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LOCAL NEWS

Three Weeks Into the School Year

■ School is back in session, and students and staff are still acclimatizing to new protocols and ways of doing things.

Details on Pages 3-4

LOCAL NEWS

Couple Recognized for Years of Service

■ This month, Ghislaine and Réginald Robert were lauded for their years of service to church and community.

Details on Page 5



LOCAL NEWS

Ste. Agathe Hosts Late-Summer Parade, Fireworks

■ The Cheyenne Summer Festival may not have been held at the scale organizers would have preferred, but residents of Ste. Agathe still got a chance to come together this year.

Details on Page 10

SPORTS & RECREATION

Junior C Hockey Coming Back to Niverville

■ After a five-year drought, Niverville is getting back its Junior C hockey team. The season will get underway in November.

Details on Page 18



OpenHealth Welcomes New Doctors

» DETAILS ON PAGE 8



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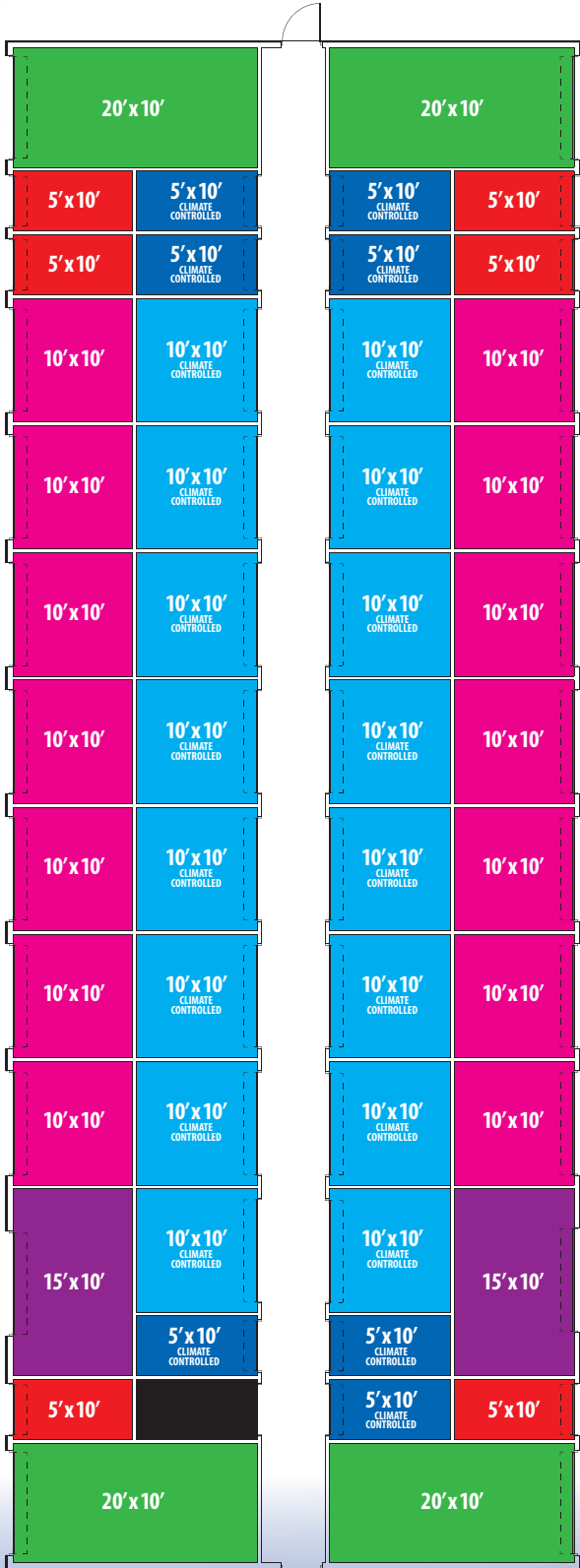
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DEPOSITPHOTOS

Back to School: Three Weeks Later

By Sara Beth Dacombe

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As we march into October, school has been back in session for about three weeks. Knowing that the incubation period for COVID-19 falls somewhere between 10 to 14 days, many people—especially parents—have become increasingly anxious as cases begin to rise.

But so far that rise has been concentrated in Winnipeg.

Although there is a spectrum of reactions from parents, the majority of those interviewed by *The Citizen* have expressed levels of concern, even fear, regarding the current state of the schools' reopening plans. Others are more laidback, but just about everyone is watching the situation closely to see what happens next.

So how are things going so far and what can we expect to come?

HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION

The Hanover School Division released a letter to parents on September 18 that acknowledged the rise of cases across the province, particularly the first cases attributed to Manitoba schools, and addressed the division's protocols for how it will handle COVID-19 cases when they are detected.

The process begins with the school's receipt of a student's positive lab report and the public health nurse's interview of the child and their parent or guardian.

"If a school setting is identified as a potential exposure, regional public health officials share information with provincial Public Health and the Department of Education," the letter reads. "Manitoba Education will contact the school division. Regional Public Health notifies the principal of the affected school that a confirmed COVID-19 case has been identified in a student/child from their school and that the investigation is ongoing."

This process relies heavily on Public Health to further conduct interviews of the principal and staff to conduct contact tracing and identify potential exposures at school. From there, close contacts or cohorts will be advised by Public Health to self-isolate, if necessary. Notice of the positive case and the steps taken will then be given to all families in the affected school.

At the date of writing, HSD has confirmed zero cases of COVID-19 in its schools so far.

The division has, however, had instances of children attending school while exhibiting cold or flu

symptoms.

Shelley Amos, interim superintendent of the Hanover School Division, has outlined what the protocol is for removing a symptomatic child from the classroom.

"Especially with young children, yes, we've seen them come to school with symptoms," Amos confirms. "If a child comes to the school or becomes symptomatic while at school, we remove them from the classroom setting and attend to them with a medical-grade mask and contact the parent to pick them up. Then we follow up with information about symptom awareness and how to get in touch with Public Health for possible testing. Public Health advises the parent on if testing is necessary."

While families are still working to self-screen for symptoms, Amos says the division is quite happy with the level of mask-wearing they have observed.

"Overall the acceptance level is really good," she says. "We have close to 8,000 students in our division and the vast majority are wearing them. It's something we all might not like to do, but it is something we have to get used to."

(continued on page 4)

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(continued from page 3)

But what about instances where students may be exempt from wearing a mask?

"We do have some students with a medical accommodation and a reason why they can't wear a mask," Amos says. "So those students, which we were already pretty aware of before COVID hit, we do not require them to wear a mask."

Since the start of school, reports have circulated of students attempting to board a school bus or enter a school without a mask. Amos says school staff are using education to increase buy-in among non-mask-wearers.

"We are providing these families with further education on why masks are useful and how much they help others," says Amos. "There is a document prepared by Manitoba Health and Manitoba Education on mask-wearing and this further information will also be disseminated to all our families very soon."

She says that increased cleaning and hand-washing have been implemented smoothly, although there have been some challenges along the way. One bottleneck in the system, for example, is dealing with the sheer volume of people who need to wash their hands at any given time. To address this, portable sinks are being brought in to act as hand-washing stations.

"Yes, it's been a learning process," she says. "Yes, it's time-consuming, with extra hand-washing and staggering who gets to use the washrooms when. But we've had good feedback from principals and teaching staff as far as being able to regulate it. At the same time, if there's something new that we need to change in our procedures, we will do so to make them better."

Despite these new protocols, Amos acknowledges that many parents continue to express concern that the protocols in place aren't good enough.

"To parents who say it's really

hard to keep kids apart, I refer them to Dr. Roussin, where he mentions that we're doing this to the greatest extent possible. We know children use the play structures, and he says that is safe to do so. We know kids will encroach on each other's space, but we are educators and we are teaching them to remain more physically distant. The staff is finding that the kids are really resilient... There's a really high understanding of why we are not supposed to touch others and why we need to wear masks in school."

SEINE RIVER SCHOOL DIVISION

In the Seine River School Division, superintendent Michael Borgfjord can also confirm that they have had zero cases of COVID-19 so far. The SRSD is operating similarly to the HSD, with students being divided into cohorts and senior high school students attending classes only part-time. In Seine River, students in Grades 9 and 10 attend on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, while students in Grades 11 and 12 go on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Borgfjord says that the collaboration between Manitoba Education and Manitoba Health strongly dictates what is to be done in the event of a positive test result, so there isn't much difference between Seine River and Hanover in that sense.

"Our cleaning protocols and training with our staff has gone well," says Borgfjord. "We are doing hand-washing and distancing. Everything has been set up to allow for interaction and education to happen in small groups."

He reports that mask-wearing from students in Grades Four or above has been going well so far.

"We've had a very high level of acceptance toward mask-wearing," he says. "I know this because we've had to give out very few masks. On the first couple of days, we probably had about 98 percent of kids coming in with masks. It's been very seamless in that regard. There are other challenges with mask-wearing... you know, kids

get tired of wearing them and need to be reminded not to touch their face. Adults do, too! But there is an attitude of acceptance and knowing we are protecting each other when we wear our masks."

HOW FAMILIES ARE COPING

As of late September, the number of active cases in Southern Health has remained relatively low, without any large spike like the one currently being seen in Winnipeg. As a result, there may be some parents who have started to believe we're out of the woods.

Conversely, there are parents who still feel anxious and insist that our first case is right around the corner. They feel it's just a matter of time before an outbreak hits.

Those with the highest level of concern have been driven to try home-schooling this year. The Hanover School Division reports that about 500 families are keeping their kids home, which is about double the rate of home-schooling reported last year.

Becki and James Wiens, who have children at Niverville Elementary School, agree that we've been very fortunate so far, but they don't believe members of the community should be less concerned just because the numbers are low.

"We can hardly predict what is around the corner," says Becki. "From what I have seen, the school division is doing the best they can. I do not envy the school administration's role in this whole situation. I am grateful for the work they are doing. However they are making decisions, it seems to be effective so far... That being said, I think it is naive to think Hanover will stay unaffected in the future."

Becki says her family has a plan in the event that cases are reported at their children's school and they are asked to self-isolate.

"Our family is very fortunate at this time that I am able to work from home and my hours are flexible," she says. "If either of my children's cohorts were affected, I

would simply be able to stay home with them. On the other hand, I run a before- and after-school care program as well as a daycare from our home. I would have to close my business for at least two weeks, which would put a significant dent in our monthly income."

The Shott family from St. Adolphe has also been getting used to all the new protocols, including the hiccups that come with their high-schooler's three-day week.

"I feel that no matter how 'good' we are doing currently, we are going to get cases in all schools eventually," says Jocelyn Shott. "From what my son says, the school is doing a really good job in following the new protocols. The EAs are being very strict about who can go through which doors. Some school doors are locked and visitors are needing to buzz in. And the EAs are doing a wonderful job keeping kids in their cohorts at recess. The kids are wearing their masks well and the teachers are still managing to keep learning fun despite it looking so different this year."

Jocelyn and her husband Kevin are both essential workers, and because their children are older, childcare wouldn't be much of an issue if their cohorts were to be affected. She says it would look a lot like the situation everyone faced in the spring.

HAVE A PLAN

Speaking for the HSD, Amos seeks to remind families to be diligent and rely on Public Health's advice to continue to keep cases low. However, she acknowledges that it's only a matter of time before they see their first case in a local school.

"We know cases in schools are happening across the province," says Amos. "It will happen in Hanover schools as well. But the more diligence we can have following the Public Health guidelines, we will be able to keep cases low. We see the evidence and impact that wearing masks and social distancing has. Remaining in cohorts will work."

Amos also has confidence in the shared support from Manitoba Education and Manitoba Health. She's heard from other school divisions that have already had confirmed cases, and so far they've had good support from the province.

"I would expect the same level of partnership between us and Southern Health when it does happen in our area," Amos says, emphasizing that the division remains in weekly communication with Manitoba Education.

Amos has one last piece of advice for families: have a plan in place for when your school is affected.

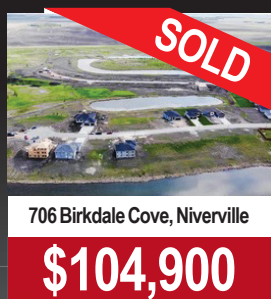
"I think parents should think about their arrangements for if this happens and what you would do if you do get that call," she says.

As for Superintendent Borgfjord of the SRSD, he says that his school division needs cooperation from all its families.

"If we're anxious about it, then children and others will be anxious about it," Borgfjord says. "There are levels of anxiety all over the place because of this. There is risk everywhere, and in society we all know that. It is a matter of learning to be socially responsible with our health."

Borgfjord, who has four kids of his own—two in university, and two others in the school system—says he knows it's not easy and has a great deal of respect for what parents are going through.

"We ourselves limit the amount of times we go out," he says. "There is definitely a time to stay home, but we need to go to school instead of just going inside and retreating. As a parent and an educator, I know this for my family: we need our kids in school. We can teach them to be responsible, model how to be more restrained, and when to take their mask off and how. Everything we do as parents can reinforce and help more young people to live on with this in a safer way."



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Do you think our schools are doing enough to prevent COVID-19 infections, and mitigate their impact?

- ☐ Yes. The schools have struck a good balance between safety and the need for in-class learning.
- ☐ No. The risk is still too great, and there are more measures that could be taken.
- ☐ Have another opinion? Visit our website to vote and leave us a comment.

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LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

Do you think the province should enforce a Manitoba-wide mask mandate this fall when it comes to indoor public places?

Yes.	No.
46%	54%

I don't know what is taking the MB Government so long to implement a mask policy and ENFORCE it. It is the only proven way to save lives and eliminate this virus!!

The fact is, to many people just care about them self. They call the news fake news. However they believe the news that is fake. Elvis is alive, the Royal family are lizard people. Yep this world. Just some points to put out there

No! This is free country. Businesses should decide for themselves if they want to require masks or not.
-Rupert Oman

Base it on positivity rate with mandatory at a certain threshold.

Free country = businesses can decide on their own.

My issue is not with masks as much as it is about consistency in policies, messaging, and quite frankly in peoples opinions. Don't get me wrong, I like roller coasters, but I've grown tired of this one. In the early days of the infection, the experts said that most people would get the virus regardless of what we do. The idea was to slow the spread to mitigate death and not overwhelm the health system. Now, that original goal seems completely lost, and not even talked about. The goal posts have moved to eliminating all cases - seemingly at any cost - and 'defeating' the virus by avoidance. It seems we were successful in keeping death and hospitalization to a minimum, however it begs the question what all the current panic is about when data isn't showing massive death rates or hospitalization being associated with the current spike. We seem very one-tracked and focused only on cases, and my fear is we are possibly doing more harm than good. That said, masks are certainly a more attractive option than forcing business to shut down again. We've already added 1/3 to our debt, and regardless of what the government says, that is yours and mine to pay for - so having a job might be a better idea than having a mask at this point.

Don't like the masks, but in reality this is a WAY better option than closing businesses all together again. Businesses can't afford another mandated close down.

Masks suck and so does this communist regime.

Against the charter of rights and freedoms

Couple Recognized for 36 Years of Community Service

By Brenda Sawatzky

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For some, volunteerism means an occasional investment of time. For Ghislaine and Réginald Robert, giving back has been their way of life.

On Sunday, September 20, the St. Adolphe Parish honoured the couple at an appreciation event held at Pioneer Hall. In deference to COVID-19 protocols, attendance had to be restricted. Even so, a memorable time was had.

Special guests at the wine-and-cheese event included many who have been directly impacted by the Roberts' selflessness over the years.

Addresses were made by the Archbishop of the St. Boniface Archdiocese, Bishop Albert LeGatt, Sister Doris Blanchette, Provincial Superior and Sister Rose-Marie Lambert, the Sisters of the Cross, Mr. Louis Boisjoli (representing the Knights of Columbus), and Ritchot Mayor Chris Ewen.

Father Gregory Kossi Djiba presented the couple with a customized plaque featuring a picture of the Roberts and the church they've faithfully served as well as a message of



Father Gerald Michaud, Archbishop Albert LeGatt, Réginald and Ghislaine, Father Gregory Kossi Djiba. **PAUL LAGASSE**

heartfelt thanks.

"St. Adolphe has an army of volunteers who keep the many facets of community life alive, active, and functioning like a well-oiled machine," says Denis Robert, who helped organized the event. "You can hardly call a small town a community were it not for the volunteers who give it life and a culture unique to itself. The committee felt that Ghislaine's and Reggie's combined 69 years of continuous and sustained leadership... could not be ignored."

To the church, Réginald was instrumental in the erection of three commemorative monuments and, over the years, he acted as president of the parish fall supper,

the liturgical committee, and the pastoral committee.

For more than 35 years, he volunteered his own time and materials to maintain the parish grounds. He provided handyman services for Sisters of the Cross and always saw to the comfort and well-being of the local parish priest.

During these years, Ghislaine kept herself busy as the director of the St. Adolphe church choir and participated as a Friend of the Sisters of the Cross. For 15 years, she worked with the elderly as a healthcare aide, and to this day she continues to visit and provide care on a voluntary basis for residents of the Heritage Life Personal Care Home.

To the community of St. Adolphe, Réginald was once known as Reggie's Landscaping, a company which, for a quarter of a century, provided seasonal work for local students. He made town beautification his personal priority by raising donations for the community's Main Street flowerpots, which he then installed and maintained for 12 consecutive years.

On top of all that, Réginald has held an executive position on the Knights of Columbus council since 1967.

Thirty-six years after putting down roots in their small francophone community, the Roberts are headed to Winnipeg and will be missed by many in their hometown.

"There is no doubt that the wide array of committees and activities that the Roberts were involved with will create a temporary void," says Denis Robert. "We are optimists and are confident that a good number of people with a great deal of talent will step up to fill this void... Small communities are made up of many gems and people's talents, skills, and goodwill come to the forefront when need arises."

St. Adolphe Market Creates Opportunity for Local Vendors

By Sara Beth Dacombe

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A new kind of event popped up in St. Adolphe this fall. With the help of two energetic organizers, the St. Adolphe Market has aimed to bring people together and raise money for community causes.

Kira Bodnarchuk and Donna Moroz, a pair of coworkers and friends from St. Adolphe, teamed up to organize a series of mini-markets.

The first hosted 15 vendors, and their second featured 30.

The third, held on September 27, was considered "full-sized," with 41 vendors, including a food truck, a coffee cart, and live music.

It all started when Bodnarchuk decided to set up a few local vendors on a neighbourhood driveway.

"After realizing that we have so many local vendors, I decided we should make a mini-market out of it," says Bodnarchuk.

After the driveway event, the second market was held in the St. Adolphe School parking lot.

An even bigger location was needed for the September 27 event, so they arranged to use the space next to the St. Adolphe Child Care Centre on Main Street.

Proceeds from the table fees are donated to the St. Adolphe School, where it will be used to secure basketball, football, and

soccer equipment.

"St. Adolphe is an amazing small town. We just needed more events to bring us together," Bodnarchuk says. "I am currently on mat leave until October, so it gave me an opportunity to really get involved in something for the community. As a vendor, I love meeting locals and having everyone together."

Bodnarchuk and Moroz credit the RM of Ritchot and Mayor Chris Ewen for helping to secure the bigger and better location.

The pair have been working on a volunteer basis and not taking any proceeds from the table fees for their time spent coordinating the market.

September's food truck was operated by Oh! Good! Path!, a brand-new Manitoba business that serves up Japanese cuisine. PERK Events was also on site with their mobile coffee cart.

If Bodnarchuk and Moroz have anything to say about it, September won't have been their last market event in St. Adolphe.

They plan to continue—provided they can find a large enough indoor location when the weather turns.

Regardless of how things shape up for the winter, Bodnarchuk is confident they will be holding monthly markets again next summer.

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2020 Golf Tournament

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We would like to thank all our sponsors, volunteers and participants for making it such a memorable event!

Upcoming Events

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The new Heritage Pavilion gets erected in Niverville.

CARA DOWSE

Heritage Pavilion Going Up in Niverville

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

One of Niverville's long-gestating beautification projects is in its final stages of completion this week. The Heritage Pavilion, located in the Heritage Centre Gardens, is nearing the finish line.

"It's great to see it going up!" says Shirley Hoult of the Niverville Community in Bloom (NCIB) community and a longtime community volunteer.

The pavilion incorporates wooden planks from the town's original grain elevator, destroyed by fire long ago. The structure's circular wall design, meant to represent that elevator, was planned by

Cornerstone Timberframes.

The front half of the pavilion has been left open to allow for special events to be held there.

Due to the pandemic, there won't be any large-scale community event to celebrate the pavilion's completion, but Hoult says there is likely to be an event of some kind next summer.

There have also been talks of hosting a Winnipeg Pops Orchestra outdoor concert on June 7, 2021. Sponsorship for this concert has already been pledged by Heritage Lane Builders. More details will be announced as the date gets closer.

Several other projects are also underway and will be

ready to be unveiled in the coming weeks.

The largest of these projects is the Heritage Wall, which will be erected in front of the Niverville Credit Union parking lot on Main Street. The wooden fence currently located there will be replaced by 64 feet of metal panels measuring four-feet high and designed to illustrate the town's heritage.

The wall art tells the story as imagined by local resident Dustin Krahn, with input from the NCIB and the Heritage Wall committee, as well as Dr. Nigaan Sinclair, Professor of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba.

"Thanks go out to the overwhelming generosity of

some residents and local businesses, we are very close to reaching the fundraising goal for the heritage wall," Hoult says. "The designers and manufacturers are currently firming up materials with the intention of completing installation in late fall."

Additionally, a community mural is being created to be showcased on the west side of the post office. The collaborative design for this mounted wooden mural has been developed by four local artists: Abigail Olfert, Elaine Krahn, Dustin Krahn, and CD Muckosky.

Hoult says the mural is expected to be in place no later than the Thanksgiving weekend.

IN BRIEF

Winterfest 2020 Cancelled

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

For the last several years, residents of Niverville have gathered in November for Winterfest, an opportunity for people to do some holiday shopping from local vendors.

Unfortunately, the Niverville Chamber of Commerce had announced that the Winterfest market has been cancelled this year.

"Winterfest would be limited to 50 percent capacity based on current COVID guidelines," says Brenda Desjardins, Executive Director of the Chamber. "We also have stringent crowd control measures that would have to take place."

Desjardins says many factors went into the difficult decision.

Last year, there were 78 vendor tables available. This year, that number would have been reduced to 37. However, most of the event's fixed expenses would have remained the same, regardless of the number of vendors, and those expenses begin to accumulate in October.

"We did a profit projection based on the reduced vendors/attendees, and we would be in a potential deficit position [if we proceeded]," she says. "There is also the possibility that the event

could be cancelled without notice, which could leave the Chamber in a loss position."

Economics aside, Desjardins stresses that the greatest consideration was safety. Foremost among these concerns was the fact that the event venue is attached to a personal care home.

Also, inevitably, to control the number of people inside, line-ups would have needed to form outside—and considering the unpredictability of November weather, that presented a clear problem.

"The Chamber deemed the risk to our community too great to proceed, even if we had the opportunity to operate at full capacity in 2020," Desjardins says. "Cancelling early also allows the Heritage Centre time to find another party to rent the facility based on availability."

She says the Chamber will continue to support the event in the future, and that they thank all of Winterfest's previous vendors and attendees for their enthusiasm in the past.

"We are currently exploring other options to assist our Chamber members that have historically participated," she adds. "We are cautiously optimistic that the event will proceed in 2021, and have already reserved the space in anticipation."

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Open Health Welcomes New Doctors

By Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

The staff is growing at the Open Health medical clinic in Niverville. After being bought by the Town of Niverville in March 2020, the clinic is on its way to offering a full team of clinicians, one of the goals set by new management.

"A new part-time doctor joined us in early July," says Kristen Fyfe, Open Health's business manager. "Her name is Dr. Eileen Burnett. We are also looking forward to welcoming a new full-time doctor this fall, as well as another part-time doctor. We are hoping to be able to expand our services to include some evenings and Saturdays in the near future and these new positions should allow for this."

Dr. Eileen Burnett grew up in Niverville and is a daughter-in-law to Drs. Chris and Mairi Burnett, founders of Open Health. She will be completing her Masters in Public Health over the next three years but



Dr. Victoria Eguaioje.

has joined the clinic on a part-time basis to practice family medicine.

The new doctor sees the importance of having a passion for family medicine when working in a small town. She describes her specialty as "a unique area of medicine in which the physician can walk beside an individual, a family, and a community over time, through many different health issues."

According to Fyfe, what makes Dr. Eileen Burnett

unique is that she is the first person who grew up and graduated high school in Niverville to return to work in her home community as a physician.

"I am aware of the difficulties that exist in recruiting physicians to rural areas," says Dr. Eileen Burnett. "Having grown up in Niverville, I feel privileged to give back some of my time and expertise to the town members, people who I consider to be extensions of my friends and family."



Dr. Eileen Burnett.

Another doctor, Dr. Victoria Eguaioje, will be starting at Open Health full-time in early October. She joins the Niverville practice having completed a family medicine program from the Max Rady College of Medicine at the University of Manitoba. She also holds a medical degree from the University of Benin's College of Medicine in Nigeria, and comes to her position with Open Health through a collaborative effort with Southern Health-Santé Sud.

Dr. Eguaioje describes herself as a global health enthusiast. She has a background in community involvement services and a focus on family health. She also has a special passion for youth and to see diversity in our community.

"I am passionate about diversity, inclusion, and representation," says Dr. Eguaioje. She sees a strong connection between the social determinants of health and health outcomes and hopes to empower the next generation to address the root causes of health problems. "I look forward to providing [Niverville] with personalized, comprehensive

healthcare focusing on family health needs, wellness, and prevention as I will be accepting new patients upon my start."

These new staff members come to Open Health following an unprecedented move to involve the town after a serious health issue affected one of the main physicians and threatened the clinic's operation.

On January 29, Drs. Chris and Mairi Burnett sat down with *The Citizen* to reveal that Mairi had been diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cells in her bone marrow. By March, the Burnetts had sold the clinic to the Town of Niverville for \$1. The town then oversaw the hiring of a business manager in March to ensure the clinic was able to maintain its services while Dr. Mairi focused on her health, which is now improving, albeit slowly.

"Dr. Mairi is improving slowly, still tired and wanting to do more than her body will allow," says Dr. Chris. "We are both so thankful for the support from the community, for the prayers and wishes of so many, expressed in so many

ways, over these past nine months. We are now looking at her possible return before the end of the year but are not sure what that looks like yet."

Dr. Chris reflects not only on Mairi's health journey, but the clinic's journey over the past nine months.

"If this had been another community, I think the story of healthcare in Niverville could have been so tragically different," he says. "This was before the advent of COVID-19 and no one could have foreseen the challenges of providing care in this setting. The town has done a great job and we are happy with the process. The bottom line is that without this move, the physician services in Niverville would have closed. It was our intention all along to create a community-owned clinic; the personal health circumstances caused us to have to accelerate this drastically and instead of a process spanning years, it took weeks. There are many unsung heroes during this transition and we remain thankful for their foresight and wisdom."

As Dr. Chris implies, the staff changes come at a timely point in the history of public health in our province, and as Manitoba has recently been seeing an upswing in COVID-19 cases. Physicians have been encouraging patients to continue to reach out for care and not put off addressing their health needs amid fears of contracting the virus when out and about.

On top of adding new staff, Open Health has introduced virtual or teleconference appointments to help facilitate patient care.

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IN BRIEF

New Pandemic Restrictions Kick In

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

A surge of new COVID-19 cases beginning in mid-September has led the province of Manitoba to bring in some new restrictions to the City of Winnipeg and its surrounding communities, includes Niverville and the RM of Ritchot.

These are the same restrictions that were successfully applied to the Prairie Mountain Health region, which includes Brandon, last month.

Mask use is now required in all indoor public places, as well as in bars and restaurants. Staff and patrons are expected to wear masks except while seated at a table to eat or drink.

Additionally, all indoor and outdoor gatherings are limited to 10 people or less.

The province is in the process of consulting with the restaurant industry to identify further measures that could be taken to curb the rate of transmission.

The restrictions took effect on Monday, September 28 and are expected to last at least four weeks.

Meanwhile, cases in the local health district have remained steady.



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Ste. Agathe Hosted Late Summer Parade and Fireworks

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

October may have arrived, and with it the cooler temperatures of autumn, but residents of Ste. Agathe still got one last burst of summer fun in the waning days of September.

Like so many other local events, the town's annual Cheyenne Summer Festival, originally scheduled to be held in July, had to be cancelled this year due to the pandemic.

Although having been initially disappointed, the festival's organizers got to work late in the summer to put together a consolation prize for the community.

The annual parade once again wended its way through the streets on Friday, September 18. The fun got underway at 6:30 p.m., starting at the north end of Ste. Agathe and working its way south along Pembina Trail.

"The parade was always an event that the Cheyenne team thought could be done while ensuring that social distancing measures are being respected," says Eric Gagnon, one of the organizers.

There had to be some changes from previous years, of course. For one thing, the floats were asked not to hand anything out to kids along the parade route, such as candy.

"We figured we could still have that incentive for the kids to come out, because a big part of the Cheyenne Summer Fest is youth involvement," says Gagnon. "Hey, they're kids! They want the candy and all that stuff, and we were still able to provide that."

The candy all came from one source this year, with the organizers taking the proper measures to ensure that the goody bags were handled safely.

Being able to still offer a bit



Goody bags were distributed to families by community volunteers..

DAVID ROBIN

of family fun came as a relief to many, since the annual Cheyenne Summer Festival has been an important part of the fabric of this community for a long time. In fact, the festival marked its 30-year anniversary last summer.

The parade wasn't the only celebration cooked up. In conjunction with the RM office, the organizers found a way to bring back one of the most popular aspects of the festival—fireworks. After dark, around 8:00 p.m., the fireworks lit up the skies above town.

Finally, Gagnon says there's at least one more side project in the works.

"Another idea that came up was the idea of doing a town directory," he says. "This is something that was last done ten years ago, and we're going to do it again... some people would describe it as a year-book for Ste. Agathe."

The last directory, produced in 2010, included a listing of every family in town, along with their

pictures. The book allowed local residents to flip through, spot familiar faces, and get to know their neighbours a little better.

A big part of the inspiration for doing a new town directory was the work of local photographer Jae Kusnick this past spring. While everyone was self-isolating in March and early April, Kusnick began a project wherein he went around town and held impromptu family photo shoots of people out on their front porches.

"The whole thing was really popular," says Gagnon. "So when the Cheyenne team got together to brainstorm about what can be done in lieu of the festival, the idea of an updated directory came up pretty naturally. We were all inspired by the way Jae's project was able to bring the town together despite us all being quarantined. And thankfully, Jae is now on our directory team!"

The town directory project will be tackled by a team of volunteers this fall, with the goal of having it

available in the new year.

"We also want to do the update because our town has changed a lot in the past ten years. There are new families that live here, there's people who are no longer living here."

Ultimately, although the parade, fireworks, and town directory represent only a small part of the larger celebration the organizers had intended to bring to Ste. Agathe this year, at least it provides a taste of community spirit at a time when it's sorely needed.

"The Cheyenne Summer Fest is something that everyone in Ste. Agathe really looks forward to," Gagnon says. "It's the one time every year when we can all come together and celebrate our community, and what makes our town really special. And since we weren't able to physically do that this year, we decided to go for the next best thing."

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Send your nominations to chamber@niverville.com by December 4, 2020



2019 Winners: RuffMutts (Outstanding Customer Service), done hair, skin & nails (Outstanding Business), Henry Friesen (Alex Fast Sr. Memorial Award)

2020 Niverville Winterfest Cancelled

The Niverville Winterfest Craft Sale & Market that was to take place on November 21, 2020 has been cancelled due to the COVID pandemic.



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Ritchot Mayor Runs for AMM VP

By Sara Beth Dacombe
sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

On September 1, Ritchot’s council agreed to nominate Mayor Chris Ewen as a candidate for vice president of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM). If elected, Ewen’s new responsibilities would be conducted in addition to those of his existing position as mayor.

As mayor of Ritchot, Ewen says he has sought to bring people together through better RM-wide accessibility and communication, including efforts on social media to engage as many residents as possible in local issues. Ewen has been a champion of the municipality’s Connect app, which enables the RM to easily broadcast information—like news, upcoming events, weather, and emergency alerts—to all residents.

“My goal is to bring young, outside-the-box concepts and ideas to the AMM,” says Ewen. “I think I really brought some of those big dreams and ideas to Ritchot when I was elected as mayor. And I think I have the opportunity to showcase that to all of Manitoba through the AMM. I love the idea of being able to increase connectivity, and to communicate with constituents with social media.”

Every two years, AMM members elect a president and two vice-presidents to form an executive committee. Nominations for these positions must be submitted by resolution passed by a municipal council.

During the RM’s latest meeting on September 1, council voted unanimously to support Ewen’s bid. He recused himself for this portion of the meeting.

“Council is excited for the mayor and this opportunity,” says Shane Pelletier, deputy mayor. “We are hopeful to see representation on the AMM executive from the RM of Ritchot.”

So what inspired Ewen to increase the scope of work beyond Ritchot?

“A group of people had asked if I would consider being on the executive committee for the AMM,” Ewen says. “I thought about it for the past few months and I sparked the idea to council. The AMM is our lobbying group and our support group for all the municipalities for all of Manitoba. Without them, we wouldn’t have the cohesion we currently have. We have a great team in them and they really bring us all together. They have great conferences to help bring training to our leaders. They have great human resources and insurance packages, and support for all aspects of municipal business.”

In 1999, the Union of Manitoba Municipalities (UMM) and the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities (MAUM) merged to create the AMM to represent all municipalities in Manitoba, including the City of Winnipeg. Divided into seven districts, group members come together to strengthen municipal leadership through professional development events, meetings, webinars, and workshops.

The AMM also provides the opportunity to access human resources help for municipal offices, municipal insurance and safety support, vehicle fleet management, and capital venture purchasing programs.

This year, the AMM convention will be held virtually on November 23, and voting will be conducted electronically using secure online voting software.

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New Pizza Joint Opens in Niverville

By Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

After working in the pizza industry for more than 20 years, Varinder Ghuman has opened Niverville's newest pizza restaurant: Pizza 311. This is the second business Ghuman has opened in the community in two years, after creating Niverville Taxi, the town's first public transit initiative.

It's been about two years since Ghuman and his family moved to Niverville from Winnipeg where he had owned and operated two Pizza Pizza franchise locations.

"I've always loved pizza," says Ghuman. "I worked for a pizza store when I was in school and I used to own a pizza restaurant in Winnipeg through the Pizza Pizza franchise. I've taken a break, but now I guess I'm back at it again."

Ghuman may know the pizza business inside and out, but running a national franchise is much different than starting up your own business from scratch.

"I learned a lot when I was with a franchise, but now I'm learning everything I didn't know before. It's different and it's exciting. I'm learning a lot," he says. "I came up with my own logo and business name. I wanted something that had a Niverville touch to it, and our highway going through the town is the 311, so I thought that had a nice ring to it. All the pieces that were in place with a franchise I have to now do."

The added work of starting from nothing meant even more work when it came to securing the ideal phone number. It's an aspect of the business Ghuman put a lot of very intentional thought towards, and he ended up finding a number that matches the business perfectly: 204-388-0311.

"I had to work hard on that," says Ghuman. "I had to call all the different phone companies to see if this number had availability. I was told by a few places it was not available. But I kept calling and finally someone was able to help



The team at Pizza 311, the latest restaurant to set up shop in Niverville.

✉ DUSTIN KRAHN

me and I got the number."

Aside from making phone calls and performing the duties of an owner and manager, Ghuman doesn't shy away from stepping into the kitchen himself.

"I'm everything. I'm taking orders, making pizza, I'm the dishwasher," he says. "When you own your own business, you have to be prepared to be wherever you are needed."

Pizza 311 has five staff members and will be looking to hire more help as the business expands. They currently operate as a takeout-only facility, with no dine-in area, which is just as well for a pizza place opening during a global pandemic.

A delivery option is coming and will be available in October.

"We haven't started delivery yet because we want to do the best service possible," says Ghuman. "I want the staff to be fully trained so we can seamlessly transition and expand the business. So right now it's just for pickup and takeout. We

will also do a grand opening event once the staff is trained and can keep up with orders. I don't want to rush anything."

Since settling in town and experiencing the commute to Winnipeg, Ghuman is happy to be able to work closer to home. His wife also worked with him at the pizza restaurant in Winnipeg, and she now works in the kitchen at Pizza 311. Having three kids in school means it's a benefit to work closer to home and be able to enjoy more family time together.

Ghuman says Niverville is a great place to raise a family.

"We have three children, ages 13, 11, and eight," says Ghuman. "The community is very, very welcoming and it's a good place to raise your kids. We've made lots of friendships in town, especially for our kids. I also have good relationships here and enjoy connecting with other business owners. They've really helped me get the businesses going and I'm really thankful."

Niverville already has quite a few options for restaurants with pizza, so when asked why he thought the town was ready for yet another pizza place, Ghuman says his pizza deserves to be tried so people can decide that for themselves.

"When I posted on the Niverville Facebook page that we're opening another pizza place in Niverville, people have asked what makes ours different. I say, come in and try it for yourself and see what makes it different. It's fresh dough made in-store every day. We don't use any canola oil. We use only extra virgin olive oil, which is healthier and tastes better. We use pink Himalayan salt, not table salt. We use the best toppings available. We carry gluten-free crust. We have dairy-free cheese. We just invite you, come and try our food!"

Pizza 311 is located at G-290 Main Street.

IN BRIEF

Council Updates

By Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

On September 15, Niverville's council met to discuss a variety of items on the town's agenda.

After some discussion, the town approved a new 37-square-foot LED sign to be erected in front of the Niverville Community Fellowship church at 82 Second Street South. The sign must be set back 40 feet from the street, be dimmed at night, and have no video or audio capabilities.

Town CAO Eric King read the conditions into the record before a vote was taken, which was unanimously in favour.

The town also awarded a contract to Valley West Landscaping to finish grading on the north side of the Community Resource and Recreation Centre (CRRC), which is still under construction on the west side of Niverville. The bid came in at approximately \$53,000 and will be paid for from grant funding already secured for the CRRC.

Finally, council agreed to waive the rental fees for the Niverville Happy Kids Stay & Play playgroup. The group currently meets biweekly on Thursdays at Hespeler Park, from 9:30 a.m. until 11:30 a.m. But when the weather gets too cold to meet outdoors, the plan is to use the meeting room at the south end of the arena.

The group is open to any parents of young children from Niverville. According to their Facebook page, their goal is to create a safe, fun space for kids, and their parents can come in and drop in and play. It's a place for families to connect.

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IN BRIEF

St. Adolphe Parish to Hold Fundraiser Auction

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

In a typical year, the coming of autumn would mark the St. Adolphe Parish's annual fundraising fall supper. The fall supper, as well as the Christmas bake sale, has been a staple of the community for 50 years.

But of course this isn't a typical year.

Nonetheless, the fundraiser is still on, albeit with some changes. Instead of a fall supper, the parish is planning to host an online auction. The auction will begin on Thursday, October 1 and run for two and a half weeks, concluding on Saturday, October 17. The final bids must be received by 8:00 p.m. that evening.

"Funds raised will go towards the parish's property taxes, insurance, and general operating costs," says Anne Eastman, one of the organizers behind this year's auction. "These funds play a vital role in the church's finances."

Eastman adds that the St. Adolphe Parish holds an important position in the history of the area. The church was established as a mission in 1893, with the first church being built three years later, in 1896. A new church was built in 1923, and that's the iconic structure still in use today.

People can participate in the auction by visiting the following website: parish-fundraiser.myshopify.com

"Items may be added throughout the auction," says Eastman. "We encourage people to keep checking for new items, or to rebid if necessary. There will be a countdown clock to let you know how much time you have left."

She says there will be a wide selection of products and services available, targeting all ages.

Each item up for bid will have its own picture and description on the website, as well as the name, phone number, and website address of the company that donated it.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Visit the auction: parish-fundraiser.myshopify.com
- Contact the organizers: parishfundraiser@gmail.com



Candace Alarie of Niverville, owner of SOAK Bath Co.

REBECCA DUECK PHOTOGRAPHY

Soap-Maker Lands National Contract

By Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

SOAK Bath Co, owned by Candace Alarie of Niverville, has landed a major national contract with Hudson's Bay Company. The local home-based business features Alarie's luxury bath and body products, made by hand with all-natural ingredients and unique scents—and a zero-waste business concept.

In the spring of 2019, SOAK was a featured exhibitor at the One of a Kind Show in Toronto, and they were also written up in *House & Home*. Since then, the business has grown quickly.

The HBC contract comes at a time when many businesses are struggling, if not closing their doors completely, in the face of the economic challenges posed by COVID-19.

Alarie's business hasn't gotten through unscathed, but she says she's been lucky to be a small business with greater maneuverability than others.

But the emotional impact has been as real as the economic one. "COVID put the brakes on the majority of my revenue streams within one weekend," says Alarie. "All live events (markets) that were scheduled got cancelled. I would say the worst part of it, though, was seeing all of my small business partners forced to close their doors. I work with over 100 independent boutiques across Canada and to see them close their doors was truly heartbreaking. These were real humans that I got a chance to get to know over the last year and I knew they relied on their shops to be operational to support their livelihood. I was fortunate to support the boutiques that kept their doors open virtually

and with curbside pickup, but the majority took a big hit."

Fortunately, Alarie had built up a social media infrastructure with a large following. When business slowed down, she poured more energy into social media and other online sales streams. The results from her online efforts have surprised her.

"The response from my audience was nothing short of amazing," she says. "I had one of my busiest months to date in April and didn't sleep the entire month but have never, ever been so grateful to receive support from my local community."

The pandemic also had Alarie reassessing her international marketing strategies. Her original business plan saw her expanding sales into the United States next year, but border shutdowns and lockdowns have affected supply chains and workforces around the world. This has meant that certain larger manufacturers of bath products haven't been able to keep up their supply—and retail outlets have come looking for other soap-makers to fill the gap.

"We've since partnered with about 20 boutiques in the USA and counting," she says, "including Greetabl, a large online gifting platform which will help me grow my brand internationally."

But the biggest win for Alarie came on May 12 when she was awarded a special "gifting and sustainability display" in 20 different Hudson's Bay stores across Canada, including provisions to make SOAK products available on the HBC online platform.

The groundwork for the contract was laid during a well-timed trip in January 2020 when Alarie attended Toronto Home + Gift Market, organized by The

Canadian Gift Association. The event brings makers and buyers together and gave Alarie the opportunity to present SOAK bath products to an HBC buyer.

"When COVID hit, the first thing I thought was that I was going to lose any traction I had on The Bay deal," says Alarie. "I let a few weeks pass as the world went from shock to denial to acceptance of what was going on. I reached out to the buyer and let her know that I was still operational, having one of the busiest times I've ever experienced but that I would still love to work with them should they still have interest. She emailed me their order not 20 minutes after I had sent this email. I still remember it—May 12 at about 10:00 a.m. and I just sat dumfounded, rereading the email to make sure I wasn't dreaming."

Since then, Alarie has been working to fulfill that order, along with ensuring other orders are taken care of. She's also continuing to build her online presence, which has been a core strategy.

"Business has been full of ups and downs and big curveballs," says Alarie, who left a ten-year career in management to pursue her dream full-time. "When I left my career, my biggest fear was that I would start my own business and we'd end up in a recession, which we were bound to experience at any time given cycles of the economy. Instead I got COVID... After going over multiple scenarios of what to do with my social media, I thought, 'I'm just going to keep showing up as myself.' And that truly has been such a big driver of my success. People buy from people and want to see the human behind the brand. They want to know the story, see the behind the scenes, and that's the stuff I love

to share."

Even though the volume of orders and supply issues have introduced new challenges, she says she's been able to source her ingredients successfully and nothing much has changed in her home-based setup.

"We're still operating from home in the town of Niverville," she says. "I have more drums of oil and blocks of shea butter in my home studio, and I've been building stock all summer to prepare for the holiday season that is sure to be very busy. As international product suppliers reopen and work to catch up on supplying gifting items, the small guys like us are anticipating a busier than normal holiday season."

Many holiday markets are being cancelled, she acknowledges. In fact, the only market on her schedule this season is Third + Bird's Christmas Market, set to kick off at the Red River Exhibition Place in Winnipeg in October.

Without an abundance of markets, many local makers will undoubtedly face hard times this season, but Alarie isn't too concerned at this point.

"I have a few tricks up my sleeve to continue finding new customers and attracting them to my Instagram and my online shop," she says. "You can also find my soap bars at the Community General Store in Niverville at 10 Cedar Drive, across from Bistro 290 and Done salon."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- To find SOAK products, you can follow the company on Instagram @cksoakbathco or visit their online shop: www.cksoakbathco.com

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IN BRIEF

Valley Fiber Bringing Faster Internet Speeds to Ste. Agathe

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Residents of Ste. Agathe can look forward to significantly improved internet service later this year. Valley Fiber, an internet service provider based out of Winkler, Manitoba has announced that they've reached an agreement to expand into the town, bringing with them fast, secure fibre and wireless internet.

The company's modus operandi is to install dedicated fibre lines to individual businesses and households, a practice that bestows greater online security and guaranteed speeds.

Valley Fiber will also construct a new fibre-connected wireless tower in Ste. Agathe, which will provide service to homes which otherwise wouldn't be able to connect directly to the new fibre line. These wireless services will be provided by Valley Fiber's sister company, VISP.

"Having access to fast, reliable internet is no longer a luxury," says Conley Kehler, Senior Vice President of Valley Fiber. "It is an essential part of our lives, from our work to our schools, to keeping connected with friends and loved ones."

Kehler adds that this agreement is the culmination of many months of working together with Ste. Agathe CDI.

"Valley Fiber's unique hardline security and ability to provide enterprise-grade speed to local businesses will help existing businesses access all of the digital tools they need to be successful," says Ren de Moissac, Director of the Ste. Agathe CDI. "It will also provide an opportunity for future economic development, providing world-class technology for any business entity looking to set up shop in Ste. Agathe."

The Ste. Agathe CDI extends gratitude to the RM of Ritchot for their support, and specifically to Councillor Curtis Claydon, who represents the community on council.

"We at Valley Fiber are excited to become part of the community of Ste. Agathe," Kehler adds. "With the additional services of our data centre, and VISP, our fixed wireless company, we are a one-stop shop."

Check Engine: Car Diagnostic Specialists

By Sara Beth Dacombe

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About a year ago, Pavel and Victoria Petrenko opened a new mechanics shop in Niverville called Check Engine. Amidst cultural adjustments and the economic struggle of COVID-19, the new Russian immigrants say that life has been challenging for them—but they're happy to call Canada home.

The Petrenkos moved with their two children from Surgut, Siberia to Winnipeg in 2014. In 2016, the family moved to Niverville and Pavel worked as an auto technician at a local shop until they were able to open their own business. The couple officially signed the lease of Check Engine and registered their business in late 2019.

They opened their doors and COVID-19 threatened to immediately shut them down.

"It was a difficult time, but we made it through. We are alive," Victoria says with a laugh. "When COVID started, things really slowed down. But we are here. We could be busier, so we are trying to get the word out."

But the entrepreneurial drive is strong with Victoria and Pavel, who ran the same type of operation back in Russia. Pavel is a licensed Red Seal auto service technician with more than 20 years of technical expertise and automotive experience with European, import, and domestic cars. Victoria has an education in business accounting, and although numeracy is a highly transferrable skill, she also took a few courses at Red River College upon their arrival in Manitoba to familiarize herself with Canadian technology and accounting software.

"Some things can be different in Canada," says Victoria. "Not necessarily with how things are done, but with software and some terminology. So it's good to receive retraining."

Their two boys are also highly driven to follow in their father's footsteps. Dmitry, 15, has just begun the automotive technology at the Steinbach Regional Secondary School and Evgeny, 18, is in his first year of Engineering at the University of Manitoba.

Pavel also has the highest level of Engineering training possible in Russia, which Victoria says would be the equivalent of a master's level education in Engineering in Canada. He has always had a passion for cars and has been fixing them since he was a teenager.

"In Russia, we had a similar



Dmitry, Victoria, and Pavel Petrenko, along with service technician Pascal. © SARA BETH DACOMBE

business from 1998 and on, about 15 years before we moved here," Victoria adds. "It didn't take long before we decided we like this town and wanted to settle here. We decided to try to find a building space, and last year we signed our lease. The first few years, Pavel spent some time to receive all his necessary papers to operate as a mechanic in Canada. We are fully equipped to provide all kinds of cars with all kinds of services and Manitoba safety inspections."

The Petrenkos welcome all makes and models of vehicles, but their focus is on European and Asian cars. Pavel's specialty is working on European cars and imports that in many cases require special diagnostic equipment.

"Well, almost everyone does domestics, but to find a shop that works on European cars is harder," Victoria admits. "Pavel has more than 20 years experience working on Mercedes, Audi, Volkswagen, and he has all the equipment and diagnostic scanners, the same as a dealership has, for these cars. And luxury cars as well, like Porsche and Bentley."

They employ one other full-time mechanic and the two boys help out around the shop. As parents, Pavel and Victoria would be pleased if the boys followed them into the family business.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

No one in the family spoke English before coming to Canada, but all of them can now speak it. The boys picked it up quite easily from being in school and Victoria and Pavel both welcome opportunities to speak more English with customers through the business.

They say the culture here is very welcoming, but sometimes even if you can speak and understand English, the humour is hard to understand.

"I'm not sure if you can understand me," Victoria laughs, "but I can understand you quite well."

Pavel agrees. "The humour is the difficult part. Humour is very cultural... Sometimes I will not get the joke, but I will laugh anyway.

And I will learn."

The family has adjusted to life in Canada well, especially the weather. Considering their hometown of Surgut is north of the 60th parallel, they are quite familiar with the reality of long cold winters, so the climate here hasn't given them any problems.

On the contrary! They are really enjoying it here, because it is warmer.

"We're from Siberia," says Victoria. "It would be more comparable to the Northwest Territories there. Our city was so gorgeous, but we're good with cold."

"It's a great summer here," adds Pavel.

Having just come through one of our great summers helps, weather-wise, but the couple agrees that their family feels completely settled.

"This is our home," Victoria says with conviction. "We're not moving back to Winnipeg. We're here to help customers. Our children are here and we're building the business here."

DIFFERENCES IN DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

The two spoke about another cultural difference from Russia to Canada, which shows itself in the expectations customers have when they approach a mechanics shop to perform a job.

"In the European style, if a customer has a problem, he'll bring us the car and say, 'You just need to find it and fix the problem,'" says Pavel. "That's normal in Germany, in Russia, just for any European countries. A customer will pay for a result. We will find it and fix it."

He says the business is different in Canada. Here, a shop will look at a car, try different things, until they find a solution.

"A lot of times, we see, customers came to us and say they have already been to one place and a second place and third place," Victoria says. "We are usually number two, three, four. If they need us to diagnose the car, we can find what is actually going wrong. But if a customer comes

and says, 'I know what the problem is,' or 'I googled and found you, now I need to replace this part,' well... sometimes they've already ordered it on Amazon or eBay. We respect our customer and the customer is always right, and we can offer advice. If they again have the same problem, though, we can say, 'Okay, let us do the diagnostic.'"

Diagnostic services are very important to the staff at Check Engine. They see the potential to save customers money when problems are diagnosed and fixed accurately.

"We live in a small town and everybody talks," says Victoria. "Obviously, if you do a bad job, nobody will come a second time. Price is very important. We try to do a high-quality repair job, with minimal price."

This is a challenge that Pavel finds enjoyable. When they say customers often come to them after already being to several other mechanics shops, it's not intended as an insult. Instead it highlights Pavel's ability to find the root problem when a vehicle's issue is very difficult to diagnose.

"It's his favourite job. He always will take a challenge if other people cannot," says Victoria. "Sometimes people will bring something in and say it is one thing, and after diagnostics we see it is not what was at surface level."

"I like a smart job. I enjoy a mystery," says Pavel. "Some problems present with the same symptoms, but are much different problems."

CAR CARE TIPS

Since a diagnostic mystery is considered a joy at Check Engine, not a threat, Pavel and Victoria's top tip for vehicle owners is no surprise: have your car's problem diagnosed correctly. And don't wait to bring it in when you feel something is going wrong.

"It's much cheaper to fix it when the problem starts," Pavel says. "If you wait, it will be more expensive. A problem can grow from a small one to a big one, with a much different price tag."

The two also want to get the word out that, with some types of vehicles nowadays, it often seems like there's no alternative but to go back to the dealer, which can get expensive.

"We are here," says Pavel. "If we say specialty, people think we can only fix performance cars or Germany cars. But no, we can and want to work on all models. But we also do have a specialization. We can fix your luxury car models cheaper than a dealer."



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Commentary

Building Resilient Kids in an Anxious Time

By Daniel Dacombe

As students return from what is arguably the longest spring break any of them have ever experienced, they are re-entering a world profoundly different from when they last left.

While September is normally a month of back to school stress, both positive and negative, no one is pretending that September 2020 is anything close to normal. For parents, the worries about gathering school supplies and buying expensive new shoes have been joined by fears related to the pandemic and guilt for sending their children out into the world—or for keeping them home.

As parents, we fear for our children in times like these, not only for their physical safety but for their psychological safety. We worry about how these current times will affect their mental health and development.

What is the appropriate amount of anxiety to feel when sending your children back to school, or starting to homeschool, in the midst of a pandemic? Surely a constant level of mild panic is appropriate. After all, living through these difficult times is likely to emotionally devastate our children's lives—and our own—for years to come... won't it?

Thankfully, living through difficult times need not negatively impact our children in the long run. The answer lies in how our brains are built, how they function, and how we can use them to build in psychological protections.

Social psychologist Dr. Dan Gilbert, professor of psychology at Harvard University, points out that our prefrontal cortex—located at the front of our skull, right above the eyes—is the most advanced part of our nervous system. Responsible for our reason, judgment, critical



thinking, and other higher functions, the prefrontal cortex is the most recently evolved part of our brain. It also can have a protective effect against the mental impact of hardships.

In his truly excellent TED Talk "The Surprising Science of Happiness," Gilbert discusses how the prefrontal cortex also serves another important function: to help us predict the future, or at least to speculate on a number of possible futures, determine which of them is desirable/not desirable, and decide which is most likely.

Unfortunately, most of us have a tendency to overemphasize the negative possible futures and their likelihood, and downplay the positive ones. We fixate on the bad, the unchangeable, and the might-have-beens, and tend to expect they will affect us to a large degree. This is what's known as *impact bias*—the human tendency to overestimate the duration and intensity of a future negative emotional state.

In fact, we can believe in these negative outcomes so strongly that we almost guarantee them coming to pass.

Gilbert notes that this need not

always be the case, and that when we focus on the positives (both here and now, and the positives that may come in the future) our expectations are often fulfilled.

Impact bias can work in reverse, and when we keep in mind the positive outcomes we can actually help bring them into reality as well, improving our mental health and overall happiness.

Social psychologists like Gilbert call this our "psychological immune system," and it can help us to build up one of our most important traits: resiliency, or the ability to recover from challenges or hardships.

As useful as it can be to learn that we have a psychological immune system which can kick in when we're in dire straits, when you know a parent who's struggling with anxiety over their child's schooling during the pandemic, it isn't always useful to extol the virtues and benefits of positive thinking. If you yourself are a parent dealing with some of these fears, you might be wanting something a little more practical to help you deal with both your anxieties and your children's.

Thankfully, even in the time of COVID-19, there are steps we can

take to ensure less anxiety, and better mental health, for us and our kids.

Children are naturally resilient, and thanks to their growing brains and our psychological immune systems this is a trait you can nurture and help grow. Our children may come out of this even better than we will as their parents, especially if we encourage their resilient tendencies. Psychologists have determined several factors that help resilience to grow, including maintaining optimism about the future, like Dr. Gilbert discussed.

Another factor that increases resilience is emotional regulation, or the ability to control one's emotional state and reactions to circumstances. We regulate our emotions by thinking about the events that affect us, by challenging negative patterns of thinking and by verbally processing our feelings. Many parents are taking this as an opportunity to talk about their children's fears, and this is excellent.

This is also a good time to give our children more language to describe their emotions, since increased emotional vocabulary has been linked to better emotional regulation skills. Teach your children words

for their complex emotions, words like "ambivalence," "isolated," and "bittersweet." The more words they have to describe how they're feeling, the better they will understand how they are feeling.

A third strategy shown to increase resilience is to establish and maintain clear values, and check in with how well we're maintaining them. Some families discuss morality with their children only about certain subjects—such as not stealing, hitting, or swearing—whereas others prefer to leave those conversations for the Sunday school teacher. Resilient people, though, tend to have a solid understanding of their own moral standards, and these standards help keep them steady during difficult times.

When it comes to building resilience in your children, this may be a good time to have some specific value-oriented conversations. For instance, talk about values like "acting for the common good," which is a big reason for people to wear masks in public.

These are tough times, and speaking as a parent of school-age children, I have immediate and intimate appreciation for the fears many parents are experiencing right now. But this time is also an opportunity to help our children grow to become strong, resilient adults.

In the same way that doctors are working to develop a COVID-19 vaccine, hopefully some day soon, to strengthen our physical immune systems, we can also help to strengthen our children's psychological immune systems to strengthen by focusing on the positive possibilities in the world today, growing their emotional regulation skills and helping them to establish values that will keep them steady in an unsteady world.

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Sports & Recreation

Junior C Hockey Coming Back to Niverville

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

It's been five years since Niverville had its own Junior C hockey team, a blemish which a few former players and coaches are ready to set right. The new Junior C Clippers will join the Hanover-Tache Junior Hockey League (HTJHL) this fall in a season that will get underway on Friday, November 6.

"Our first step was to put out some messages on social media, and we got a lot of response from local kids that want to play," says Luke Toews, who will serve as the team manager. "Once we heard back from all of those kids, we were good to go."

According to Toews, they heard back from about 30 interested players, which is a large pool from which to build a competitive team. All the players are between the ages of 18 to 21, although the league rules state that a team can only have a limited number of 21-year-olds on its roster.

Toews himself played all four years of his Junior C eligibility in Niverville, and in fact his fourth year also happened to be the last year Niverville had a team, five years ago.

"So we haven't had Junior hockey in town since then," he says. "Then last season, myself and a few friends thought about maybe starting it up for this year. It just ended up working out that we got enough people together to help manage and coach it. I'll be the team manager, and then we'll have a full coaching staff and a safety."

Filling the role of head coach will be Todd Anderson, who previously coached the Junior C program in Niverville. Anderson also has plenty



The team behind the new Junior C Clippers: Reagan Carruthers, Dominic Martens, Luke Toews, and Todd Anderson.
Not pictured: Jordan Laioie.

I LIKE TO FEELS

of experience coaching Eastman
minor hockey.

The assistant coaches will include Dominic Martens, Jordan Lajoie, and Reagan Carruthers.

Of course, in addition to the usual hurdles involved in putting together a new team, they also had to navigate the ever-shifting nature of our new COVID reality. Toews says the pandemic has definitely thrown a few wrenches in the works—but that's the same as everybody, everywhere.

"Currently Hockey Manitoba and Manitoba Health have approved phase two for hockey, which is non-contact and very much spaced apart on the ice," Toews says. "Which obviously doesn't work for actual hockey games. But for Junior leagues, the current plan is that phase three will be approved for early October, and phase three includes full contact and you can have your full team on the bench."

Tryouts will be announced shortly, and through that process the team will get whittled down to about 20 players.

"We're going to have two to three

skates with everybody," Toews says of the tryout process. "Those skates will just be general drills, puck drills, skating drills, and in-house scrimmages. Then we're aiming to have at least one exhibition game against one of the surrounding towns, depending on how ice and time goes."

A PURELY LOCAL LEAGUE

If you're only a casual hockey fan, you might not have a solid understanding of what Junior hockey even is—and that may be due to the fact that there's a lot of variation in what people mean when they talk about this age level.

For example, there's Junior A, which is very high-level. These are the especially talented players who get drafted out of minor hockey and oftentimes move to different towns and small cities across the country. Many of them will likely go on to play for Canadian universities and American colleges.

The Steinbach Pistons, for example, are a Junior A team, drawing their players from all over the

province, and beyond.

Junior C teams, on the other hand, are made up entirely of local players. This level provides an opportunity for local kids to continue playing competitive hockey after they've aged out of their local minor hockey Midget programs.

"Junior C is a special league, because it's a purely local league," says Toews. "It's local kids playing against local kids. It has much more of a community feel to it. When I played Junior, it was basically 20 of your really close friends, and you're able to play competitive hockey after minor hockey ends."

The number of local Junior C teams has fluctuated in recent years, since the surrounding towns aren't always able to ice their own team for various reasons.

However, the Hanover-Tache Junior Hockey League will be up to nine teams in the 2020-2021 season. Aside from Niverville, teams will be competing in St. Adolphe, Landmark, Lorette, Grunthal, Oakbank, Steinbach, La Broquerie, and St. Jean Baptiste.

"In my first year, I was 18 years old, so it was neat going into a room filled with these 18, 19, 20, and 21-years olds, and just seeing how that whole room was," Toews says of his years in the league. "Then as you play year after year after year, you get older and eventually you're the 20 or 21-year-old. And it's interesting to see how the players' role on the team changes throughout the years."

Toews adds that some of his favourite memories from playing Junior C have to do with the rivalries Niverville had with other local teams.

"For us, it was always St. Pierre and Grunthal. Those were two teams we would really have some pretty good games against," he says. "But just being able to bond with the people my age playing competitive hockey, I really appreciated all of that. I have a lot of good memories along the way."

One big area of uncertainty for the organizers had to do with sponsorships.

It's no secret that community-level hockey programs like the Junior C Clippers are highly dependent on the support and generosity of local business, and at first there was some fear that COVID might impact their support.


Fortunately, they needn't have worried.

"It's been very, very encouraging to see so many businesses support our team," Toews says. "We weren't really sure what the response would be to people asking for money, but the businesses in town have been awesome. We want to say thanks to all of them."

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Events



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Who will Pick the Berries?

My wife called from the kitchen, "Who will pick the raspberries?" Company was coming and I roused to volunteer. It was a hot and muggy day, and the berries seemed to be well into the interior of the patch. There were bees and black flies, and the plants were barbed, and oh, forgot to mention, I get bored easy. To endure until there was enough was going to be a task. I started thinking about visiting my parents on Vancouver Island where my mother had a patch that was smaller in size but very productive. She was known for her raspberries and her summer desserts were always fresh raspberry something. Just then, it occurred to me that when we showed up at Mom and Dads place the work was already done. She had spent her time in the patch, cultivating, pruning, picking, and preparing so that we could just pull up to a place at the table. I'm reminded of Luke 14:17 where God is pictured as a certain man who prepared a great supper and sent out his servants to announce, "Come, for all things are now ready". In the Bible, "Come" is the great invitation word for the Gospel of Gods grace. It is Gods loving invitation to the weary who need rest (Matt. 11:38-40), the sin-stained who need cleansing (Isa 1:18), the hungry who need nourishment (Luke 14:17), and all who thirst for the water of Life (Rev 22:17). There was no greater display of Gods love to man than when, on the cross, Christ cried "It is finished", where he completed the work of redemption for all of man. Now God invites us into fellowship with him based on the work that his Son accomplished on our behalf. The invitation is to Gods full and furnished banqueting table – the place where believers receive the graces and blessings of Christ. We come to God through his Son for in John 14:6, Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me". We are reminded in John 1:12 that when we COME we BECOME. "But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to BECOME the sons of God, to them that believe on his name". Gods invitation is today (2 Cor 6:2b "Behold, Now is the day of Salvation), and there is an urgency to it. One day it will end; Do not be late.

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