-school care for the upcoming year.

Semira Getachew was one of those parents. But instead of looking elsewhere for a new option, she decided to start her own. Her homespun business, M&A Before and After School, sprouted from her own childcare needs and is a response to other parents who may find themselves in the same predicament.

"When my son started school here... we were struggling to find before- and after-school care because [my husband and I both] work in the city," says Getachew. "It's really hard to live here and work in the city."

Last year's Right at School program was the answer to the problem, at least in part, but she's not surprised to hear that the program didn't last.

"I think the main concern parents had [with Right at School] was the before [school care]," says Getachew. "That was not provided... They were awesome, but [many] parents work in the city and they need both before and after care."

When she learned about Right at School's decision

to pull their operation out of town, she wasted no time in contacting the Hanover School Division and requesting space to run her own program. From there, she developed a website and put a call out to parents on Facebook.

"I'm a very big risk taker and I took the risks that I usually do," she says. "When I first launched my website... I had two parents that registered and that motivated me, and I'm like, 'Okay, two believe in me and now I'm going to go and find staff!'"

This time, she sent out a Facebook ad. The staff, she says, were surprisingly easy to find and they all live locally.

In total, five staffers have been hired. Getachew now has full-time and part-time employees with childcare certification, as well as a casual employee who's working to obtain her certification. The childcare team is rounded off by a high school student and Getachew herself, who will be quitting her full-time job to focus on the new endeavour.

"I'm actually going to have more staff than I need, just for the safety, and that way the staff are not stressed and the kids can have fun," she says.

Getachew feels her own work experience helped her come to this decision quickly. For the past seven years, she's been a senior staff worker for a company affiliated with Child and Family Services. In



Niverville resident Semira Getachew.

 BRENDA SAWATZKY

her role, she helps children who have experienced sexual exploitation and other childhood traumas. She's also a certified healthcare aide and has taken courses in daycare management.

According to provincial guidelines, M&A will be allowed to provide care for up to 30 children. After that, Getachew says new children will go on a waiting list, with preferential treatment going to kids already in the program and to siblings of those kids.

"We're going to be

her staff will work together to re-evaluate the program regularly, considering all feedback from parents and kids.

"If the staff are involved and the parents are involved, then the kids succeed," she adds. "That's my main goal."

Come the start of the new school year, parents with enrolled children will be able to drop off their kids as early as 7:00 a.m. and pick them up as late as 6:00 p.m., although Getachew hopes to provide some flexibility on pickup time for parents who are running late. Approval will need to come from the school division for that.

Ideally, her goal is to become a licensed before- and after-school care facilitator. But with paperwork that takes about six months to complete, she's run out of time for the coming year. Getachew assures parents that she'll be licensed by the time the 2020 school year rolls around.

In the meantime, M&A will run as an unlicensed daycare, but the fee structure will be based on provincial guidelines for licensed care centres. Parents will be able to sign their kids up for three, four, or five days per week and also choose only-morning or only-afternoon care.

"I want to give as many options to parents [as I can], and that way they can save money and get the care they need at the right price," Getachew says. "Not too

expensive."

Getachew is excited for the opportunities this new business will mean for her own family, as well as her long-time aspiration to open her own daycare business.

"I'll be close to home and I'll be more active with my kids," she says.

She and her husband Glenford moved to Niverville three years ago after attending the Olde Tyme Country Fair.

"We said, 'My gosh, this town is really for us,' because we're quiet people and... we always wanted to live outside of the city," Getachew recalls. "It's been really good. We really love it here. I don't think we'll ever move back to the city."

She's looking forward to being at home during the day with her three-year-old daughter Aaliyah and providing top-notch care through the M&A program for her nine-year-old son Malik.

"I'm hoping that parents put their trust in me," Getachew says of her new business plan. "Let's do this together this year, and then next year I will push until I'm licenced and then those who want to be subsidized are able to apply."

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ To enroll in M&A Before and After School's program, visit [www.mabeforeandafter.ca](http://www.mabeforeandafter.ca)

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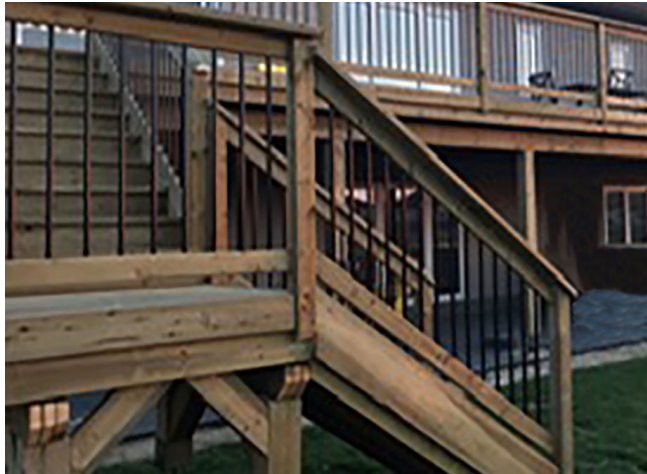
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# Elementary Students Get Lesson in Construction Techniques

**By Brenda Sawatzky**  
bsawatzky@nivillecitizen.com

For weeks, students of Niverville Elementary watched with great interest as cranes, excavators, and construction crews descended upon Country Snacks, right across Main Street from their playground.

On June 6, construction works indulged their curiosity with a lesson on construction and safety.

From 9:00 a.m. until noon, Alan Klippenstein of Three Way Builders gave guided tours to approximately 240 young students from the safe side of the construction fence.

"Before we got started [on construction] here, we just wanted to let the school know that we were going to be working here, so we went across and talked to the principal and let them know what was going on," says Klippenstein. "They mentioned that all their kids at recess were just glued to the fence, curious about what was happening. They asked if we'd be interested in giving the kids a construction tour."

That was the impetus for an event that Klippenstein says is a first for the company.

Donning oversized safety vests, the children excitedly arrived in small groups, each accompanied by a teacher. Klippenstein gathered them close, pointing out the many layers of construction that have gone into the soon-to-be gas station.

The lesson began with the importance of construction safety gear, worn by



Students gather at the Country Snacks construction site.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

Klippenstein and the many workers onsite that day.

Steel-toed boots, Klippenstein told them, have metal inside the toe and sole to prevent injury from falling debris and from sharp objects lying in the work area. Kids rose to the challenge of stomping on his boot in an attempt to inflict pain.

Klippenstein also introduced each stage of what it takes to create a gas-filling station. He pointed out the soldier piling along one side of the 15-foot hole. Made of metal beams and wood, the piling's job is to prevent soil from falling away from the existing building and damaging the structure.

"We're digging a really deep hole right here," Klippenstein told the class. "But we're digging it right next to a building, so we have to make sure we

keep that building [standing]."

At the onset, geotechnical cloth is installed along the sides and bottom of the pit to keep everything firmly in place.

On June 4, two large gas storage tanks were lowered to the bottom by a crane. The tanks are currently being pressurized to remove all the air. Gauges fitted to the top of the tanks indicate whether air is still seeping in, which could mean the existence of tiny holes, which would eventually lead to gas being released into the ground. Fuel will not be added until assurances are made that the tanks are airtight.

By Thursday, the children were witness to the crew's task of filling in the gaps around the tanks. An excavator dropped buckets of sand and gravel into the pit while it got

packed down.

"Wet sand can't fall," piped in one intuitive child.

Klippenstein, making the most of the perceptive insight, followed this with an explanation of how a construction crew uses water to pack the ground, making it resilient enough to bear the weight of concrete, cars, and trucks.

"Just like you try and make your sandcastles strong, we do the same thing on construction sites except we do it with bigger equipment," Klippenstein informed the students.

According to Klippenstein, the project will take the bulk of the summer to complete. He says the curious schoolchildren reminded him of his own five-year-old son, who already loves all things related to construction.



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The best team score award at the 2019 Ritchot Regional Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament goes to: Cory Belot, Denis Beauchemin, Roger St. Laurent and Mike Dumaine.

SUZANNE TURENNE

## Updates from the Ritchot Chamber

### Ritchot Chamber Golf Tournament

A group of 50 business leaders teed off on June 18th, a beautiful summer day at our 5th Annual Ritchot Chamber Golf Tournament held at the Lorette Golf Course. Good times were had by all! (as you can see from all the smiles ). We'd like to thank everyone who participated and sponsored the event. We could not have done it without you!

### The Chamber Gala and Business Awards

The annual Gala and Business Awards dinner is set for Saturday, November 16th at the TransCanada Centre to beat the rush on holiday parties so business members can attend. It's never too early to think of businesses that should be awarded for their role in the community.

Nominations are accepted at: [Nominate.RitchotChamber.com](http://Nominate.RitchotChamber.com)

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# Former NCI Educators Receive National Award

By Brenda Sawatzky  
bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Two deserving former educators of Niverville Collegiate were presented with the Loran Scholars Foundation Teachers Building Leaders Award on June 27 at an award ceremony in Niverville. The national award was given to Ms. Angela Burtnack-Schinkel and Ms. Dana Dueck.

To receive the award for Ms. Dueck was her mother, Wilma Keating. Dueck's teaching career ended tragically in 2012 when she died as the result of a motorcycle accident.

Former NCI student Lauren Wiebe nominated the teachers for the award. In 2015, Wiebe herself was a recipient of the Loran Scholarship, having been selected from a pool of more than 5,000 applicants on the basis of character, service, and leadership.

In Wiebe's remarks at the ceremony, she sought to honour Dueck and Burtnack-Schinkel for having made an impact on her life. "I am here today to honour and say thank you to two people in particular who drastically shaped my journey and will continue to through my whole life," Wiebe told the gathered crowd. "Ms. Dueck was my teacher, coach, mentor, and friend and I deeply wish that she was here today to receive this award..." [She] fulfilled the definition of kindness every single day in the classroom. She wanted everyone of all learning styles to feel thought of, and she often did this through ensuring her classes were fun so everyone would feel at ease and welcome."

Ms. Burtnack-Schinkel served as NCI's vice principal during Wiebe's high school years. Wiebe describes her as powerful while maintaining unconditional kindness. She was also a key contributor to emotional healing for Wiebe and the entire school after Dueck's tragic passing. "Her acts enabled me to understand that it was okay to be emotional and vulnerable," said Wiebe. "[It was] a generosity that she extended to me while she herself was grieving... She was always in my corner, advocating for me and challenging me to do more... One day I hope that I can inspire those around me like Ms. Schinkel inspires the people around her every single day."

Wiebe added that both teachers demonstrated to her the importance of treating people with respect and kindness rather than becoming self-absorbed with her own goals.

"It's absolutely wonderful," said Keating after accepting her daughter's award. "I'm not entirely surprised. She was a great teacher and we were very aware of that. She did good."

Keating added that Wiebe isn't the first student to make them aware of Ms. Dueck's incredible effect on their lives. As for dealing with the loss, Keating says it never gets easier, just different.

"It was an absolute privilege to be able to work with kids like Lauren and [teachers] like Dana Dueck," said Burtnack-Schinkel. "Lauren definitely exemplifies what we try to instill in every student that we work with. But she also reminds us to continue



Angela Burtnack-Schinkel, Lauren Wiebe, and Wilma Keating. BRENDA SAWATZKY

to reach out. Are we getting to all the kids that we need to get regardless of their background or their situation?"

Burtnack-Schinkel said she felt enormous pride when she heard she had been invited to celebrate in the accomplishments of former students and to celebrate the legacy of a teacher like Dueck.

"Lauren really is an exceptional young lady... and she just makes it easy to love on kids and to help guide them to where they want to go in life."

Burtnack-Schinkel served as vice principal of NCI for five years. Dueck and Burtnack-Schinkel's history together goes back to when Dueck began her teaching career at Steinbach Junior High under the guidance of Burtnack-Schinkel. Today, Burtnack-Schinkel serves as principal of Green Valley School in Grunthal.

After high school, Wiebe gained entrance to the University of British Columbia, studying Public Health and Political Science. After graduating with a degree, Wiebe has since been accepted to the Health Sciences University in Stockholm, Sweden. There, she'll be studying Global Public Health and will be the youngest person to take the program. Out

of 950 people who applied for the program, only 26 were accepted worldwide. Wiebe was one of those few.

She humbly suggests that she's unsure as to why she was selected.

"I really wanted to study in public health in a country that's doing it the best," Wiebe says. "All the Scandinavian countries, specifically Sweden, have the best public health system... The school that I'm going to, it's kind of their specialty. When I originally became interested in global health, there was this one Swedish physician, whose name is Hans Rosling, and he really inspired me. He started up the global health program at this university."

The program will take her 24 months to complete. Wiebe's dream job, she says, is to work for the World Health Organization, which might find her in an office in New York or Sweden. In the perfect scenario, though, Wiebe hopes to be assigned to field work in a variety of countries, designing public health interventions.

"In terms of what I'm really passionate about, it's kind of more like emergency global crises and the role that culture plays within that," Wiebe adds. "Canada just is not a hub for global health."

As to why she chose to take the time out of her busy life to honour her past educators, Wiebe says that these influential women still feel very present in her everyday life. She recommends that other students also take the time to acknowledge the positive influence of their teachers.

"[Teaching is] a very interesting career because it's one of the only professions, I would say, that don't get a lot of accolades, and there's not a whole lot of room for promotions or things like that, even though it's such a critical career," Wiebe says.

She adds that when teachers take the time to personally connect with their students, it doesn't go unnoticed.

## IN BRIEF

### Niverville Accepts Environmental Award

By Brenda Sawatzky  
bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

The June 18 meeting of Niverville's council opened on a high note as council welcomed Rodney Sage, city manager for Brandon and board member of the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA).

Sage was in attendance to offer an official congratulations and award to council for Niverville's environmental ingenuity, displayed in the lagoon's remediation through natural means.

"It is my distinct honour and privilege this evening, on behalf of CAMA, to present the Town of Niverville with an environment award as part of the awards of excellence program," said Sage. "Each year, CAMA recognizes the value of excellence and professionalism in municipal administration across Canada through the annual awards program."

He added that success stories such as Niverville's are circulated widely to provide other local governments with new ideas that may prove useful for implementation in their own communities.

For the 2019 award, CAMA received 41 nominations. Each nomination was measured on the criteria of innovation, creativity, and significant change.

"The environment award recognizes the commitment of a municipality to environmentally sustainable governance, to protecting the environment, and to combatting climate change," Sage added.

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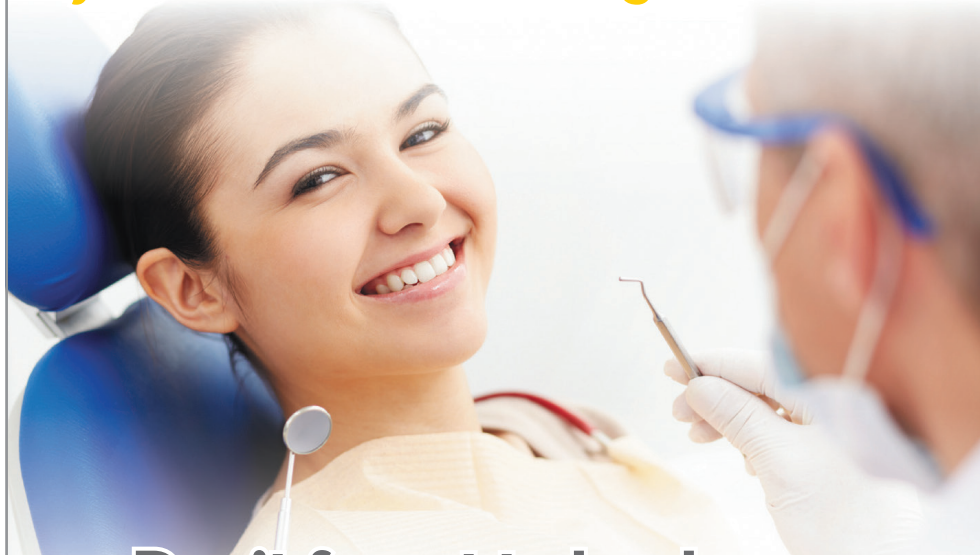
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## Local Response to Federal Government's Proposed Ban on Plastics

By Brenda Sawatzky  
bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's recent announcement of the federal government's proposed ban on single-use plastic by the year 2021 came as a welcome surprise to some local leaders.

Ritchot mayor Chris Ewen and Niverville town councillor Chris Wiebe sit on a board of the south quadrant of the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region (WMR). Together with other representatives from the RM of Tache, Roseau River First Nations, and the RM of Morris, the team has been taking a hard look at improving waste management in their areas.

Recently, they submitted a proposal to the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) in the hope that the AMM will, in turn, make a formal request of the province to eliminate the use of single-use plastic bags across the entire province.

"We, as the WMR, had not been told that anything like this was in the works federally," says Wiebe. "As a focus group, we had discussed that the only significant way to make a sustainable impact would be for the federal government to legislate such a policy."

Wiebe says most plastic bags make their way into rural communities from Winnipeg and other larger centres and yet disposal becomes a rural problem.

As a world traveller, Wiebe has seen the need for similar legislation around the globe.

"The move to eliminate plastic from our environment is a worldwide problem," Wiebe says. "I have seen firsthand some of the effects of plastic that has not been disposed of properly. On one of my travels, I witnessed plastic bags in tree lines that resembled snowbanks for miles and miles and the burning of plastics on street boulevards because they didn't have proper disposal methods. Canada generally has

good landfills and collection, coupled with some recycling, [but we're still] a long way from being [good] stewards of our environment."

Ewen, too, recognizes the need to challenge ourselves to make a difference on a local level.

"It is an absolute must to reduce our carbon footprint in any way possible," Ewen says. "This will not only create a policy, it will create a movement, which is something our generation needs to get behind."

But the federal government's proposal, if they follow through, will eliminate more than just plastic bags. The list of items under consideration are straws, cotton swabs, drink stirrers, plates, and cutlery.

Also possibly on the chopping block are items made from expanded polystyrene, such as takeout food containers and cups. Bags to be removed are those containing oxo-degradable plastics, which include additives that don't fully biodegrade and remain a bane on the environment indefinitely.

The federal government's list follows the model created by the European Union, which voted in March to ban plastic items for which alternatives exist. Trudeau also intends to make the manufacturers and retailers of plastic products accountable for creating recycling solutions for their products.

"Our approach, including determining which products fall under the ban, will be grounded in scientific evidence and closely mirror the actions being taken by the European Union and like-minded countries," Trudeau said in a press release.<sup>1</sup>

John Schmitke of Niverville Bigway is taking the new proposed legislation in stride. As a grocer, he sees most of his food products arriving pre-packaged in single-use plastic materials. He says it will take a lot of creativity on the wholesalers' end to find better alternatives since, in many cases, plastic is

the easiest and most affordable solution to packaging.

"A solution will present itself and it will be better for the environment than single-use plastic," Schmitke says.

He adds that, whatever our belief system, recycling and eliminating many plastics is just the prudent thing to do.

According to a 2019 study produced by consulting firms Deloitte and ChemInfo Services, it was found that only nine percent of plastic waste was recycled in Canada in 2016. The majority, 87 percent, ended up in landfills.

Environment and Climate Change Canada says that Canadians throw away more than 34 million plastic bags every day, and they take as long as a thousand years to fully decompose. This total doesn't even take into consideration the full effect of all single-use plastic products on our environment.

"One of the things I have noticed over the past few years is the increase of littering, and a lot of that litter is plastic," Wiebe says. "That plastic will still be there for my grandkids to deal with if we don't get a handle on this issue. As a result, I have been more concerned of my daily use of plastic and recycling."

Ewen, too, says that his response has been to pay more than just lip service to the issue.

"I can say that, as an avid believer in limiting single-use plastic, our household has eliminated any bottle water purchases," says Ewen. "We have reusable shopping bags and use the plastic bags that have been left over from others [giving] gifts to us on a reuse-cycle until they can no longer be reused."

### REFERENCE

<sup>1</sup> "Ottawa Announces Plans to Ban Single-Use Plastics Starting in 2021 at the Earliest," CBC, June 20, 2019 (<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/plastics-ban-trudeau-mcken-na-1.5168828>).



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### CITIZEN POLL

#### Do you support the federal government's proposed ban on single-use plastics?

- ☐ Yes. The ban may be difficult to implement, but it's a necessity.
- ☐ No. The economic costs of the ban will make it unpalatable.
- ☐ Have another opinion? Share your thoughts in a comment online.



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#### LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

#### Do you support allowing a retail cannabis location to open in Niverville?

Yes.	No.
<b>51%</b>	<b>49%</b>

#### YOUR COMMENTS:

People are shocked by how the crime rates have been raising lately. Well, what do you think this is going to do? Lower it? No! Cannabis will cause Niverville to be a much more dysfunctional town than what it is at the moment.  
-A. Q. Rogulinski

While it may be legal, I do not support the use of cannabis, nor the influence such a shop may be to our community and especially minors.

We think it's good business for our growing economy here. Plus the convenience of not having to travel and deal with the stress of the city

It's all natural. It's a plant. Cannabis can help ease so many mental and physical conditions. Sometimes better than most chemical based medicine can. It's also pretty good for the local economy.

People smoke weed, there's no denying that. Make it more easily available and bring some extra revenue into town instead of having us go elsewhere for the things we're gonna buy anyway.

Supported, the reasons being there is already a sizeable illegal market here. Having a legal means to purchase here will put a dent in the illegal market. Also, another business that will have to pay licence fees and business taxes to the community while providing a legal means to purchase products. Staff will have to be hired, so new job opportunities for the community. It will also bring more people to the community from surrounding communities, so an increase in shopping traffic also. And yes, there are negatives also. There might be an increase in DUI traffic, but an increased police presence could negate that. Make it illegal for minors to be on the property, not just the building, might help. Either way it's a social problem that's not going away, just like alcohol. Denying a retail cannabis store here will not make the problem go away. It will just help the illegal market here and prevent the community from benefiting from a problem that is here to stay.

-R. MOWAT



The first Niverville council is sworn in on January 6, 1969.

NIVERVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Niverville Council Meetings in Review—The First Year, 1969

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

On **January 10, 1969**, Elvin Enns of Niverville was appointed as the village's first secretary-treasurer, at a salary of \$4,000 a year.

Other appointments included John W. Enns as fire chief, Peter Bueckert as building inspector, and Bill Wachtendorf as Chief Constable. The new constable was to be in possession of handcuffs and use his own vehicle for patrolling. A minimum fine of \$3 could be charged for traffic violations.

He was also given authority to curb the use of "power toboggans" in the village, which had been causing concern to residents. Wachtendorf saw a remuneration for his services of \$100 per month.

**January 13.** Mayor Kuzenko shared a request from Labatt's Brewing for the installation of a sign at the Niverville Centennial Arena. It was hoped that the company would financially support the finishing work on the building.

**February 4.** Council created the Health and Welfare Committee to administer to residents in need. A request was also submitted to the Department of Highways for a traffic light on Main Street for the safe crossing of schoolchildren.

On this date, a review of the village's first list of expenditures showed total disbursements in the amount of \$790.

**February 17.** Council held a special meeting with a consulting engineer, B.J. Fleishman, to begin discussions on water and sewer utilities.

Council made a proposal to pay rent of \$30 per month to the Niverville Credit Union, at 86 Main Street, for meeting space, with the option of purchasing the building at a cost of \$4,500 at an interest rate of 7.75 percent.

**March 4.** Council adopted a wage scale of \$1.70 per hour for casual adult labour and \$2 per hour for foreman labour.

**March 11.** Council created an agreement with Manitoba Hydro to provide street and decorative lighting around the community for a maximum of \$4,000 per year for five years. Also, resident John Krause was appointed to serve as a weekly garbage collector with a salary of \$300 per month.

**March 21.** Council hosted delegations from the RM of Hanover and RM of Ritchot to discuss a proposal made by the Niverville Community Club regarding the creation of a tax levy to aid in the completion of the arena. It was recommended that such a levy be collected from all of the communities using the rink, including Niverville, St. Adolphe, Ste. Agathe, and Ile-des-Chênes.

**April 15.** Council passed a motion to request that the RM of Hanover create with them a joint Hanover-Niverville Recreation

Commission.

**May 21.** John H. Dyck was appointed Public Works foreman with a salary of \$2.25 per hour. His duties were to include that of the weed inspector, fire hall caretaker, machine operator, and decorative lights operator.

**July 15.** Council moved to present Bill Wachtendorf with a plaque to express the village's gratitude for his policing services in the community over the past 20 years. Mr. Wachtendorf's services were no longer needed after council agreed to hire Imperial Patrol of Winnipeg.

**August 5.** Council decided to enforce a penalty of \$50 a day against residents who kept horses in residential areas, which went against Niverville's new zoning bylaws.

**September 2.** Council entered into an agreement with Price Balchen and Associates for the construction of a new sewer system to be installed in the summer of 1970.

**September 23.** A delegation of local businessmen attended a council meeting to protest the newly painted double lines on Main Street, requesting that council replace them with single broken lines in front of business establishments. The request was overruled.

**October 7.** A delegation from the Department of Highways advised council that a study of the

flow of traffic on Main Street indicated that the amount of traffic at the intersection of the Elementary School was insufficient to warrant a traffic signal or pedestrian corridor. The representative recommended that council consider instituting parallel parking instead of the current diagonal parking in this area for the greater safety of schoolchildren.

On this date, council authorized the purchase of six chairs, a coat hanger, and a carpet for the town office building. Council also authorized the installation of a telephone in the home of the Protection Constable, at the village's cost, as well as an Olivetti Underwood typewriter for council's secretary-treasurer.

**October 14.** Council approved the payment of \$198 in property taxes for 1969 on the building that they leased from the Niverville Credit Union. Council also agreed to hire Philip Gamache and his shepherd dog for extra policing services on Halloween night.

**November 18.** Council decided to make a formal request of the Department of Highways for the construction of a centre median on Main Street.

**January 6, 1970.** Council planned to host a reception in the local Pines Restaurant in appreciation of staff and citizens who had been involved in the execution of the village's official first year of affairs.



# Niverville Celebrates 50 Years Since Incorporation:

## The Story Behind One Community's Bid for Independence

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

The large fiftieth anniversary signs at each end of Niverville's Main Street have confused more than a few locals since they first appeared a few weeks back. Perhaps these people are asking themselves, "Hasn't Niverville been on the map since the early 1870s?" The answer, of course, would be yes. And if we were celebrating Niverville's complete history, we'd be looking back at nearly 150 years of growth and progress.

So what anniversary is Niverville marking this year? 2019 represents the fiftieth year since arguably Niverville's most significant milestone: the village's separation from the RM of Hanover and its incorporation as an independent local government.

On January 6, 1969, five local visionaries stood before a provincial delegate for the swearing in of Niverville's first self-governing council.

That same day, Niverville's first mayor, William Kuzenko, received the charter for the newly incorporated village. This meant that the 660 people in Niverville would no longer be reliant on the governance of the municipality just east of its borders.

At 22 years of age, Fred Bergmann was one of those early visionaries. He is the only member of the original council still alive today. Mayor Kuzenko and counsellors Alvin Podjan, David Stoesz, and Wally Pauls have all since passed, but they've left their mark.

"We were on council not for the money," says Bergmann. "We were on council to promote Niverville. And we all did that. We all shared that vision. We wanted Niverville to grow, and by doing that we had an influx of all kinds of people."

### JOURNEY TO INCORPORATION

The movement towards Niverville's incorporation began long before 1969. Situated at the far northwestern edge of the Hanover municipality, Bergmann recalls a sense of

disgruntlement that had pervaded the community due to the lack of return they were seeing for their tax dollars. Snow-clearing and weed control, he says, were slow at best. Requests for improved infrastructure such as street lighting and sewer repairs were turned down.

Clarence Braun, a lifelong Niverville resident and former mayor (1995–2002), has always had a fascination for local politics. This was partly instilled by his father, who was involved on many of the community's boards.

Braun recalls attending a political debate at the Niverville School in 1962, at just seven years of age. One of the political hopefuls, he says, told the gathered crowd that communities need people who care enough about their town to get involved and think about the future. Those words resonated with him and others that day. They may well have been the impetus for the move toward political independence.

"The issue of great discontent here [based on] what we were getting. That was the driver [for change] right there," Braun says of the mood in the late 1960s. "There was a strong feeling that we were getting the short end of the stick."

He says that Niverville was a rather unique community in Hanover. Like Kleefeld, Blumenort, and Grunthal, the Mennonite roots ran deep. But a strong English and Scottish influence had also been present in Niverville from its beginning, demonstrated through the presence of a United Church, a dance hall, and prominent families such as the Wallaces, the Stotts, and the Churches.

"We would have been considered a bit of a different community than the other ones," Braun says.

He adds that, in the 1960s, the provincial government didn't assume as much responsibility for snow-clearing rural highways as they do now. It would have been left up to the municipalities. Hanover's maintenance shop was located in Kleefeld, a location more central to other



Fiftieth anniversary signs greet visitors to Niverville.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

communities in the RM than to Niverville.

As well, the municipality appointed a representative to each community whose job was to assess the needs of his area and make recommendations to Hanover's council. According to Braun's memory, Niverville's representative didn't even live in the community.

"The aspirations of the community had outgrown that which [Hanover] was willing to support," Braun concludes. "You can look at it two ways. You can say 'We weren't getting enough' or you could say 'We wanted more.' And both are true... If you don't have enough, you aspire to more, so obviously the communication between us and the RM wasn't satisfactory to what we wanted, and [incorporation] grew out of that."

He describes Niverville as an active, vibrant, and welcoming community even before incorporation. The business sector was also thriving for a village of its size, and after gaining independence in 1969 progress came quickly.

### MUNICIPAL TENSION

Tensions in Niverville finally resulted in action as a group of local businessmen and community champions initiated a public meeting. They proposed the incorporation of the village of Niverville and the hiring of Winnipeg lawyer Charles Chappell to represent them to the province.

"We were able to get enough people to sign [a petition] and the [provincial] government agreed that we should have our own [council]," says Bergmann.

According to a resident

at the time, Hanover wasn't pleased with the separation proposal, but they eventually agreed to the arrangement if Niverville reimbursed the RM in the sum of \$1 million to compensate for the loss of tax revenue.

Chappell appealed this arrangement to the provincial municipal board on Niverville's behalf. The municipal board later flipped things around, determining that the RM of Hanover would instead pay \$2 million to Niverville in order to assist the village in getting its start.

This odd turn of events caused much friction between Niverville and Hanover in the coming years. But it was just the boost Niverville needed to begin ambitious plans for the installation of a gravity sewer system to replace the privately owned septic fields that had been located on every lot.

"The first sewer system in Niverville was in 1970," says Bergmann. "If it hadn't been for Chuck Chappell, we [wouldn't have managed that]."

### THE FIRST COUNCIL

In the fall of 1968, the local Chamber of Commerce sponsored a candidates meeting with the five men who were running for council. All five were voted in by acclamation. On January 6, 1969, council's inaugural public meeting took place, chaired by Hanover reeve Albert Driedger. The new mayor and councillors were officially sworn

into their positions by the province's Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs, R.L. McDonald.

At the end of the meeting, lots were pulled to determine the length of each councillor's first term in office. Bergmann and Pauls were installed for one year, Podjan and Stoesz for two.

The enthusiastic new council had humble beginnings, renting a miniscule nine-by-nine-foot room in the original Niverville Credit Union at 86 Main Street. The rent for that space came to \$6 per meeting, and councillors received a monthly stipend of about \$50.

That building was later purchased by council, expanded, and used as a town office for another 50 years—it's the very building that council moved out of earlier this year.

Bergmann recalls those early meetings in the tight, poorly furnished space. Mayor Kuzenko, he says, liked to smoke cigars. It was Bergmann who finally mustered up the courage to ask him to take his habit outside.

He describes Niverville as an active, vibrant, and welcoming community even before incorporation. The business sector was also thriving for a village of its size, and after gaining independence in 1969 progress came quickly.

During his first year in office, Bergmann recalls an uncle who warned him that council's mandate for growth meant risking the arrival of a broad range of cultures and religions. Bergmann didn't see this as a threat. Fifty years later, he's still proud of his hometown, a place that boasts a lively fusion of ethnic diversity.

In fact, this aspect of the town is truer in 2019 than ever before.

In the first few months, council hired residents to fill a variety of positions, including fire chief, policing constable, public works, and garbage collection. New streetlights were added and a grader needed to be purchased to maintain the gravel streets and clear snow. In 1970, eight and a half miles of sewer mains were installed. A couple of years later, the

main streets were paved.

"We were the first in Manitoba to have a continuous sewer pipe from the pump to the lagoon," boasts Bergmann.

### GREATER AUTONOMY

Braun says that Niverville was the last community in Manitoba to separate from a municipality and gain complete autonomy over its own affairs, something that hasn't happened again in the 50 years since. And he points out that there's a reason for this.

In the past 25 years or so, he says the province has worked to create ways for communities with populations over 250 to better operate within municipalities by giving them designations as local urban districts (LUDs). LUDs can have their own elected councillors and are provided with a budget, giving them greater autonomy.

"These LUDs actually have some power," Braun says. "They speak to council about what is happening in their communities... Today, I don't know if Niverville would have to [separate from Hanover], but they certainly had to back then [in order] to move forward."

Braun recalls tension between Niverville and Hanover councils for years after incorporation, often regarding boundaries, drainage, and other disputes. In 1995, when Braun was elected mayor, council made a request of Hanover for a land annexation which would create the Fifth Avenue Estates development. By that point, he says, Hanover and Niverville's relations had improved greatly.

Bergmann now lives with his wife Susan in a Heritage Life Retirement Living suite and is enjoying retirement in the community that he's called home since the mid-1960s. Thinking back to his 12 years on council still puts a smile on his face.

He chuckles. "We have it so good in Niverville that, if anyone complains, let them come and see me!"

# Gab-Roy Celebrates 2019 Grads

By Evan Braun

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Collège Régional Gabrielle-Roy held its graduation exercises on Thursday, June 20, at La Cathédrale de Saint-Boniface in Winnipeg. The Île-des-Chênes school draws French-speaking student from throughout southeastern Manitoba.

This year's graduating class holds a special distinction this year—with 73 graduates, it's the largest crop of graduates in the school's 35-year history.

As is the school's tradition, two valedictorians were selected to represent the graduating class,

Isabelle Balcaen and Katéri Danneels.

"Over the past four years, we the graduates have become a family," said Balcaen. "We are the city-slickers of St. Norbert, the farmers of Île-des-Chênes, the neighbours of Lorette, and the cool kids of Ste Agathe. Together, we form this dysfunctional family... Every experience we have shared has helped us get to know each other better and has built relationships that we will cherish for the rest of our lives. This much-anticipated event marks the end of this long chapter of our lives and the beginning of a new, equally exciting one."

Their speech also poked some fun at and demonstrated appreciation for the school's many beloved teachers, then went on to acknowledge the quirks and unique achievements of certain members of the graduating class.

"Despite the numerous obstacles we have had to overcome throughout our journey, we have always been able to count on our teachers," Danneels said. "Thank you for the stability you have given us throughout this stage of our lives, when we were so unsure of our futures. We owe much of our successes to you."

Danneels went on to reflect on the meaning of this transitional

moment in their lives.

"This marks the beginning of us achieving the dreams we have spent so many years cultivating," she added. "Welcome to the rest of your lives, graduates of 2019! This is not a time to be afraid, but rather a time to explore new horizons, to question ourselves, and to rise to the challenges we will face. We are our own worst critics and the only ones who can stand in the way of our own success."

A host of scholarships and bursaries were also announced in which more than \$32,000 was disbursed to dozens of students.

## Math Students Named Provincial Champions

By Liz Byron

A group of Grade Nine students from Niverville Collegiate recently earned the title of provincial champions for their skills in mathematics.

On April 17, the group participated in the Newton Contest, a national math competition run by Mathematica Centrum. In each province, one school per grade level is named provincial champion based on the combined scores of each school's top-three student scores.

"It's a great accomplishment," says math teacher Helen Schapansky. "These students work very hard throughout the school year and their dedication really paid off."

Each spring, Mathematica Centrum runs a separate math contest for every grade from third to ninth. Niverville Collegiate had 46 students participate at every level from Grade Five and up.

Every year, says Schapansky, motivated students participate in weekly sessions to learn and practice math skills. No matter the age of the student, the math they study for the contest is always challenging beyond the student's grade level. The students in Grades Five through Eight are coached



Most of the NCI students who participated in this year's Mathematica Centrum Contest.

LIZ BYRON

by Schapansky, while the Grade Nine students work with Gerald Negrave.

Of the champion Grade Nine students, the top finisher was Jaxon Peters, who ranked one hundred forty-fifth in the country, putting him in the top seven percent. In Grade Seven, Kade Peters finished in the top three percent, ranking at 201 out of approximately 8,000 Canadians who took the test. Similarly impressive was Landen Buhler's finish in the top four percent of all Grade Six participants.

All three students earned a medal as the top finishers for their

school. Joining them as school champions for their grades are Ryan Smeltz for Grade Five and Damien Dalupang for Grade Eight.

### A TREND OF MATH EXCELLENCE

This isn't the first year that Niverville students have done exceptionally well in the math competition. In fact, it seems to be a trend.

In 2017, the Grade Nine students claimed the title of provincial champions as a team, and Kyra Kwiatkowski was named individual provincial champ. Back in 2008, the Grade Nine students also earned the team provincial

championship, not to mention the fact that the top two individual spots went to NCI students Brent Warkentin and Tobi Ann Jolly.

So what is it about NCI that has resulted in such achievements? Schapansky, who retires this summer, gives the credit to the kids' enthusiasm and school support.

"These kids are so motivated to learn," says Schapansky, smiling. "In June, they were already asking me about next year and when they can sign up for next year's math contest. I think there is great value in being part of a team, and in celebrating excellence, which is what we do."

She also notes that the school sets students up for success in math by offering numeracy support. The school also gives the students opportunities for math enrichment by participating in this voluntary competition.

The extra hours spent learning math skills aren't just important in terms of individual scores, nor in terms of the contest, Schapansky adds.

"Math is a skill that is useful on its own," she says. "But it's also a great way to train your brain to think logically and analytically and to solve problems. And then, of course, that transfers to all sorts of other skills."

IN BRIEF

## Childcare Centre Nets Large Donation

By Evan Braun

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St. Adolphe's Childcare Centre announced a major donation on Friday, July 6, with Tourond Creek pledging a total of \$20,000 towards the community project. This donation included a \$15,000 contribution for the hub space, and another \$5,000 specifically for a climbing wall. The centre's current fundraising goal is \$110,000.

In late March, the RM of Ritchot approved a proposal to expand the daycare with 90 new spaces and begin renovations to the building at 372 Main Street, St. Adolphe, where construction is already underway.

"This funding from the Tourond Creek group will go a long way in helping us reach our fundraising goal of \$110,000 to properly equip and furnish our expanded daycare," says Joelle Sylvestre, chair of the fundraising committee. "We will not stop at \$110,000, but that is what is needed to open the doors once construction is complete. We are extremely grateful of the ongoing support of the Tourond Creek group, community members, volunteers, and the RM of Ritchot."

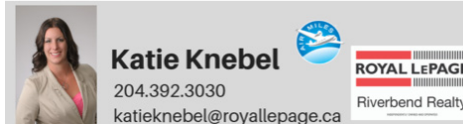
The daycare currently operates out of the St. Adolphe School and has 23 licensed spots. Their educational offerings include nursery school, preschool, and school-aged programs.

"The developers of Tourond Creek are excited about the changes happening in St. Adolphe," says Jon Powell, Project Manager for Tourond Creek. "This daycare will provide childcare opportunities close to what matters to the residents of Tourond Creek and the community of St. Adolphe as a whole. We are happy to support this community-driven initiative for the current and future residents of St. Adolphe."

\$374,000



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# Seniors Spotlight: Jules and Raymonde Manaire

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Jules and Raymonde Manaire love their hometown of St. Adolphe for its quiet, peaceful, and friendly qualities. When they moved here in 1969, they were surrounded by wheat fields and summer breezes. The parish on Main Street was the hub of community activity and there were plenty of ways to get involved in village life.

"When we first moved here, Jules was with the Knights of Columbus... and I was with the Catholic Women's League," says Raymonde.

It was the perfect way to make new friends and feel like you belonged. Now, 50 years later, the couple is still invested in making the community a great place to live. Seven years ago, with the help of friends, the couple founded the St. Adolphe Forever Young Dance Club.

"We used to go dancing in different towns," Raymonde says. "Denise and Romeo Belisle were with us and we said, 'Maybe we should start one in St. Adolphe,' so it went from there."

The Pioneer Hall heats up eight times a year now with live local bands and old-time dances. Fun-seekers drive in from Winnipeg and many rural communities around Manitoba to shake up the dance floor with waltzes, polkas, and good old-fashioned square dancing. "[Everyone's about] our age," says Jules. "Some older, some younger."

And at 76 and 73 years of age, that's saying something about these young-at-heart souls. The Manaires' hope, though, is that younger generations will see the value in these community events and get back in touch with their Metis roots through dancing.

Many of the local bands hired have a distinctly Metis sound with fiddles and vocals and square dance callers.



Jules and Raymonde Manaire with friends Denise and Romeo Belisle.

JANICE BURNETT

"We have good bands," Jules says. "The best!"

At any given event, the couple says they average between 120 to 150 attendees. The \$15 cover fee amply takes care of the hall rental and cost of the luncheon Raymonde and a few other senior ladies prepare beforehand. Twenty percent of the funds raised go back to the Pioneer Hall for ongoing renovations.

Thanks to the Forever Young Club and grants that Jules has applied for, they've been able to put in new flooring, blinds, ceiling, and paint. Currently, they hope to recover the cloth chairs and then begin renovations on the canteen, coat room, and bar.

Funds from the dances also help the community in other ways. After their May event, they were able to donate \$1,100 toward upkeep at the cemetery, including the purchase of a new riding mower.

But without help from a new generation of volunteers, things like this may soon become a thing of the past.

The community's annual fall supper is another long-standing

tradition the couple has been actively involved in over the years. Proceeds from the supper are integral to the maintenance of the St. Adolphe parish, but as church attendance declines, so do the volunteers.

"It's always the same group [volunteering]," she Raymonde, suggesting that most everyone on these committees are in their mid-seventies or older.

As long as they're capable, the Manaires hope to keep the dance scene alive and kicking in St. Adolphe.

"When I was a teenager, that was our social [outlet]," says Raymonde. "We'd go to the hall and the girls would sit on one side and the guys would sit on the other... There was a lot more girls than there were guys, so we learned to dance with each other."

It's no surprise then to discover that the couple first met 55 years ago at a dance in St. Boniface.

"That's where all the single people would go to meet," says Raymonde. "We were sitting at the same table and there was paper on the table, so

we were writing little notes and I sent one across."

And the rest is history. They married in 1966 and moved to St. Adolphe after a brief time in Winnipeg. Here, they raised their son Paul and daughter Suzanne. They summered at their cottage in Buffalo Point and curled at the local rink in the winter months. Jules enjoyed a few years playing senior hockey. Today, they have four grandchildren ranging in age from 10 to 18.

Jules was born and raised in Fort Frances, Ontario. He moved to Manitoba as a young adult to be closer to his sisters and find work in the construction industry. For most of his career, he operated an excavator for a Winnipeg company, installing sewer and water infrastructure.

At 76, he's only partially retired. The backhoe he keeps in the garage still provides him with part-time work doing private jobs in the summer months and clearing snow in the winter. After a fresh snowfall, he rises at 4:00 a.m. so that residents can get to work on time.

During the 1997 flood, Jules

was one of the few residents who remained in the community to operate heavy equipment alongside the military that had arrived to carry out flood assistance.

Raymonde grew up in St. Jean Baptiste but moved to Winnipeg after graduation to pursue an education in accounting. She worked at Great West Life until her first child was born, then happily took on her new role as a mother and community champion.

The couple both grew up on family farms and were no strangers to hard work and little play. They're also keenly aware of how their lives were changed for the better by the great-grandparents who came before them.

"Land was very scarce in the province of Quebec and a few of the seniors came to Manitoba to see what was available," says Raymonde of her great-grandfather's arrival in this province.

In the case of both of their forefathers, a 40-acre square of land was provided to begin their farm livelihoods. But Raymonde says it was mostly bush and full of stones, requiring hard labour to make it productive.

"The men came first and they built little huts and lived in there," Raymonde says. "There might have been one or two ladies that came along to cook and clean."

That was how many immigrant farmers got their start so many years ago. Thanks to their perseverance, couples like the Manaires have been able to enjoy the fruits of that hard work.

Having built their own long-time home in St. Adolphe, Jules and Raymonde don't look forward to leaving. Before too long, they hope the community will invest in seniors housing so they can continue to live out their retirement in their beloved hometown.

# The Last Grad Class of NCI

By Evan Braun

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Under the traditional strains of Pomp and Circumstance, the last graduating class of Niverville Collegiate Institute marched toward the future at this year's graduation ceremony on Wednesday, June 26. These 55 students said goodbye to NCI, and so did all the rest of us. While next summer will produce another crop of promising graduates, they will be products of Niverville High.

"Whatever this day may mean to you, one thing stands clear: it's a special and unforgettable day on which you will look back with cheerful memories and happy tears," said Principal Michael Koester. "A high school diploma is a significant beginning to a twenty-first-century education." Koester went on to issue advice and offer his perspective on what it takes to thrive in today's workforce.

"When I was your age a long time ago, we defined the illiterate as those who couldn't read and write, but now there's a new twist," he said. "The illiterate of today are those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn. With globalization and the rate of information flow in this day and age, one must be prepared to shed outdated information and relearn to stay relevant. Therefore, continuous learning is necessary in the rapidly changing world we live in."

In presenting an award on behalf of the Town of Niverville, Mayor Myron Dyck also took the opportunity to speak.

"As the hockey fan that I am, there are hockey drafts they say are deep," Mayor Dyck said. "This means there are many more talented players available in a given year... I've been told this



The 2019 graduating class of Niverville Collegiate.

TRISH PALUD

graduating class would be considered a deep draft class, a class of many exceptionally smart and talented individuals, a class of world-changers, a class of over-achievers, and a class that has by far the best-looking parents."

He earned a few well-deserved laughs from the audience for that one.

"The Town of Niverville is growing and there is a great need for people of your drive and your intellect," Mayor Dyck continued. "We need professionals, engineers, lawyers, entrepreneurs, teachers, and a host of other professions... To those who are staying in town, I say thank you. To the others, I invite you to have your gap year, learn your trade, achieve your degree, but when that is done I am personally inviting you to come back. Please consider my invitation to help to keep Niverville a place where people want to belong. We need you."

Mayor Dyck also extended words of appreciation to the various teachers and educators who are retiring from the community's

schools this year, including Helen Schapansky, Pat Fast, Mary Klassen, Shari Davey, and Suzanne Church.

## THE HIGHWAY OF LIFE

"Life is like a highway," announced valedictorian Stefan Bardal to his classmates to a chorus of good-natured chuckles. "You can't turn around or even slow down, because you're stuck with everyone else in the gridlock of time, constantly edging on until the end of the line. Grad, and all of high school, is just another milestone along the highway—a sign showing that we are all just a bit closer to the end of the road."

Bardal continued the metaphor, relaying a story of travelling with his aunt along the highway when they were suddenly confronted with a wall of rain that almost stopped them in their tracks. Other vehicles had pulled over, waiting out the storm.

His aunt, he said, kept on driving, believing that even slow progress was better than no progress. Soon they emerged on the other

side of the storm.

"What I'm getting at is that even when your life gets stormy, when things get gloomy or hopeless, you've just got to push through," Bardal said. "You can't wait for problems to leave you or you'll be stuck on the side of the highway, getting nowhere. Even when you can't see three feet in front of you and you have no idea what lies ahead, just keep trudging on."

Bardal, who has attended school in Niverville since the second grade, sat on student council, served on the yearbook committee, and graduated with an average of 95 percent in his classes. Outside school, he found ways to invest in the community by volunteering with the Junior Gardeners Club. He'll be attending the University of Manitoba in the fall, with a plan to study microbiology or virology.

"I've always found biology, in general, very interesting," Bardal says. "I want to go into the medical field, not like a general practitioner but I want to work in a lab."

## IN BRIEF

### School Division Reinstates Addictions Counsellor

By Evan Braun

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The Hanover School Division is poised to reinstate an addictions counsellor to serve students in the school division.

According to Superintendent Randy Dueck, the position had to be eliminated in April due to budget shortfalls. The counsellor had been provided by Addictions Foundation Manitoba.

Due to additional funding from the provincial government, a half-time counsellor will be rehired in time for the next school year. Dueck says he is grateful for the funding, which totals \$40,000, as he realizes that addictions counselling is an area of particular need.

It has been reported that the previous counsellor observed a significant increase in meth use among the division's students.

After the counsellor was let go in April, Dueck says the division had decided to address the service shortfall by training their existing counsellors and social workers to fill this role. He now says the additional training will continue even though the addictions counsellor position has been retained.



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# Ritchot Council Approves Tourond Creek Rezoning

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Approximately 50 St. Adolphe residents gathered at Pioneer Hall on the evening of Tuesday, June 25 to participate in a special public hearing for the rezoning of a portion of the Tourond Creek development. The developer had requested a change in zoning from Commercial General to Residential General on almost five acres of land just north of the development's main entrance.

Delegates from Stellar Capital Inc., the Lombard North Group, and Forthright Properties opened the meeting with addresses to council, explaining in full the reason for the rezoning, which would allow the developers to begin work on a series of multifamily units on that site.

At the public hearing, council voted on the rezoning only. The vote was passed with all councillors voting in favour and Mayor Chris Ewen voting against.

Now that it's been approved, a conditional use hearing will be required down the road for approval of the multifamily development. At the next meeting, an exact site plan, including renderings and layout, will be presented.

This was the second rezoning request by the developers of Tourond Creek. The first, in May 2018, was denied by council when a large contingent of residents voiced concerns over the loss of potential commercial space in the community.

Other concerns were based around the fear of low-cost housing in a high-end development and the potential for three- or more-storey units which could overlook the neighbours' backyards.

While the developer's plans hadn't changed much from the previous attempt, this time their approach was different. In 2018, they applied for a multifamily zoning, which wouldn't require a conditional use permit, giving them the freedom to build according to the flexibility within the RM's bylaws. This, they believed, is what caused concern among local residents.



Ritchot's council meets to consider a rezoning request by Tourond Creek.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

Under this new application, the request for a zoning change to Residential General means that a second application for multifamily units within that zone gives council a stronger voice on the outcome.

"So what's really different is that this time there is complete control [by council]," said Keith Thiessen of Forthright Properties.

Thiessen went on to explain that when the Tourond Creek Secondary Plan was first created, this parcel of land was intended as Mixed Use, which provides for a combination of multifamily and commercial.

At the time of lot registration, zoning bylaws in the municipality had no Mixed Use options. Council of the day recommended a Commercial General designation, the closest thing the bylaws offered to Mixed Use.

According to those bylaws, Commercial General allows for a variety of uses, including convenience

stores, drive-ins, farm supply stores, gas bars, and hotels.

"What this means is that, within the current zoning, a 45-foot high hotel is permitted and therefore wouldn't require a public hearing," Thiessen said. "The Residential General zoning has only a few permitted uses: single-family houses, a duplex, park space, and public buildings."

Thus, he adds, rezoning according to the developer's current request is considered a downsize and should be viewed as less of a threat to the neighbourhood. There would be less traffic, less noise, fewer smells, and less light pollution.

The various delegates also reminded residents that 6.5 acres of land opposite the section in question is still designated Commercial General and provides ample space for business development even once the community reaches 5,000 residents at Tourond Creek's full build-out.

Councillor Janine Boulanger

inquired as to what the delegates have done to try and promote awareness of the commercial land available in the community.

A representative of Capital Commercial Real Estate suggested there are key factors that retail companies look at before moving into a community. These include the population base, proximity to high-way traffic, proximity to the greater market surrounding the community, and co-tendency, which refers to a large box store or grocery store. Having a key business like this in the area attracts the traffic which smaller retailers benefit from.

"The challenge for this site is that we're going to need an anchor," the representative said. "We're going to need something of some size to start the project off. Our approach to this... is to look at that anchor tenant. The key anchor tenant is a grocery store."

He added that all the key grocery

store players have been contacted over the past three years and all came back with the same response: the population is not yet at a level to support a new location in St. Adolphe. National chain restaurants have also been approached, but their response is similar: "Who's your anchor tenant?"

"We believe that a development such as the multifamily across the street would be incredibly important to entice these people," he said. "We're really anxious to have new [growth numbers] that we can present to them, and especially density. That's another couple of hundred [people] that would be right at their doorstep."

Council opened the meeting to residents wishing to speak for or against the rezoning application. Four letters were received prior to the meeting in favour of the proposal and three residents appealed to council to approve the application.

"I've lived in St. Adolphe for 80-some years," said Mr. Brodeur. "I was in business for over 50 years. I am very, very pleased to see that someone's going to come into my community and invest in it... There is six acres left and I hope in my wildest dreams that the six acres will be full [of businesses] in 20 years."

Five letters were received by council in opposition to the proposal. Another five residents came forward to represent their reasons for objection. Similar to the 2018 public meeting, the sentiments conveyed a concern over the loss of potential commercial space.

"I support the fact that we do need [multifamily housing units] in St. Adolphe," said resident Robert Doiron. "[But] if you take away this land now, there will be no commercial land left in St. Adolphe." Doiron added that approval of this rezoning might set a precedent, eventually leading to the other 6.5 acres being rezoned to residential. "I think that if you allow this plan to move forward, the other side of the land needs to be retained as commercial."

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"If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door."  
- **Milton Berle**

"The most important thing in your life is to live your life with integrity and to not give into peer pressure to try to be something that you're not."  
- **Ellen DeGeneres**

"My dear terrified graduates, you are about to enter the most uncertain and thrilling period of your lives. The stories you are about to live are the ones you will be telling your children, and grandchildren, and therapists."  
- **Lin-Manuel Miranda**

"A river cuts through rock not because of its power but because of its persistence."  
- **Proverb**

"The world does not pay for what a person knows. It pays for what a person does with what she knows."  
- **Hyacinth Mottley, Words of Wisdom**

"Don't confuse having a career with having a life." Hillary Clinton  
"Struggling to decide what to do after graduation is, and always will be, a sort of rite of passage to the next phase of your life."  
- **Gloria Davidson, When Graduation Spits You Out**

"Even if you are on the right track, you will get run over if you just sit there."  
- **Will Rogers**

"Big pay and little responsibility are circumstances seldom found together."  
- **Napoleon Hill**

"You can't make decisions based on fear and the possibility of what might happen."  
- **Michelle Obama**

"The world is full of wonderful things you haven't seen yet. Don't ever give up on the chance of seeing them."  
- **JK Rowling**

"We have to choose between what is right, and what is easy."  
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## IN BRIEF



Jolene Kehler.

HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION

## Niverville Elementary Lands New Vice Principal

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

On Monday, June 24, the Hanover School Division announced the appointment of a new vice principal for Niverville Elementary School. The board of trustees has selected Jolene Kehler for the post.

Kehler, who currently teaches at Mitchell Middle School, will transition into her new role in time for the new school year beginning in September.

She has taught in Mitchell since 2005 and currently holds the position of learning support and resource teacher, having served in that capacity since 2014. Her teaching experience at Mitchell Middle School also includes nine years as a Grade Six teacher and part-time guidance counselor.

"The board of trustees and administration of Hanover School Division congratulate Ms. Kehler, and wish her all the best in this new appointment," reads a statement from HSD.

## Spring Fundraiser to Boost Ritchot Senior Services

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

On Saturday, June 15, from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Ritchot residents came out and joined their neighbours for some old-fashioned good times at 457 Main Street, St. Adolphe.

Visitors enjoyed an outdoor barbecue of hot dogs or pulled pork, then dug into some of Grandma's home baking at the bake sale.

When that was done, they tried some friendly competition in games like the bean bag toss, ladder ball, giant Jenga, hula hoops, and a horseshoe tournament.

Guests could also drop tickets into the silent auction draw for a slew of fantastic prizes including a hockey stick signed by Blake Wheeler, tickets to Rumors Comedy Club, an automatic garage door opener, and dozens of unique items and gift certificates provided by local businesses.

Janice Burnett, RSS resource coordinator, drew special attention to one prize in particular she was certain the kids would love.

"I will just say that it contains a seven-foot inflatable rainbow



A lap quilt created by the Made With Love ladies.

JANICE BURNETT

sprinkler as well as some unicorn toots," she says. "But one of my favorites is an Inflatabull... Someone is going to have a summer full of fun!"

What's an Inflatabull, you may ask? As you might be able to guess from the name, it's a large inflatable rodeo bull for the beach or pool.

The raffle was accompanied by an auction on a few amazing handcrafted items created by the Made With Love ladies. One of this year's 45 beautiful lap quilts and a hand-knit shawl was up for grabs.

The Made With Love ladies spend their winters tirelessly sewing, knitting, and gifting their treasures to the Alzheimer's Society and women's shelters across Winnipeg.

The proceeds from the Jour de Plaisir help provide year-round programming for the seniors of Ritchot.

Burnett hopes to raise enough money to also provide group transportation for social events throughout the year such as shopping trips, garden tours, and Christmas festivities.

"RSS is a non-profit organization," says Burnett. "Fundraising is how we are able to provide the little extras to our seniors when they are attending events and activities. Simple things such as refreshments, coffee, and prizes would not be possible without fundraising. Since I became the coordinator at RSS, I have been able to offer a summer barbecue to the group with... an afternoon of games, creating a wonderful social activity."

Since these seniors have invested so much of their own lives into their communities, Burnett's goal this year was to raise \$1,500.

"We are run completely by a volunteer board," Burnett says. "[They are] a great bunch of ladies that come together... throughout the year to volunteer their time without a moment's hesitation. [For this event] every board member has taken on the responsibility of searching out silent auction prizes and on the day of the event we will work together to keep everything running as smoothly as possible so that it is a day enjoyed by all that attend. We hope to see you there."

# Commentary

## The World Is Our Classroom

By Greg Fehr

I've always appreciated Mark Twain's advice of not allowing school to get in the way of your education.

That isn't to knock the benefits of our school curriculums but rather to acknowledge that the courses offered by our fine institutions provide only part of the skills and knowledge our students need to succeed in this world. Not only to succeed, actually, but to make impacts and advance our society beyond where we are today.

And what a timely discussion this is, as we turn a fresh crop of graduates onto the world!

The pace of change in our communities and economies has created a situation unparalleled in our history. Historically, we dealt with changes on a generational basis—that is, the new generation could learn from the previous generation, building on existing procedures, methods, or systems.

Generally speaking, we took what our parents did and enhanced them, without engaging in much reinvention. In most cases, you could choose your trade or practice and then work that job successfully until retirement through natural learning and



DEPOSITPHOTOS

adaptation.

This is no longer the case. A university student in a four-year program may notice that by the time they graduate, the knowledge they learned in their first year is bordering on obsolescence.

In many cases, we are preparing our students for tasks that don't yet exist, that will use technology that hasn't been invented yet, through methodology that is still in development.

So how do we prepare our youth—and ourselves?

Perhaps we should place our focus on the fundamentals of the human

spirit.

Since the pace of change is fast, and getting faster all the time, it will be critical for us to teach our young people how to adapt. If today's curriculums are bound to be obsolete before too long, we should inspire in students a love of learning rather than focusing on the material itself.

In other words, perhaps we can teach them *how* to learn rather than *what* to learn.

Ingenuity, adaptation, creativity, curiosity... these are the traits previously reserved for and required by our civilization's great thinkers, inventors, and entrepreneurs. Now

we all must learn them.

This will require enormous efforts by our educational institutions, yes, but also by society as a whole.

To impart this wisdom, we'll need to take a cooperative and combined approach.

Successful learning depends on having a willing pupil and a diligent teacher; we all take on both roles at various times, and we must be conscious and reverent of the part we play, looking for ways to both gain and impart wisdom, even if it seems non-traditional.

What did you learn from your first employer? Or perhaps it would be a

better question to ask, what do you wish you had learned?

We need only look at ourselves to realize that our assets, and opportunities, are the result of a wide range of experiences. We carry within ourselves a little bit of everything we've ever seen, heard, and done. And yes, we take with us parts of the people we've met. The neighbour next door, the community leader, the stranger with whom we strike up a conversation... every relationship is an opportunity.

And then we take all of this and make it our own, incorporating it into who we are. In this way, the world is our classroom.

Perhaps the attribute that will best prepare us all is humility. Humility is so much more than the absence of ego; it's the acceptance of our shortcomings, our lack of knowledge, that makes us willing pupils. Having grace for our own errors allows us to have grace for the ignorance of others. Grace and humility are key attributes for nursing effective relationships, and they pave the way toward the relational approach to both learning and teaching that we all need.

Class is now in session! No textbooks required.



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# Sports & Recreation

## Hespeler Park Fundraiser Shines Light on PTSD Stigma

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Residents of Niverville, in collaboration with the Canadian Mental Health Association Central (CHMAC), took action this spring to fight the stigma attached to PTSD suffered by emergency first responders.

On June 15, the first annual S.O.S. (Strike Out Stigma) Slo-Pitch Tournament and Family Fun Day took place at Hespeler Park in Niverville. The teams consisted primarily of emergency medical staff from around Manitoba.

"We had teams from Niverville, Ile-des-Chênes, St. Malo, Ritchot, the Interlake, Steinbach, MacDonald, and Springfield," says co-coordinator Lindsay Unrau. "We had paramedics, firefighters, police, EMRs, correctional officers, and some nurses playing."

Unrau says 13 teams participated, with the top three receiving medals. Green Eggs and Slam took second place, and Batter Up came in third.

The winner of the tournament, the Trauma Troopers, received a complimentary dinner at the Great Canadian

Brewhouse.

The whole region was encouraged to come out and support their team and enjoy the many other events going on in the park that day. Beyond the tournament, attendees enjoyed a carnival, face-painting, and a bouncy castle for the kids. The splash pad was open as well. Generous gifts were donated for a silent auction and a 50/50 draw saw one lucky winner. A canteen and barbecue kept everyone's appetites satisfied.

Niverville firefighters were on site, serving at the beer gardens. Proceeds from alcohol sales were split between the Niverville Fire Fundraising Initiative and CMHAC. Funds raised from the other attractions assisted the CMHAC in their efforts to strengthen current programming and add new programs to aid first responders living with PTSD.

"We are so excited about the results and look forward to giving the Canadian Mental Health Association Central a cheque of \$3,000 to be used on new peer-to-peer support programs," says Unrau, who adds they're already gearing up for next year.

She says the frequency of



Eldon and Lindsay Unrau, event organizers.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

PTSD among first responders is concerning. The Canadian Journal of Psychiatry cited the results of a 2017 survey which showed that police, paramedics, firefighters, and 911 operators had a much greater likelihood of developing mental disorders such as PTSD than the larger population.

Stigma and discrimination, she says, remain the primary concerns when seeking help.

"PTSD in first responder services has become a prevalent issue," says Unrau. "Speak with any first responder and they can recount the most horrific call they've ever been on and how it personally

affected them. When a community hero needs to be saved, who saves them?"

Unrau herself is very close to the issue. Her husband Eldon, who was also the primary event coordinator, has been a long-time paramedic and former Niverville volunteer firefighter.

Just two years ago, Eldon listened in on an emergency call out to a motorcycle accident. He followed along closely as fellow paramedics worked tirelessly to save the victim's life. Unfortunately, the victim died on scene.

Shortly after, Eldon discovered that the victim was his

own brother.

"It's impossible to describe what it's like to have listened to your brother dying over your work radio," Unrau says, adding that it changed her husband's life forever. "Paramedics handle grief differently... They compartmentalize and only allow themselves to experience the personal trauma of the call when they feel it's safe to do so."

By searching for help, the couple found the CMHA and eventually decided to partner with them to bring the same support to other first responders and their families.

Others on the S.O.S. committee have been too close to the affects of PTSD.

Mandi Bueckert, a ten-year paramedic veteran, recently returned to her job after a year's battle with PTSD. Her symptoms came as a surprise since there was no one triggering event she could put a finger on. Rather, it was an accumulation of triggers.

"My day to day life was affected by my [lack of] ability to handle minor stresses," says Bueckert. "I would get upset at the drop of a hat. I felt an overall sense of doom... I lost confidence in myself and the

ability to do my job. I didn't realize any of this, of course, until I began treatment and my journey of self-care... I fully believe the stigma of a potential diagnosis holds people back from seeking help—and it shouldn't."

Andee Hiebert has worked in emergency medical services for 20 years. About 15 years into her career, trauma began to fill her dreams and anxiety kicked in when emergency radio calls came through. It took everything in her to prevent a panic attack en route to calls.

"This was definitely not something people talked about when I started experiencing this," says Hiebert. "Then one day I reached my breaking point. I couldn't stop the panic... Every fear came true for me and I questioned why I even do this job. I cried that day and the next day and the next and I didn't know when it would end."

Hiebert says it took more than two years, with the aid of professional help, to fight that inner battle. She's since returned to work and, with the support of his colleagues, her love for the job and the people she serves has returned.



Beach volleyball action at Hespeler Park.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

### Beach Volleyball Hits the Sand in Niverville

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

On June 6, the beach volleyball court in Hespeler Park saw a renewal of activity as fans and players kicked off the first games of the season. Running from June until mid-September, the local league will play every Thursday night from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Two teams from Niverville and one from Ile-des-Chênes round out the league.

Coordinator Andrew Maronese and his wife Chelsea decided to make Niverville their home just over a year ago. A volleyball enthusiast, he coached a Niverville Junior High team this past winter. He also played in a Winnipeg league himself.

"Apparently these courts haven't been used in a few years," says Maronese. "I was talking to Niverville Recreation and they were excited that it was coming back. It seems like there's lots of interest in the area. Apparently Niverville is a very big volleyball town."

It was at a Steinbach volleyball tournament that the idea for a Niverville league was born.

"Talking to a few people there, they said, 'It would be nice to have a beach volleyball league,' so I thought, 'Why not start something here?'" Maronese says.

In spring, Maronese put out a call on Facebook and was pleased with the response. Since then, the Niverville Beach Volleyball League's Facebook page has attracted about 75 members.

Registration is closed for this season, but he hopes the site will garner enough interest over the course of the next few months to grow into something bigger. Currently, the teams are co-ed with 9 to 10 players on each.

Games are played six-on-six, leaving plenty of subs on each team to allow for players to go away on vacation over the summer months. Players range in age from 18 to mid-40s.

Maronese says there's little difference between beach and court volleyball except for the lack of grip since the game is played barefoot on a sandy surface.

"For co-ed, we're playing on a lower net so there's some [different] rules with that," he adds. "Guys can only hit back row instead of front row and some other rules."

He intends to keep the games competitive by providing a prize for the winning team at the end of the season.

With registration closed, Maronese invites interested individuals to come out and join the spikeball tournaments every Tuesday night throughout the summer.

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The new nature playground at Niverville Elementary.

CARA DOWSE

## Niverville Elementary Adds Nature Playground

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Niverville Elementary School has unveiled the latest upgrade to their school grounds: a nature playground.

Located in the northwest corner of the property, the playground has been in development for the last few months.

"The idea of building the nature playground has been part of the planning for the outdoorspaces for about three years," says Tracy Beaudin,

principal of NES. "The reason that a nature playground was chosen as part of our design plan was that it allows for a child's imagination and creativity to develop in a different way compared to a traditional playground. It allows the children to decide how they want to play and interact with the items that are there... It gives the students more options at recess."

In addition to giving students another location on the playground to explore and play, Beaudin says, it also

mimics a more natural setting. "We have fresh sod in the area, so we are waiting a few weeks for that to be ready to walk on," she adds.

Students at the school were able to begin accessing the new play area in mid-June.

The project was a large financial commitment, and the school's Parent Advisory Council took the lead in organizing the necessary fundraisers.

The work was contracted out to Valleywest Landscaping.

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Brent Richards, Donald Eidse, and Chris Richards at Ride for Mom 2019. Brent and his son Chris raised \$4,100 between them for CancerCare Manitoba.

## ATV Fundraiser Brings in Big Dollars for CancerCare

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Saturday, June 1 marked the fourth annual Eastman ATV Ride for Mom, a fundraising event in support of CancerCare Manitoba. According to the organizers, this year's event was far larger than previous years, both in terms of the number of riders as well as donations.

In the three previous events, Ride for Mom raised about \$31,000. 2019's event alone brought in about \$20,000 for CancerCare Manitoba. There were 411 riders, 235 passengers, and 55 volunteers and vendors.

"We are truly excited about the big increase in collections, as that's the point of this entire

event—to raise more money for CCM every year," says Donald Eidse, President of the Eastman ATV Association. "So congratulations to all the riders collecting pledges, volunteers making this happen, and all our sponsors that made this event possible!"

In addition to the ride itself, attendees also enjoyed a barbecue lunch and had the chance to win prizes through door prizes and a 50/50 draw.

But of course the highlight of the event was hitting the trail.

"The Ride for Mom route this year is about 85 kilometres," says Eidse of the trail which winds its way through the Sandilands. "The eastern path travels along an escarpment for a while

with a winding and twisting path. It had one water-fording [area] this year. There is bumpy, rocky trail as you get close to the Dawson Trail. It's sometimes dusty [and there's] sometimes big puddles. This time... it was dusty."

The Dawson Trail then brings riders to the Eastman Staging Area, which according to Eidse is the first official staging area of its type in Manitoba.

"This is where a trail ride could normally start," he says. "[It's] where you can park your truck and trailer, unload your ATV, and go ride for the day on a signed trail. The back half of the trail we use is more fire road to allow a different pace for a while. Most [riders] seem to like that, too."

He says there are several key features of the trail that make it popular.

First of all, it follows the provincial standards set by ATM Manitoba, which means that it's safe and is able to be insured. Secondly, it's a signed trail. And finally, it follows an escarpment and has areas with a nice treed canopy.

"On a longer ride like this, maybe your 14-year-old wants to drive a bit," Eidse says. "This is a great trail to learn on with its inherent safety features built in."

Eidse and the rest of the Eastman ATV Association are already making plans to make next year's event even better.

IN BRIEF



The baseball diamonds at Hespeler Park in Niverville. BRENDA SAWATZKY

## Baseball Provincials About to Arrive in Niverville

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Niverville will host the 2019 U11 A Provincials this summer in Hespeler Park the weekend of July 5–7.

Eleven other teams from around the province will join the Niverville Wildcats, including two others from the local Carillon region, La Broquerie and Kleefeld. Niverville will begin the tournament in Pool A with round robin games against Parkland, Portage, and Pembina Hills. The top teams will head into the playoffs on Sunday, with the final being held at 3:00 p.m.

In order to qualify to host this year's provincials, Hespeler Park needed a few upgrades.

"Covered dugouts are a requirement for hosting provincials," says Rod Wolfe of the Wildcats organization. "We shared our desire to host a provincial championship in Niverville with the town and the need for covered dugouts. The town generously included the cost in the budget and town operations did a superb job of installing the dugouts."

Another upgrade is the extension of the parking lot

at the south entrance of the park, to accommodate more visitors.

"Lastly, Niverville Baseball did some fundraising and installed two batting cages last year," Wolfe says. "This is in addition to the excellent maintenance the town provides on a daily basis for the diamonds and the park... dragging infields, chalking lines, cutting grass, weed control, etc. As a whole, the ball diamonds and the park itself look great."

Getting the provincials has been a great coup both for the town and the local organization.

"Niverville Baseball sent an application to Baseball Manitoba to host a provincial championship," Wolfe says. "We specifically asked for either U11 A or U13 A. After reviewing the applications, Niverville was awarded the U11 A provincials in November 2018."

As for this year's Wildcats, Wolfe reports that at the time of this writing the team had a 2–2 record in league play, with a similar success rate in tournaments. He adds that all players are local to Niverville and Ste. Agathe.

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# Arts & Entertainment



Brenda Sawatzky at a reading at McNally Robinson in Winnipeg.

ELLEN BYGGDIN

## Author Reflects on Coveted Writers Guild Mentorship

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Last year, one local author got the good news that she'd been selected for a coveted writing mentorship with the Manitoba Writers Guild.

Brenda Sawatzky of Niverville, a longtime member of the Guild, had seen the annual Sheldon Oberman's Apprenticeship advertised many times, but never before had she been in a position to apply.

"Until the summer of 2018, I had only short stories in my repertoire," says Sawatzky. "Last summer, I challenged myself to create a novel and had a couple of chapters completed. In the fall, when the [mentorship] call came out, I submitted my short manuscript to the Guild, thinking I'd never win because the story was still very unpolished and there were far better emerging writers out there than me. By January of this year, I'd

all but forgotten about the award until I got the email saying that I'd been selected out of a total of nine submissions."

Being selected for the program this year was no small achievement, especially considering that the Guild had significantly reduced the number of mentorships available, due to funding cutbacks.

"I was completely overwhelmed," Sawatzky says. "Somebody believed in me as a fiction writer. In past years, the Guild had sponsored numerous pairings of emerging writers with established ones. That made my acceptance all the more thrilling."

Sawatzky says she wanted to set her novel in a time and place she could remember well from her own lifetime, so for her setting she chose Manitoba in the 1970s.

"The story follows the life of a young teenaged girl who finds

herself pregnant and without the support of family to get through it," she says. "This kind of event bore such shame that girls were whisked away to homes for unwed mothers, to carry out the pregnancy far away from the family, friends, and village that should have been their support."

She adds that most women weren't given the option of keeping, or even seeing, the young life they'd created. Instead these girls had to carry their secret and shame all their lives, dealing with that shame well into their adult years.

When the mentorship began, Sawatzky was paired with Winnipeg author Keith Cadieux, who was three times published.

"He offered me a ton of feedback on theme, story arc, and character development throughout the months. Keith was a fantastic mentor, gently guiding me but never

doing the work for me. He offered up options when I hit a snag but reminded me that every writer's work needs to remain unique to that writer and that there's never just one way of developing a story. More than anything, though, the program as a whole instilled in me the belief that 'I can do this.' Keith had the same struggles I did when he went through the mentorship program and was living proof that I could achieve what he did."

One of the requirements of the mentorship, according to the guidelines established by the Manitoba Writers Guild, is that mentees have to showcase a portion of their work at a public reading at the end of their experience.

For Sawatzky, who doesn't consider herself a public speaker, the prospect of putting herself out there was an enormous challenge.

"I was excessively nervous," she

says. "To stand in front of a crowd and read my work was difficult. Also, when you write a story like I'm writing, a huge part of your inner self is invested in the characters, and writing makes you feel very vulnerable when it's exposed publicly."

But on Wednesday, June 26, Sawatzky confronted her fears in front of more than two dozen members of the public at a reading held at McNally Robinson in Winnipeg.

"After the fact, I feel a second wind to keep going with the rest of the novel," she says about the relief that came from getting over her fear of public speaking. "The warm feedback I received after the reading was just what I needed to affirm, once again, that I might just have what it takes. We'll see about that when it comes time to send it to publishers!"

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for further details  
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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### GOOD TIME HOCKEY LEAGUE

The GTHL (Good Time Hockey League) is looking for teams or individual registrants for the 2019/2020 season. Registration deadline is September 12th.

The GTHL is a men's league for players 18 years or older. Anyone interested in registering or looking for more information can visit our website:

<https://sites.google.com/view/nivervillegthl>

Tom Schmitke, on behalf of the Board of Directors for Niverville Heritage Centre, Niverville Heritage PCH and Heritage Life Retirement Living, is pleased to announce the appointment of



**Wes Hildebrand**  
as the new Chief Executive Officer  
for the organizations on the  
Niverville Heritage Centre Campus.

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Wes Hildebrand has been working with the Niverville Heritage Centre Campus since November 2015 in the areas of Financial Management and Human Resources. This appointment is effective June 5, 2019.

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