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**DECEMBER 2020** 

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### FT CARD CHRISTMAS

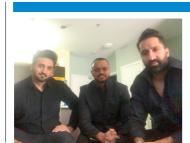
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#### **LOCAL NEWS**

### **Commuters Concerned About Highway Nails**

■ Drivers have begun to report frequent incidents of nails being strewn over the surface of Highway 200. **Details on Page 12** 



#### **LOCAL NEWS**

### **New Cannabis Retailer Seeks** to Open in Niverville

A new shop, called Urban Flavours, could be on the way for residents of Niverville—if the ownership group can persuade town council to approve a key zoning variance.

#### **LOCAL NEWS**

### **Local Veteran Launches Program for PTSD Sufferers**

■ Cameron Bennett of St. Adolphe is seeking to help PTSD sufferers through the use of artistic blacksmithing.

**Details on Page 17** 

### **COMMENTARY**

### I Won't Be Home for **Christmas**

This will be an unusual, and difficult, holiday season for many. Daniel Dacombe discussses coping mechanisms.

**Details on Page 24** 



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2 LOCAL NEWS
THE CITIZEN | DECEMBER 2020

### Dear Niverville Neighbors and Friends,

**2020** has been a tough year for us all. This pandemic has impacted us all in unexpected and unwanted ways. We need hope.

We need hope that can be experienced. We need hope that makes a difference. We need hope that is for all people.

As we enter into this Christmas season, we invite you to experience this hope as we celebrate one who came to bring peace and hope to all of us; Jesus Christ.

We, the churches of Niverville, are available to offer you hope and connection as best as we can. If you would like prayer or would like to talk with someone, please give us a call. We would love to connect with you. Or join us online for Sunday and Christmas worship services.

We wish you a Merry Christmas!

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116 3rd Avenue South Ph. 204-905-4297

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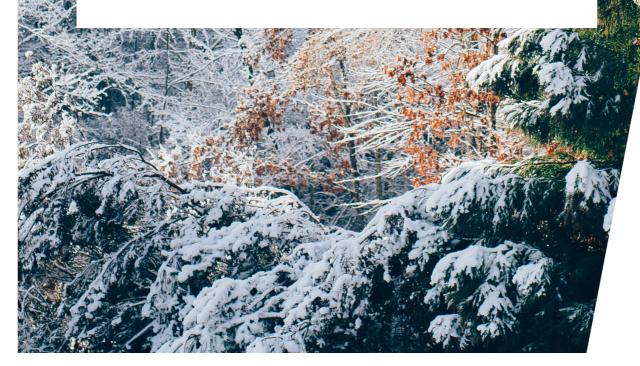
all church contact info can also be found at https://niverville.church

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to all people."

### You are invited to a free, online Mental Health Workshop on Jan 9th with Dr. Don

**Russell.** The focus will be on practical ways to recover hope, vitality and resilience in the midst of this pandemic.

Contact info@nivcf.ca or call 204-388-4645 for more information or to register.





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### Stille Nacht, Heilege Nacht

### **By Jennifer Lavin**

I grew up on a farm just outside Niverville. The days on the farm were long and sweet and my life was secure and pleasant. But I spent a lot of the year waiting for the most exciting day of all—Christmas Eve.

My mom, dad, sisters, and I dressed in our finest to go to church. Well... actually our second finest. The very finest was for Christmas Day!

We always made it into town for the Christmas Eve service, no matter the weather. It seemed like every year there was snow falling; sometimes beautiful and soft and other years a swirling blizzard. It was, it seemed, always so cold.

But you went to church on Christmas Eve and that was that.

We attended the Mennonite Brethren Church and I loved it with all my heart. In later years, I would become involved in different ways at the church, but during my childhood it was all about the Christmas Eve pageant. And a pageant it was. In my young mind, it was an absolute extravaganza of sight and sound.

The Saturday before Christmas Eve, the children would meet for a dress rehearsal. It was chaos. By then Joseph and Mary and the wise men had already been chosen and the rest of us were generally shepherds or angels. I loved being an angel because I could wear a long white gown that was excellent for twirling around in, and I could wear a piece of silver Christmas garland around my head for the halo.

There were songs and little plays. In my mind, we always sang "Silver Bells," but I could be wrong. In my mind we were all so loud and obnoxious that the leaders must have been going crazy trying to wrangle us, but I could also be wrong about this!

Finally, on Christmas Eve, dressed in our (almost) finery, my family and I would slog down to the church for the big production. Mom and Dad would find a place in the packed church... you had to get there early or you might be relegated to the chairs set up in the back for overflow!

Then we girls would head downstairs to get ready for the show.

As soon as those angel gowns and shepherd housecoats were on, we quieted down. This was no time for levity; it was Christmas Eve.

We headed up the winding steps to the choir loft. It was dark and candlelit and felt totally different than any other day of the year. We would seek out our parents and give surreptitious waves, secure in the knowledge that they were watching and waiting.

There was no more chaos then. It was hushed, it was beautiful, it was Jesus's birthday. The seriousness and import of the occasion was not lost on any of us that day. This was a big deal and we all knew it.

We would sing and perform, but I barely remember any of that part. I just knew we were all determined to do our best.

When I wasn't singing, I sat and looked at our audience, feeling so close to them. I also looked at the back of the church at the large letters that read "Jesus Christ, the same, yesterday, today, and forever." And I thought about what this meant and how this was the reason we were celebrating.

After our performance, there was usually a congregational song or two. Many years it was my dad who led the singing, and often the song was "Silent Night."

"Let's sing all three verses of 'Silent Night' and then verse one again in German," my dad would say.

And we would sing our hearts out. Our Mennonite voices come out of the womb prepared to search out perfect four-part harmony, and we did exactly that.

As verse three came to a close, a soft *thunk-thunk-thunk* could be throughout the congregation, the songbooks being put away. The German version of "Silent Night" wasn't in the green hymnals, and even if it had been we didn't need it.

We had been reverent before, but as we began to sing the soft refrains of "Stille Nacht," we became even more so.

This, I remember thinking. This is the moment when it happened. Jesus is being born.

That moment, every year, was the highlight of my year. The closeness I felt right then to my family, to Church, and to God will never be surpassed.

There would be a pause, and then life began again. We kids got to dash down the aisles and collect our loot: a brown paper lunch bag with some peanuts in the shell, a Christmas orange, and sometimes a few of those delicious (unwrapped!) hard candies that tasted like raspberries.

Now it was time to pile in the car and head back to the farm. When we got home, we would put on our nightgowns and sit in front of the fireplace to open presents. It was warm and cozy. Getting gifts is always fun!

But as I would settle into my bed that night, it wouldn't be the presents I thought of; it would be the moment at church when time stopped.

"Stille Nacht, heilege Nacht. Alles schlaft..."

### Not Everyone Has Good Memories

#### **By Anonymous**

Not everyone has candy cane sugar Christmas memories.

We would go every Christmas out to my grandparents' house. They lived three and a half hours northwest of Winnipeg, and they raised me until I was nine.

What I remember of Christmas was always being excited to go to my grandparents' house. This was Christmas for me.

But I also remember something else. You see, my stepdad would always go out drinking the night before, and in the morning we would go for that three-and-a-half-hour drive. See, he wasn't a happy drunk, so I had that to look forward to every year. Mom and I would have to wait until he was passed out, then load the car and carry him into the back seat.

Then off we would go, at about 2:00 or 3:00 a.m., after Mom had cleaned herself up and the fear had subsided. That went on every Christmas until I was 16 and I could do something about my mom not being scared.

So that's my candy cane Christmas memory.

(continued on page 4)

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- It allows inheritances to be placed in trust on special conditions if necessary;
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LOCAL NEWS
THE CITIZEN | DECEMBER 2020

(continued from page 3)

### **Treated Like Family**

### **By Jennifer Sawatzky**

Back in 2013, I was out in British Columbia at Capernwray Harbour Bible Centre. This was my first time being so far away from home and it was very hard for me. But I looked forward to it being Christmas, because that meant I could go home and see my family.

As Christmas came closer, my family and I were trying to make plans to get a flight home for me.

When it came down to it, though, we couldn't afford to get me home for Christmas. That left me to find a place to stay and spend Christmas away from my family for the first time.

Thankfully, one of my friends, who had previously attended Capernwray, lived nearby with her grandpa. She offered for me to spend Christmas with her family. I was upset that I couldn't go home to my family, but I was thankful that I quickly found a family to spend this time with.

I would definitely have to say this was a very memorable Christmas for me. During the time I was at my friends' house, her aunt and uncle and their kids came to stay there as well. These people were strangers to me, but they treated me like family.

Come Christmas morning, I wasn't expecting much for presents, because these people didn't know me and I didn't know them. As it turned out, they had gone Christmas shopping while they were with us and bought me presents, too.

That Christmas, I was so blessed. I was treated like family, and that's something I am going to remember for the rest of my life. Merry Christmas.



#### **Wartime Christmas**

### **By Crystal Isaac**

My dad, Arthur Wilson, was born on December 16, 1938 in Sarnia, Ontario. Dad grew up in wartime and poverty. His dad had signed up for the war in 1939, the day after England declared war on Germany, and so little Arthur spent his first years at home with his mother and sister.

"It was hard for me to remember Christmas when I was young, because we didn't really have Christmas like you have it today," he says. "We never had a tree. The only thing we did was we hung our stockings on the wall and we hoped that there might be something in them in the morning. Usually what Santa brought was an orange and apple and some hard sweet candy. The war was on and everything was hard to get, so those things were usually rationed. But my mother found a way to get them and put them in our stockings. That was so exciting for us, to look in our stocking and put everything out on the bed to see what we had.

"The first real Christmas I remember was when my dad came home from overseas. The war was over. We got all dressed up, washed up, and we headed over to my Auntie Kit's home in her new Dodge car. As we were driving down the highway, it was snowing. Not really slippery, but you know, the kind of snow that melts

when it hits the pavement.

"Aunt Kit had a radio in her car, which was unbelievable to me. I never had heard of that before in my life. I was in first grade at the time, so I kind of knew what a radio was. I remember they were playing Bing Crosby's song, 'I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas.' I can still hear it playing to this day. I've remembered it all this time. I'm almost eightytwo and I was about six or seven years old when I heard Bing sing that for the first time. It was so beautiful and it was so real because we were getting a white Christmas all around us as we drove down the highway.

"The next thing we knew, we had arrived at Kittie's home. We were all tired and had to go to bed, but I didn't want to go to bed because we had been told Santa was coming. Everyone was so excited about Santa coming. I went to bed like I was supposed to and in the morning I woke up.

"I went out in the living room and there, up against the wall beside the door of Aunt Kit's kitchen, was this huge, huge toboggan. And it had my name on it from Santa. I couldn't believe it! I thought to myself, Santa Claus is real! I never knew that he was real because he had never brought me anything before.

"You see, we always had toys growing up, because we made toys. We could take a can of beans to pretend it was a truck. You know, you could use any kind of item to make-believe. You just had to go to a sandy beach and you're good to go! Make cars out of sticks and stufflike that. We didn't have toys like they have today. We did not have television. We did not have cellphones. We only had whatever we could gather together. My mother was very poor, so we didn't get very much. That toboggan was the first real Christmas present I ever remember."

Dad has been living at the

Morris Hospital since last May, in the midst of the COVID-19 lockdowns, awaiting placement at a care home. I asked him what has carried him through this tough season and what might encourage others in our communities navigating these waters.

"The Lord has been so good to me in here," he says. "What you need to get is the truth. Pray to the Lord. The Bible says He'll never leave you or forsake you. He is with you till the end. And the Lord is good to His word. He is my saviour, He's my strength, He's my hope, and He's my prayer. That's why even though I have been in this hospital for six months, I feel I have a purpose."

I also asked Dad about what he has learned, living through the financial pressures of wartime during Christmas and what he might share regarding that to our communities.

'Take the time to pick up your Bible and read the story of the birth of Christ," he reminds us. "What we're celebrating at Christmas is the birth of Jesus Christ. More important than anything is to remember the Lord. That would be the most important thing to do. I can't emphasize that enough. Don't get lost in Christmas gifts, ribbons and things. They are neither here nor there. Remember the manger where Iesus lav. Don't let the devil destroy vour time at Christmas with disappointments. There is so much to rejoice for. The gift of Christ is eternal life. Think

"I remember, during the war, I was just a young puppy standing beside my grandfather in church, watching the people singing hymns, praising God. They were all poor back then. Nobody had a lot of money. Nobody had a lot of anything. There wasn't much around. But the people in the Lord were happy. I could see it. I knew it. I could feel it. It was the joy of the Lord. Now it's so easy to have

stuff. Back then, it wasn't even that we didn't have enough money—the stuff wasn't there to have! I mean, I'm holding a cellphone laying in a hospital bed and I'm talking to my daughter. That seems like a complete miracle, really, when I think about it."

Iasked Dad how he expects to celebrate Christmas this year. He expects that a nurse might play some songs on the piano in their common room, but he doesn't think much more will happen beyond that.

So how can our communities support seniors this Christmas season?

"The most important thing is to visit them," my dad says. "Find the time. These people feel lost. They are lonely, and they are cut off from the world. If you can't visit, call them on the phone. But the main thing is to get down here and visit your relatives. I can't believe the number of people in here who have not seen their family yet or heard from their family. They just about go nuts after a while. There's a big need here. Huge! It gets to near desperation."

### Break from Tradition? Absolutely Not!

### **By Ruth Braun**

One year I said to my daughter, "I'm pretty busy this year, and I'm not sure I have a free Saturday between now and Christmas Eve, so maybe I'll just pick up a box of one of those nice appetizers at Costco instead of making our mushroom turnovers."

I'll never forget the look of sheer horror that swept across her face. "Absolutely not!" she stated emphatically.

I had already been imagining how much time I would save, how nice it would be to pull those nice flaky storebought pockets from the freezer on Christmas Eve, baking them on my new stone

baking sheet and serving them with no work involved.

But my daughter wouldn't have it. "Mom! We can't do that! We've had mushroom turnovers ever since I can remember! I'll come help you."

Her voice was strong and clear and there would be no more discussion.

I think it's now been 40 years of us making those annual mushroom turnovers, and the temptation to simplify our long-standing tradition has never been discussed since.

It's a yearly anticipation, and not just the part where we enjoy them on Christmas Eve, but also the whole production of making them. Several of us get together well in advance, turn on the Christmas playlist, and make hundreds of the turnovers. Yes, the recipe is the same, recorded in a very stained old green school notebook, but the volume has grown and whoever in the family comes to help also gets to bring some home to serve at their own Christmas events.

What is it about these non-negotiable family traditions that are so meaningful? Do we have a deep-seated desire for what's familiar? Does routine provide comfort and safety? Do we enjoy the anticipation of repeating precious memories? Is it a God-given value for us to form connections and share our joys with the people closest to us?

Whatever your tradition is at Christmas, don't worry about changing it. If you're a new family, go ahead and have fun developing your own traditions. Or, if you want the recipe for these delicious cream cheese mushroom pastries, seasoned with thyme and wonderful in every way, email the editor of this paper. He knows what I'm talking about.

(continued on page 6)



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THE CITIZEN | DECEMBER 2020 **LOCAL NEWS** 

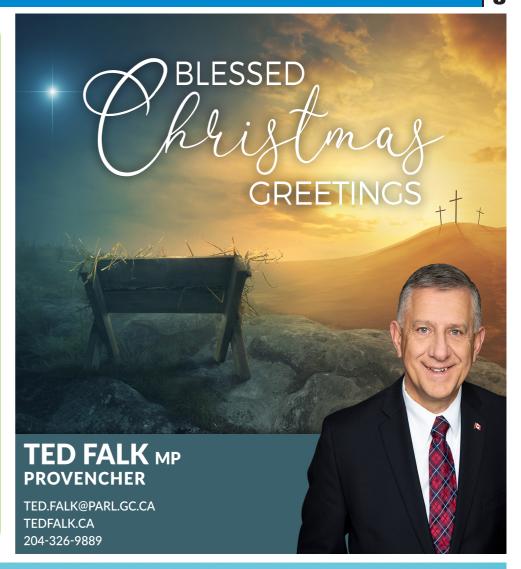
### **NIVERVILLE** MEC DIGITAL BANQUET

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LOCAL NEWS
THE CITIZEN | DECEMBER 2020



We are calling on the businesses, churches, community groups and individuals from the Niverville/Otterburne/New Bothwell and Ste. Agathe area to support the *Niverville Helping Hands Christmas 2020 Hamper Drive* in order to offer a hand up to those residents in our area who are in need this Christmas season.

Please note that this year, due to COVID-19, any food donations will require shelf time, so these can only be used for later distributions, but not for Christmas hampers for which financial sponsorships are being requested this year.

- Christmas hampers for small families \$95.00 (two to three people)
- Christmas hampers for medium size families \$130.00 (four to five people)
- Christmas hampers for large families \$160.00 (six to eight people)

Please use the contact information below to channel corporate and/or individual financial sponsorships to Niverville Helping Hands, or give to NHH directly. <a href="https://www.nivervillehelpinghands.org/contact-us/">https://www.nivervillehelpinghands.org/contact-us/</a> For income tax receipts, all cheques should be made payable to the Niverville Helping Hands.

With family hampers, a toy for each child (ages infant to 13) is planned with a market value of at least \$30.00, as well as a family toy which the children can share. People can either sponsor a toy for \$30.00, or bring any new toy donations to either the Niverville Credit Union, or to one of the following church locations between now and Friday, December 11.

### • Niverville Community Fellowship

Tanya Plett | info@nivcf.ca | 388-4645

#### • Word of Life Mission Church

Reception Desk | info@wolchurch.ca | 388-4800

### • Fourth Avenue Bible Church

Jason Kehler | youth@fabchurch.ca | 346-3573

#### • Niverville United Church

Reception | nuchurch@mymts.net | 388-4634

#### Niverville YFC

Gord Kroeker | gordonkroekerinc@gmail.com | 388-6827

### Maranatha Niverville

Karen Unrau | reception@maranathanivervillle.church | 388-4795

#### Niverville CMC

Emanuel Toews | emanuel@bristal.ca | 371-9444

#### • Church of the Rock Niverville

Tim Hamm | tim@churchoftherock.ca | 228-3048

### • Ambassador Canadian Reformed

James Zekveld | ambassador@gmail.com | 905-4297

### • Bothwell Christian Fellowship

Sjana Fehr | kensjanafehr@gmail.com | 388-6187

#### • Niverville Helping Hands

info@nivervillehelpinghands.org | 392-5699

### Together, we can make a difference!



**THANK YOU** for your generosity!



(continued from page 4)

### The Gift of Receiving

### By Jan Kendall St. Cyr

The week before Christmas one year, I was busily shopping, baking, and organizing the food for our family celebrations. I pridefully took on this momentous task, rejecting all offers of help from my family.

I awoke the next day with flu-like symptoms and a gnawing pain in my lower abdomen and had no choice but to put the Christmas preparations aside and go back to bed.

Two days later, my symptoms worsened and I feared an infection had set in.

Feeling very weak and frustrated, I finally went to the doctor. Having had infections like this in the past, I self-diagnosed that a round of antibiotics would soon have me feeling better, enabling me to get on with my Christmas tasks.

After a few tests were run, the doctor kindly put his hand on my arm and said, "Although you have symptoms, there is no infection."

Shocked, I tearfully asked, "So you are not going to give me a prescription?"

"No," he replied. My heart sank. "I believe that what you are experiencing is a result of stress. Your body is violently reacting to an emotional overload. My advice would be to figure out where the stress is coming from and then find ways to let it go."

Dejected, I returned home and to my bed.

Not yet heeding the doctor's advice, I struggled to finish my preparations, again rejecting any offers of help.

By Christmas Eve, I was too sick to participate in any festivities and spent the holiday in bed. Missing Christmas became the painful catalyst I needed to make some necessary changes. I had experienced a couple of traumas that definitely had a hand in my current situation, but what really stood out apart from everything else was my inability to ask for or receive help! As one who loves to give, my selfworth had been determined

by doing everything myself.

I further learned that giving and receiving are actually equal parts of the same equation. You cannot have one without the other. So by refusing the gift of help, I was actually rejecting the giver and making myself sick in the process!

I began practicing the wise admonition that tells us, "Many hands make light work." And as a result, my body healed.

Christmas now is the most wonderful time of the year and I am so grateful that I've learned to accept the valuable gift of receiving!

### **Blackout Fairy Tale**

### Sylvia St. Cyr

Growing up, my Christmases consisted of two traditions each Christmas Eve.

First, after dinner we would go to church where us kids would perform a play for all the adults. Second, my family would head home where we would gather in the living room to open our presents.

One particular year, my most memorable Christmas, was when I was roughly ten years old. I took to the stage in our little Mennonite church with my fellow Sunday school class to put on a little production of Mary and Joseph heading to Bethlehem. When I was younger, the production

always seemed to be so long, which I enjoyed. In hindsight, the plays probably lasted a total of 20 minutes.

After the play, I felt a swell of joy having reminded myself of the true meaning of Christmas as I sat back in the pew to sing a few carols.

In the midst of singing one of the beloved hymns, the power went out. No one screamed as the floodlights shone dimly, the generator having kicked in. But it was clear to the congregation: the evening's event was finished after everyone stood around for a few minutes in the dark.

I'm not quite sure why, but I'll never forget the drive home that night. The streets of Niverville were pitch black, other than the headlights illuminating the softly falling snow. It was eerie yet serene at the same time, beckoning each of us to be still on this truly silent night.

When we got home, my parents talked about what to do next. On that December evening, even though we live in one of the coldest places in the world, there was no panic in their talk. They decided that we would continue our tradition anyway.

My dad went and got his kerosene lantern from the garage, lit it, and then we took turns opening gifts by the flicker of a single flame.

I'm not sure what I opened as a present that year. It didn't really matter, as we had an unforgettable Christmas in the dark. In my mind, as a child, the evening felt like a fairy tale.

This Christmas during the pandemic will no doubt be different than ever before. But as citizens of this town, we have the opportunity to find the light in the darkness and make it one we won't forget—sort of like the first Christmas, a holy night so calm and bright.



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### Merry Christmas & and Happy New Year!

The owners and staff of The Citizen would like to express our sincere gratitude to the people and businesses in and around our region. Now more than ever, we encourage our readers to recognize and support those people and businesses who continue to make this region a great place to live, work, and play!



Looking forward to a year full of **good** news!



R LOCAL NEWS

THE CITIZEN | DECEMBER 2020

### New Cannabis Retailer Seeks Opportunity to Operate in Niverville

### **By Evan Braun**

⋈ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

A public hearing will take place in Niverville on December 15 at which town council will hear from a new applicant seeking to open a cannabis retail outlet. The proposed location is at 41 Main Street, a unit in the new commercial strip mall which began construction earlier this month.

Sim Sandhu is the spokesperson for the ownership group behind the proposal.

Should the shop come to fruition, the business will be called Urban Flavours.

"As a group, we have been looking at doing something in Niverville for the last few years now," says Sandhu. "We had pursued a few business opportunities, which unfortunately we were not able to close on. At the moment our group is looking at the retail cannabis business as well as another business, which we will be revealing to the community soon. We enjoy the way the



The team behind Urban Flavours: CEO Harvinder Dhillon, VP of Operations Said Mohamed, and COO Harsimran (Sim) Sandhu.

SIM SANDHU

community supports local businesses and how the overall focus on building a healthy community is a strong goal for both council and the community. It is not a secret that the town has seen exponential growth over the last few years and we plan to bring a positive impact to the community through business relationships and community support."

Sandhu adds that he and his group have more than three years of experience in the retail cannabis business.

In Manitoba, the sale of

cannabis is overseen by the Liquor, Gaming, and Cannabis Authority. Sandhu explains that the LGCA has a very strict and extensive approval process to ensure that all companies selling cannabis in Manitoba meet a high standard.

"All companies applying for a retail cannabis license are required to provide all personal and business disclosures and background checks," he says. "This means that all of our personal and other business interests are analyzed to ensure that we

are good businessmen who have a strong track record when it comes to managing and operating a business in the province of Manitoba."

Beyond these checks, Sandhu says they must also present an employee screening plan, as well as a thorough security plan for their business.

"When it comes to security, we have engaged ProTELEC Alarms, who is a leader in the security industry and have completed over 50 retail cannabis installations across the country," he says. "We are meeting the minimum [security] standards set forth by the LGCA and have added additional security measures to appease the community, which includes providing RCMP access to our surveillance systems. Further details on security will be provided as we go through the build process."

An issue of major concern both to the LGCA generally and Sandhu's company specifically is ensuring that minors aren't able to access the product.

Sandhu confirms that this is a major focus for him and his partners.

"We have a strict protocol, which is also mandated by the LGCA, to verify the age of any individual purchasing cannabis," he says. "Similar restrictions are also in place for tobacco and/or alcohol consumption. As an authorized licensee, we must adhere to these laws or our license will be revoked."

This latest approval process comes after the previous company assigned to the Niverville area, Canna Cabana, withdrew their interest in operating a store here. Canna Cabana's application to council was rejected in July 2019, and their bid to open a store stalled out afterward due to a variety of factors, including the absence of suitable commercial properties.

For this reason, Sandhu and his business partners feel the only viable option is to request a variance to the town's bylaw establishing a 1,000-foot buffer between cannabis retail and a school or park. They looked hard for other locations and weren't able to find any that met their needs. Their proposed location at 41 Main Street would instead be 744 feet from the nearest school.

"We are looking at retail cannabis from a business standpoint," he says, "but we also understand that this is a very sensitive matter when it comes to the proximity to the school, and overall acceptance in the community will have its pros and cons. As a group, we were all raised in Manitoba and we have a reputation for doing good business and creating a positive impact on the community. We are not a large corporate entity like all of the other cannabis retailers whose main focus is opening many stores in a short period of time to control the market. Our store is not a franchise model as most others are. We control everything, and this was important for us before we made the decision to pursue retail cannabis in Niverville. We know that if and when retail cannabis were to come to the town that our team would be the best caretakers of that responsibility."

The public hearing on December 15 will by necessity be a virtual meeting, due to the current pandemic restrictions that prohibit  $indoor\,gatherings.\,Residents$ who wish to voice comments, whether in support or in opposition, may submit their correspondence to planning@whereyoubelong.ca. This correspondence will be read into the public record at the hearing. Anonymous comments will not be addressed.

Individuals who would like to attend the virtual meeting must register in advance by emailing the town (reception@whereyoubelong.ca) on or before December 14.

### Public Notice Proposed Valley Fiber Radio Communications Project Telecommunications Tower

Valley Fiber Limited is a locally owned and operated technology firm based out of Winkler, MB. The ever-growing need for fast and reliable telecommunications has spurred innovation. To continue this innovation, Valley Fiber in partnership with the RM of Ritchot and the Local Fire Department, is proposing to construct a 58m tower next to the newly developed fire hall. The tower will support communication equipment and Transport Canada required lighting. The tower will require a small 3.6m x 4.2m ancillary building at the base of the tower. Based on a review by Valley Fiber, there were no available existing locations or facilities that would suit the project requirements.

Valley Fiber is inviting the public to comment on the proposed tower location prior to January 4, 2021. This tower is going to be constructed and operated to be fully compliant with Industry Canada guidelines found in the client procedures circular (CPC-2-0-03, including Safety code 6 and CEAA 2012). For more information on Industry Canada's requirements please see (www.ic.gc.ca/towers).

#### **Project Details:**

**Location:** Ste Agathe, Manitoba **Legal:** 368 Service Road

**Coordinates:** 49.569440, -97.182134 **Valley Fiber Contact:** 

Tim Peters

800 Monticello Way Winkler MB R6W 0N3 tim.peters@valleyfiber.ca

**RM of Ritchot Contact:** 

352 Main Street, St. Adolphe, MB R5A 1B9 204-883-2293

**Industry Canada Contact:** 400 St. Mary Ave, 4th floor Winnipeg, MB R3C 4K5

lc.spectrumwinnipeg-winnipegspectre.ic@canada.ca



X - proposed tower location





### Local Couple Builds "Friendship Trail" in St. Adolphe

#### **By Jennifer Lavin**

The pandemic has taken away a lot of our entertainment opportunities, but a couple from St. Adolphe took advantage of some unseasonably warm weather in November and put in the hard work to give the locals a new place to play.

Many may not be aware, but there is a bird sanctuary just north of the Pierre Delorme bridge, just off the TransCanada Trail. According to ebird.org, it is among the top ten places in Manitoba to watch birds. At least 244 species have been spotted within the sanctuary.

The sanctuary is what inspired Henriette and Richard Collette of St. Adolphe to get out of the house and keep busy. Throughout the

pandemic, the Collettes have can warm up a little or even been picking up trash along the river and throughout the sanctuary.

'We thought it looked so good once clean... so why not make a trail along the river?' says Richard.

Every day, they have been outside working on what they now call Friendship Trail. They say there are already various small structures and painted birdhouses constructed by kids and their parents throughout the trail.

"We also put up a Christmas tree, and with the saw sliced round pieces of wood with a hole and a ribbon through it and invited kids to take them home and paint them and put them back on the tree," Richard adds.

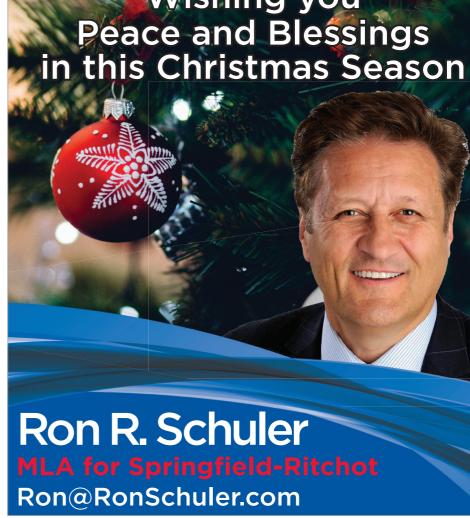
There is also a fire pit along the trail where walkers

cook hot dogs or s'mores. Mr. Collette points out that so far people have been very good at wearing masks and maintaining social distance.

After a little snack, the kids can head to the dike. The steep hill is a perfect place to toboggan-and as more snow falls, there are sure to be plenty of bundled-up kids and adults alike enjoying the thrill of a ride.

Richard Collette says that unfortunately much of the hard work he and his wife have put into the trail will be lost in the spring thaw, but he is pleased that their effort has been benefitting the townspeople in this difficult time.

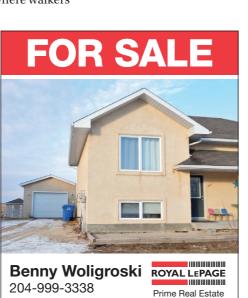
'We are bringing lots of smiles to people's faces and that's our reward."



Wishing you









1 LOCAL NEWS

The new commercial strip mall to be built at 41 Main Street in Niverville.

RAY DOWSE

### Commercial Strip Mall to Begin Construction

**By Evan Braun** 

☑ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

A new commercial strip mall has begun construction in Niverville. The property at 41 Main Street, which is currently home to BSI Insurance, is getting a major facelift as well as a significant expansion.

The 5,410-square-foot expansion will include two new commercial units, one of which will be 3,000 square feet and the other 2,410 square feet. The addition will feature a glass, limestone, and brick exterior. Construction began on November 15, with work on the new foundation. The construction is being overseen by a local company, Prairie Sky Properties.

The existing structure, with the BSI Insurance office, will be refinished to match, with updated siding and stonework. A brand-new sidewalk and parking lot will also be built.

In total, the strip mall will offer

nearly 8,500 square feet of commercial space.

The laneway that currently exits onto Main Street to the east of BSI Insurance will need to be closed in the coming weeks to accommodate the new building. Utilities have also been relocated.

According to the developer, Ray Dowse, part of the long process of getting this building approved meant dealing with the foundation of a long-departed building to the east of 41 Main Street. Decades ago, that building was home

to a coffee shop, and afterward it became Niverville's youth drop-in centre before burning to the ground.

"After the fire, the foundation was never excavated," says Dowse. "It was simply filled and left in the ground. As this new building will be built on piles, we needed to prep the site and remove the old foundation, which we completed one year ago."

Dowse reports that a tenant has already claimed the new 3,000-square-foot space, and more details of that business will be available in the coming weeks.

"All of the people we were able to work with at all levels really helped get this project and agreement together."

Ray Dowse | Developer

The centre unit could be the site of a new cannabis store, Urban Flavours. That store is subject to a public hearing in front of town council on December 15.

Overall, this project has been in the works for three years, including

early dialogue, site planning, town approvals, architectural work, engineering reports, legal consultation, environmental studies, and nailing down financing.

"It takes a lot of time and patience," says Dowse. "That said, all of the people we were able to

work together with at all levels really helped get this project and agreement together—and we are all very excited to see this building plan come to fruition in 2021."

BSI Insurance intends to continue occupying their current space for the

foreseeable future.

"I'd like to congratulate Ray and his team for the amazing work they do to help with Niverville's economic development," says Ren DeMoissac, CEO of BSI Insurance. "Their work in turn helps us grow

our business in the long run. We're excited about the expansion of the BSI building, as it will create opportunity for businesses and services to find a new home and will naturally help boost foot traffic in our area. Businesses in Niverville have recently done a great job renovating their storefronts and I'm pleased to be part of Main Street's beautification."

DeMoissac adds that the BSI offices will also get an interior renovation over the course of the coming year.

"We anticipate having to reroute foot traffic during construction, as well as coming up with possible parking alternatives, but for the most part it will be business as usual," DeMoissac says. "We hope everyone is staying safe during these times and want to remind everyone that we're open to help you. Thank you all for the support over the years."





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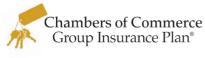
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### Commuters Frustrated by Frequent Nails on Highway 200

### **By Sara Beth Dacombe**

sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

Commuters south of Winnipeg, beware. For the last several months, residents of the southeast—specifically from the communities of Ritchot-have been outspoken when it comes to reporting multiple incidents of nails being strewn along the surface of Highway 200, St. Mary's Road, in the area around the Winnipeg Floodway.

These nails have led to a large number of punctured tires, and drivers have begun to suspect someone may be placing the nails on the road intentionally as an act of vandalism.

Kyle Langlais and Susan Zimmerman commute from the St. Adolphe area and have both had their tires punctured by nails, which they suspect happened along this stretch of highway.

"I have been dealing with the issue of brand-new roofing nails in our tires for months now," says Langlais. "It always seems to be on the Floodway bridge and south, around the corner there. We have had dozens of flats over the last few months and it's very frustrating, to say the least. It seems as though it's being done intentionally, as it's always brand-new roofing nails in the same location. And there's no possible way that a contractor or multiple contractors could lose brand-new roofing nails in the same stretch of highway, again and again and again like this.

Zimmerman has recorded the exact locations of the times she's found nails on the highway, including recently on November 4 and 14.

"I've seen the nails on three occasions in the last couple weeks," Zimmerman says. "The first time was north of the Floodway, but before Courchaine Road. The second time was just south of the Floodway right before bridge. This most recent time, it was about a quarter-mile south of the Floodway on the straightaway between the curves.

Zimmerman has racked up more than \$800 in repairs, money which she has had to shell out on tire replacements since 2017. Some ofher tires have had multiple nails.

Langlais estimates dozens of people, at least, have had to repair or replace damaged tires recently and says that something needs to be done about the situation. He and other concerned residents have reached out to the local authorities for help.

"My first call was to the RCMP, and they said it's not our area, that it's Winnipeg police," says Langlais. "So I contacted them and they said it's outside the city and it's not our area, that's RCMP. But then they confirmed on a map, it was their area. The City of Winnipeg also tried to say it wasn't



Commuters have been reporting many incidents of nails in tires after driving Highway 200

SUSAN ZIMMERMAN

their area, but eventually they did send a crew to clean it up."

Ken Allen, communications officer for the City of Winnipeg's public works department, sent a crew to clean up nails on St. Mary's Road just south of the Floodway on November 4. He said this was the first time their department had been made aware of an issue with nails.

"It appeared like a box or a container of nails had fallen off a truck and was scattered across the roadway," said Allen about what his clean-up crew saw. "This seems to be an isolated incident. Sometimes things fall off trucks. So in my opinion, it appears it happened accidentally. We appreciate the public calling us at 311 so we can send a crew to complete whatever clean-up is necessary."

Since this story was first published online last month, dozens of people have come forward with similar claims. The RCMP have been onsite more frequently to clean up the nails.

One local man in particular, Marcel LaFortune, has been instrumental in removing nails and organizing community members to tackle the problem and keep the road safe.

#### **RECURRING ISSUE**

While the City of Winnipeg determined that this was not a recurring issue, Corporal Julie Courchaine responded on behalf of the RCMP and confirmed the opposite.

"There are a number of files that have been called in and been investigated throughout the year," says Courchaine. "In speaking with some detachments, in some of these reports people have said they had a flat tire from before, and it may have happened somewhere else. Our files do not confirm such a specific area of highway. But the people do seem to feel it has happened in that area."

Courchaine also says it is quite a large area to monitor and the RCMP has communicated with the RM of Ritchot about these incidents.

Staff Sergeant Guy Landreville with the St. Pierre RCMP acknowledges that this continues to be an ongoing problem. He says this is not really a public safety issue, but an issue of suspicious activity.

"We have responded to a few calls stating people got a flat tire from roofing nails near that location," says Landreville. "From experience, a roofing nail will normally not cause a blowout of a tire. It will usually contribute to a slow leak of the tire, leading to a warning light activating on the vehicle's dashboard."

The RCMP encourages the public to report suspicious activity, and they say all leads will be investigated.

Mitch Duval, CAO of the RM of Ritchot, says he personally filed a police report last year about nails on the highway and that the RM has tried to help address the importance of cleaning the road of nails.

"The RM has been made aware of the issue approximately three to four times over the past six years," says Duval. "We are not sure if this is intentional or not, but we did report the matter in the past to the RCMP. If the municipality hears about the issue, we contact the province, Manitoba Infrastructure, Highway Division, as it is a provincial road. They are pretty good and send out a sweeper to take care of the problem. I take that road every day, so I'm hoping for no flats along the way."

Duval says that the RM welcomes any concerned residents to contact their office.

#### **VIDEO EVIDENCE**

The RCMP has suggested that video evidence would go a long way toward helping to confirm whether this is being done by someone on purpose.

Recently, Niverville's town council installed high-quality video surveillance around the community and recently had success solving a hitand-run crime. The cameras secured footage that the RCMP were able to use as evidence in court, which was critical to solving the case.

Video evidence is always extremely helpful in helping to solve any crime," says Staff Sergeant Landreville. "Anyone who possesses such equipment and would like clarification on laws surrounding its usage is asked to contact our detachment. We would be glad to help anyone with questions.

Currently, Ritchot does not have any community surveillance cameras, but Duval says purchasing them is not out of the question.

"Absolutely, Ritchot's council would be willing to talk to the RCMP about how and where to install community cameras," Duval says. "We are looking at the RCMP as well as the province's collaboration on the

#### **INSURANCE CLAIMS**

In the meantime, residents continue to be frustrated and are looking for further options to address the issue.

"I live about five kilometres south of the Floodway, north of St. Adolphe, and one kilometre north of Leclerc Road," says Langlais. "The option to just take another road is not reasonable for me. We have to drive this road to bring our kids to daycare and go to work. Telling people to just avoid the area is not feasible."

Some residents are looking to file reports with Manitoba Public Insurance in the hopes of recouping some of the costs they've accrued from repairing or replacing tires.

Leanne Moore with Affinity Insurance in St. Adolphe has also had a few nails in her tires over the years.

"Everyone gets a nail in their tire over the years," Moore says. "It's happened to me. It's not a costly repair job and we are lucky in the St. Adolphe area to have so many great car repair shops to help get a quick repair. But with all the other reports of nails coming forward, I'm starting to think about that area being where

Even though Moore agrees it's possible someone could be putting nails on the road intentionally, she says it would be a difficult insurance claim to approve. Vandalism insurance can sometimes cover damage to vehicles, if you have a \$100-\$200 deductible, but MPI would require proof.

"While I am starting to think, yes, there is something going on in the area, it would be hard to claim vandalism," says Moore. "Unless there is evidence somebody put the nails there, it cannot be proven as vandalism. And there is no way for MPI to really determine where someone got a nail in their car. You can say it happened in one area, but if you drove all the way to the city, who's to say it didn't happen in the city?"

### "WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING"

Frustrated residents have continued to brainstorm on the St. Adolphe Community Info Facebook page, and Langlais is hopeful that the increased media awareness of these incidents will help put a stop to it.

"Hopefully the more awareness we raise, the more that the individual doing this will realize it's harming real people in the day-to-day world and hopefully it will stop," says Langlais. "I think we can figure out who is doing this and get an answer to what can be done to address this and make this stop. We have to do something."

LOCAL NEWS | 1

### (I) CITIZEN POLL

### Is the province providing enough pandemic support to teachers and school divisions?

Yes. With the province's help, the schools are adequately funded and staffed.

No. Our school divisions are falling short, our teachers are exhausted, and more should be done to help them.

Have another opinion? Visit our website to vote and leave us a comment.







Take part in our monthly poll for your chance to win a \$10 gift card from Niverville Shell.

Congratulations to last month's winner: LESLIE HOWIE



#### **LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:**

### Will putting the Winnipeg metro region in code red succeed in flattening Manitoba's COVID-19 curve?

Yes.	No.	I
39%	61%	

#### YOUR COMMENTS:

People are not taking the virus seriously enough until someone close to them gets it.

The ones who will want to meet, these restrictions won't mean anything. We should all protect the vulnerable and let rest of us move on. We should be looking at the recovery rate.

We are not addressing the issues of suicide, loneliness, sense of abandonment and isolationism that is taking place in our personal care homes, hospitals and assisted living institutions right at this hour. A strong case could be made this this is an example of an old saying that warns, "The cure is worse than the disease."

# DSFM President to Minister of Education: "We Need Help"

#### **By Jennifer Lavin**

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc across Manitoba, and school divisions are taking some of the hardest hits. Each division is coping in its own way, but one has come forward to say they've been hit particularly hard.

On November 12, Bernard Lesage, President of the Franco-Manitoban School Commission, the governing body of the Franco-Manitoban School Division (DSFM), sent a letter to Manitoba's Minister of Education outlining the extraordinary pressure his division is facing.

"It is hard enough to find qualified teachers at this time, but to find francophone teachers is nearly impossible," says Lesage.

Hundreds of students in the Ritchot area attend the DSFM through Gabrielle-Roy in Île-des-Chênes.

Lesage's letter to the Minister demonstrates in detail the ways in which the DSFM is struggling to meet the needs of its students and staff amidst all the pandemic chaos. The letter cites, among other things, "a desperate shortage" of substitutes, qualified teachers, specialist teachers, and classroom space.

Two days before Lesage sent the letter, on November 10, the Minister of Education, Kelvin Goertzen, announced the hiring of 400 additional teachers and assured school divisions that they would

have the opportunity to hire

Lesage argues that although this seems like a positive step, it is not helpful to his division. The DSFM has already hired 40 supplemental teachers and more than 150 auxiliary personnel to ensure there is an adult in every classroom to guarantee the safety and wellbeing of students.

"The well of available teachers has already dried up, consumed by COVID and general needs," Lesage says.

He adds that the shortage of teaching staff is so dire that entire cohorts have had to be sent home to do remote learning because there simply isn't enough staff to teach or care for them.

Because of the extra hiring taking place, the school division is also concerned about their financial situation. They are already predicting a budget deficit of more than \$8 million this year.

"May we obtain the reassurance of the Minister of Education that the DSFM will not have to deplete all its reserve funds, which were dedicated to the purchase of new property to allow the construction of new schools, which are well overdue?" Lesage inquired of the Minister.

The staffing shortages are creating another problem as well: the teachers are, simply put, tired.

"These are frontline workers, but who have no medical training," says Lesage. "They are exhausted and overwhelmed."

Another major concern for the DSFM, says Lesage, is a lack of clear guidance from the province.

He cites the following example.

"Manitoba Health will send out information saying that a two-metre distance between people is highly suggested," he says. "But when I ask for clarification about that, I am told that it is not required, that one metre is permitted."

Lesage indicates that this lack of clear and consistent messaging is often announced at the last minute, leaving school administrators in a state of constant confusion.

"It is nearly impossible to determine what is required and what is only highly suggested," he says. "We feel that we are doing all we can without having all the pieces of the puzzle."

When asked what the DSFM needs in order to ensure that their school year can move forward, Lesage replies with one word: clarity.

"All of our staff want to be here," he says. "They think of these schools as their schools. We believe that all kids want to be in school, too, even if they don't want to admit it... but right now we need clear guidelines and we need help."

The Citizen reached out to Kelvin Goertzen for a comment and received the following response.

"The health and safety

of Manitoba students is our highest priority and we will continue to work closely with all divisions, including DSFM, to address their needs," reads the statement from the Minister. "Meeting the recommended health provisions requires financial support and we are ensuring that support is available to schools. Our government previously committed \$100 million in Safe Schools funding to support school divisions in a variety of ways and schools are currently investing this funding in their priorities, including over \$900,000 for DSFM. The department is in regular communication with the divisions and we encourage DSFM to work with the department to address specific issues as we work together to ensure that the student health, safety, and learning are the top priority. We understand this is a difficult time for students, parent, teachers, and staff and we continue to support all of our education partners to try and overcome these challenges."

Despite this media release, by November 23, more than a week and a half after sending the letter, the DSFM had not yet received any response from Minister Goertzen.

At the time, Lesage said simply, "I have not received a response from Mr. Goertzen and will wait until I receive [one] before making a statement."



14 LOCAL NEWS THE CITIZEN | DECEMBER 2020



PREMIUM CHRISTMAS TREES NOW HERE! CURBSIDE PICKUP OR DELIVERY!



### Dr. Mairi Burnett Set to Resume Medical Practice

### **By Sara Beth Dacombe**

Open Health Niverville recently announced that Dr. Mairi Burnett has resumed her medical practice at the clinic, returning at the end of November after having taken a medical leave of absence.

"She will be working Tuesday and Thursday afternoons virtually by phone or video," says Kristen Fyfe, Open Health's business manager.

In the announcement, Open Health says Dr. Mairi has a reduced workload and will not be able to resume the large practice she had before. However, she is happy that many of her patients are now with Dr. Eguaoje.

The clinic also understands that other patients have found new clinicians during Dr. Mairi's absence and that they may wish to stay with their new clinician.

Dr. Mairi is seeing many of her previous patients, but considering the Niverville area is under code red right now, like the rest of the province, appointments are conducted virtually by telephone or video only.

Dr. Mairi is also not accepting new patients at this time.

"With the recent code red announcement, we have moved to further increasing our virtual appointments in addition to our previous COVID procedures already in place," explains Fyfe. "We are accepting in-person appointments on a limited basis with strict screening procedures. Our lab has been running by appointment only for several months, which also helps decrease the number of patients in the clinic at one time. We ask that patients with an appointment for the lab or in the clinic arrive only at their scheduled time. We also want everyone to know that if you are experiencing cold/flu symptoms, you will still receive care from your practitioner, however we ask that



Dr. Mairi Burnett has returned to work.

OPEN HEALTH

you start with a virtual/telephone appointment."

### **APPRECIATION FOR SUPPORT**

Drs. Mairi and Chris Burnett also wish to express their appreciation for all the support they have received from patients and members of the community.

In the fall of 2019, Dr. Mairi was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cells in her bone marrow. The Burnetts are happy to report that Dr. Mairi is in remission from cancer and is very excited to return to practice.

The atmosphere at Open Health is also one of excitement.

"The clinicians and staff are all very happy to hear of her return. Everyone has been thinking of her and wishing her well over this last year," says Fyfe. "We anticipate an evolution as she returns to our team and we will be working closely with Dr. Mairi to ensure her continued health and well-being as she returns to practice."

Previous patients of Dr. Mairi are welcome to call the clinic to make a virtual appointment with her. The patients who had recently been under her care (after July 1, 2019) and who wish to return are encouraged to call the clinic for an appointment.

Open Health will work with Dr. Mairi to re-evaluate her work arrangement at the end of January to see about potential in-person visits.



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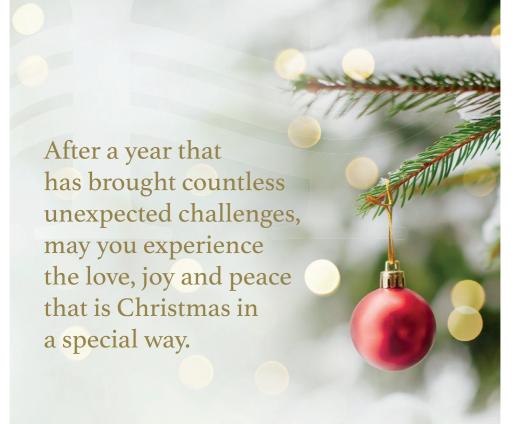






16 LOCAL NEWS







The Board of Trustees, Administration and Staff of the Hanover School Division wish you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.



The new Heritage Mural on the west side of the post office in Niverville.

CARA DOWS

### Community Mural Unveiled in Niverville

**By Evan Braun** 

⊠ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

A new community mural is up on the west side of the post office on Main Street Niverville, a beautification project that has been in the works for the last several months and which was announced over the sum-

The mural was produced by four local artists—Abigail Olfert, Elaine Krahn, Dustin Krahn, and CD Muckosky. They came up with their collaborative design earlier this year and have been working toward transferring the design to the final medium.

"It [is] an amazing piece," says Shirley Hoult of the

Niverville Communities in Bloom committee.

The painted wooden mural has now been mounted.

Two other projects came to fruition this year, including the new Heritage Wall in front of the Niverville Credit Union parking lot, as well as the new pavilion in the Niverville Community Garden at the Heritage Centre.

"The fact that we're getting so much support for these community projects, it's something community members are having fun with and they like to see these projects happen despite all that is happening," says Hoult. "To see that things are still happening on Main

Street, in the community, the businesses and residents here are still pulling together and actively involved. I was overwhelmed by the support that's been shown for all of these projects. I know it's been an anxious and difficult time for people, but we need something to look forward to as well. We need to see good things happening—and good things are happening."

She is also quick to thank the community and spread the credit wherever it is due, in particular to other dedicated volunteers, those who have donated to these causes, and a large grant from the Building Sustainable Communities Program

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# Veteran to Offer PTSD Therapy through Artistic Blacksmithing

**By Brenda Sawatzky** 

St. Adolphe resident Cameron Bennett is about to launch a new grassroots project which he believes could help sufferers of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The goal of the not-forprofit organization will be to aid veterans and first responders in better managing their PTSD symptoms by learning the skills of artistic blacksmithing and metalworking.

Himself a retired veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, Bennett says his blacksmithing workshop will provide a relaxed and safe environment where attendees can learn a new skill, rebuild their confidence, and hopefully move forward on the road to recovery and integration back into society.

"I am a veteran who was released for mental health issues as well as physical [ones]," Bennett says. "After attempts to rejoin the workforce, I found I was unable to hold a job down. I have a friend who started blacksmithing and I thought it looked fun. I found that this is the only thing I can focus and concentrate on for long periods."

Bennett's 20-year military career included a peacekeeping tour in the former Yugoslavia and three combat tours in Afghanistan before his release due to service-related injuries.

Soon after, Bennett discovered a passion for blacksmithing which he then expanded on through an advanced course at Fleming College, as well as personal training from experienced blacksmith Jim Kehler.

"No matter how frustrated or angry I get, blacksmithing is the only thing that I can come back to and feel great afterwards," says Bennett.

He says the work demands both focus and planning while providing a physical and emotional release-not to mention a sense of pride in the completion of a project.



Cameron Bennett outside his blacksmith shop in St. Adolphe.

Deciding he wanted to help

PTSD sufferers find the same

outlet for healing, Bennett set

his dream into motion, giving his

not-for-profit the unofficial name

Affairs Canada, Bennett attended

the University of New Brunswick

and received a diploma in Occu-

pational Health and Safety. To

round off his business acumen,

he hopes to attend business

management courses provided

begun on the specialized black-

smithing shop in Bennett's back-

yard on Hebert Road. The shop

will be outfitted with the latest in

safety equipment and sound and

financial support for every aspect

of the project, from building con-

struction to month-to-month

maintenance costs and the pur-

"With the addition of a new

chase of specialized tools.

Bennett continues to seek

vibration dampening materials.

Construction has already

by a veterans' support network.

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self-contained pneumatic power hammer," he says, "veterans with physical injuries will be able to perform tasks and reach goals that

them. As well, he hopes to create a building ventilation system which

were previously unachievable by

will reduce the need for restrictive personal ventilators.

To cap off his dream, Bennett hopes that the people of the rural southeast will show their support by providing opportunities to display the works of blacksmithing art which will soon be coming out of his workshop.

This hands-on approach to PTSD therapy, Bennett says, is a relatively new idea.

The current programs that are created to help with PTSD and other mental health conditions are based upon teaching members [how to use] tools and resources individually in order to deal with their conditions," he explains. "This can create an increased mental health burden if conditions persist and can even cause regression in some cases."

According to Veterans Affairs Canada, up to 32 percent of Can $a dians\,in\,high-risk\,groups\,such\,as$ military, police, and paramedic services will suffer from PTSD in their lifetimes.

A whopping 71 percent of Canadian veterans who receive disability benefits for a mental health condition have PTSD. And Canada has a higher prevalence of PTSD than Europe, South Africa, Mexico, and Japan.

"Unfortunately, with the stigma that is prevalent in military and paramilitary organizations, members feel ashamed and many hide their mental health issues," adds Bennett, suggesting that the actual rate of mental health issues among military personnel is likely much higher than what's reported.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- bennettcameron@yahoo.com
- **(204) 232-7764**

**INBRIEF** 

### **Ritchot Crime Report**

**By Jennifer Lavin** 

On November 3, the RM of Ritchot heard a report on crime statistics from Staff Sergeant Guy Landreville of the St. Pierre RC-MP detachment.

Ultimately, Landreville said he is "not overly concerned" by the increase in reported crimes.

The councillors raised concerns regarding a perceived spike in the theft of vehicles.

"Every single theft of vehicle that we've had has been related to people leaving their keys inside their vehicle," Landreville explained. He further remarked that one resident said to him that it's his right to leave his keys inside the vehicle; that's why he has insurance. "So that's the type of mentality we're dealing with."

Councillor Janine Boulanger brought up the issue that there has been a lot of action in the area due to "quad and dirt bike action."

Landreville encouraged people to report these incidents, since they will be followed

"I always tell people, be careful what you wish for, because there's not going to be any warnings," Landreville said. "They're going to be nailed with heavy tickets... if you guys call me and you want action, then there's going to be action taken."

Council asked about current staffing levels at the St. Pierre detachment.

"Normally we're at 15 fully operational members," Landreville said. "Right now, we are sitting at 11... It's not good right now, that's all I can say."

He then noted that the RCMP training depot had been shut down due to COVID-19, so they simply aren't getting newly trained cadets.





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18 LOCAL NEWS THE CITIZEN | DECEMBER 2020







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### Niverville Animal Hospital Open to Furry Clientele

### By Brenda Sawatzky

□ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

The Niverville Animal Hospital is now accepting new patientsthose of the furry and four-legged predisposition, that is. Since November 3, the new hospital has been fully staffed and available to serve local pet owners.

The animal hospital, located at 301 Main Street in Niverville (previously the local Manitoba Hydro office), has been completely remodelled inside and out to create a modern veterinary hospital and retail outlet.

"We wanted to provide Niverville and the surrounding communities with local experienced veterinary care for their beloved furry family members," says general manager Eric Hamilton. "Also, one of our veterinarians is a resident of Niverville and she thought this would be the perfect community to have local veterinarv care."

Drs. Delores Faucher and Gwenda Olson are the hospital's core veterinarians and they bring years of experience to the table.

Rounding off the team is registered veterinary technologist



The staff of the Niverville Animal Hospital: Andrea Unruh, Dr. Delores Faucher, and Sarah Carbonneau

BRENDA SAWATZKY

Sarah Carbonneau as well as Andrea Unruh, customer service representative and veterinary assistant.

Since the Niverville Animal Hospital is a sister company to the South-East Veterinary Hospital located in Steinbach, Hamilton says the Steinbach team will be there to provide backup for the

Niverville team when needed.

Niverville's primary hospital services include wellness exams, vaccinations, dental procedures, X-ray, ultrasound, surgery, in-house blood testing, and pet food and supply sales.

"Anyone driving into Winnipeg or the surrounding area to pick up veterinary-specific pet food can

now conveniently pick it up in Niverville," says Hamilton. "Two very popular brands of pet food we sell are Hills and Royal Canin."

At this stage, pet services will be limited to those of the household variety. Large animal services are available at the South-East Veterinary Hospital—although, should the demand arise, the Niverville location may expand to include large animal products and supplies as well.

As business ramps up, Hamilton anticipates the eventual hiring of additional staff to meet demand. When more employees are needed, he says, he'll attempt to hire from the local market.

Niverville Animal Hospital is open every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., on Thursdays from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., and every other Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. After-hours emergency services are not available at this

Pet products can currently be purchased through curbside pickup. To contact the Niverville Animal Hospital phone (204) 326-9840.









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### Ritchot Council Increases Vigilance Over Home-Based Businesses

#### **Sara Beth Dacombe**

M sdacomhe@nivervillecitizen.com

Home-based businesses are on the rise in our current economy, fostered by both the work-from-home atmosphere fostered during the COVID-19 pandemic and the overall rise of the self-employed or those employed by the gig economy pre-pandemic.

But figuring out how to govern and be governed is sometimes a grey area for home-based business owners and legislators alike.

A recent public hearing showcased a number of letters in opposition to the opening of a new homebased pet salon, and now Ritchot's council is increasing vigilance about ensuring compliance for home-based businesses in the area.

Mayor Chris Ewen has experience on both sides of the issue.

"I believe we are seeing more home-based businesses for many reasons," says Mayor Ewen. "One being the ability to work with an open and pro-business municipality that encourages anyone to invest in themselves and their community. The right way, [this] can create a flexible opportunity by operating in their home, saving on overhead and start-up costs."

Despite concerns that some small businesses exploit areas of municipal by-laws pertaining to home-based business, Ewen says, in his time on council, they have continued to work toward building a safe and enjoyable environment for all residents and business owners.

"There aren't always concerns. The goal is to educate all residents about the appropriate steps to take when registering or starting a business," says Ewen. "This initiative gives us an opportunity to meet new business owners and ensure that they are best set up for everyone's success and happiness."

Business owners considering operating out of their home are always encouraged to consider traffic concerns, safety issues, environmental hazards, as well as the necessary permits and paperwork.

At the end of October, Shake Your



Inside a home-based pet salon, Shake Your Tail Feather Grooming, run by Nicole Rosner in Grande Pointe.

**►** NICOLE ROSNER

Tail Feather Grooming, owned and operated by certified pet stylist Nicole Rosner, opened in a home at 1914 Carriere Road in Grande Pointe.

"Thave been grooming since 2013. I have had my own business since 2015 and have been using different salons over the years," says Rosner. "In 2017, I also started doing house call grooming. I have always wanted my own salon, so my partner and I have been looking. This property [on Carriere Road] had everything we wanted and needed. It was a perfect fit."

As an entrepreneur, Rosner had been saving money for quite a while to establish her new location. She knew she would need to apply for a conditional use permit with the RM of Ritchot, and when the RM of Ritchot required her to present a business plan she used a template they provided.

The process to secure a conditional use permit also requires a public hearing, where neighbouring properties within a certain radius must be alerted and allowed to speak in favour or against the business seeking to open.

Rosner's experience is an example of a home-based business that receives pushback against opening.

"We needed to get a conditional

use permit, which we did receive in late October. Also if we had to build anything, we would have needed a permit for that, but luckily there were rooms that were already built," says Rosner. "We did go to the public hearing. It was really nerve-wracking. The council was pleasant to deal with. It was unfortunate to hear all the letters in opposition from all our neighbours. It doesn't make you feel very welcomed to the neighbourhood when you hear that."

Council received eight letters of opposition covering concerns such as not wanting increased business or traffic related to business in the area.

Janine Boulanger, councillor for Ward 4, agreed with the concerns saying that residential areas should remain residential.

"It's very appealing to open up a business because you have the space, but the reason people are on two acres is to get away from the business aspect of the city. Those people who have been there for 38 years, 40 years, they've got it right," said Boulanger at the hearing. "This is a bedroom community. And even though I understand this will be minimal impact on the area—I truly believe that with five cars a day, I don't see that being an issue—it just opens it up

for other people to want to do similar things, and then next thing you know we've got little pockets of business in the area, which is what I don't think Grande Pointe was intended to be."

At the meeting, Ewen said, "If we don't maintain and control what can be done, a lot of these business will operate without coming to Ritchot [council]. And that was one of my biggest pushes, was to be open and honest about what you will be doing in the area, so not only that you can promote it legally, but we can help you as a resident and business owner thrive."

"I think current council's on the right track with cleaning up some of these issues that we're having with businesses operating in places they shouldn't be," said Councillor Shane Pelletier. "I'd like to see us continue to enforce that and pushing for compliance on that."

After the hearing, Rosner's application was approved with four council members voting in favour and two against. Additional conditions were included, such as limiting employees to one and preventing the future expansion of her business to include a daycare or kennel service.

"I had no intention of that anyway," says Rosner, who was happy to accept

the conditions of the application. "It can be very hard to find a small space with running water to have a salon. And with COVID, I can't exactly go introduce myself around the neighbourhood anyway."

Mayor Ewen is also the owner of PERK Coffee Bar, which operates out of his home in Île-des-Chênes. Ewen's business operates a coffee cart that can travel to various events and offer refreshments. They also operate an online store, which conducts a delivery service.

Ewen considers it a benefit that he has personal experience in what it's like to own a home-based business. It helps him consider the larger picture when entrepreneurs apply for permits from council.

"I believe being a business owner that has gone through the process with and to council, understanding my parameters of what I can and cannot do within my conditional use, allows me to understand what other home-based business owners should expect to go through," says Ewen. "This is much more a benefit that there is a councillor that has been through the process than it is a bias."

Ewen's home-based business also opened after achieving a conditional use permit secured after a public hearing from which Ewen recused himself. The hearing for Ewen's business also brought to light several letters of concern from people who were against the opening of his business within the condominium complex where he lives. But overall, Ewen says the conditional use process was the "easiest part of starting my business."

As mayor, Ewen believes all businesses that comply with the rules, regulations, and laws of the area they operate in can create opportunity and growth for the surrounding region.

And despite Rosner's bumpy experience, she has an encouraging message for any future entrepreneurs interested in starting a business, home-based or otherwise.

"Go for it," she says. "You will have problems along the way, but overcoming them is so rewarding. Try not to let negative parts hold you back."



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# MMF ANNOUNCES \$5.5M IN SUPPORT FOR MÉTIS BUSINESSES

Manitoba is now under the "code red" or critical restrictions. " Your Manitoba Métis Government wants to make sure Métis businesses can keep their doors open throughout this crisis.

Eligible Métis entrepreneurs can receive a non-repayable grant of up to \$10,000. There are currently 450 businesses registered with the MMF, but this support is open to all entrepreneurs that are Métis Citizens and those in the process of applying for Citizenship.

Your Métis Government wants to support all Métis businesses across Manitoba that are forced to reduce operations due to the recently implemented pandemic restrictions. Some eligible applicants would include:

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"Investments made by small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of our economy. Rest assured, our Métis families and businesses can rely on their Métis Government to support them in these uncertain times. Your Provincial Government has failed you; we won't."

- MMF President David Chartrand





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# Province Steps Up COVID Fight in November

**By Evan Braun** 

⊠ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

After weeks of largely unsuccessful targeted measures designed to help Manitoba's healthcare system cope with rising COVID-19 cases, November saw the implementation of province-wide lockdowns. The entire province has now been in code red for three weeks.

Locally, this has meant the closure of public parks, a crackdown on all gatherings, and our municipal councils switching over to fully virtual meetings.

Only essential businesses are allowed to open, and social gatherings are no longer permitted. Churches and faith-based organizations have also been forced to close, which has led to some confrontations between police and congregations.

Large retailers were also forced to stop selling non-essential items in-store, following complaints that these big businesses had a significant advantage over smaller and more specialized retailers who were not able to open to in-person shoppers at all.

Regardless of the business, non-essential items can still be purchased online, by telephone, or curbside pickup.

"We are at a critical point in our fight against COVID-19, and we must do everything we can to protect our most vulnerable Manitobans and ensure our healthcare system is there for Manitobans, when they need it," said Pallister at a press briefing November 12. "This is a team effort, and we all have a role to play in protecting ourselves, our loved ones, and our community. By taking these measures seriously, we are going to save lives."

The province also stepped up its enforcement efforts, training and hiring more

bylaw officers.

Additionally, the government established a tip line which allows people to make reports when they witness people breaking public health orders.

For the most part, the province's school have remained open-but that all changed for families in the Hanover School Division on November 24. Due to extraordinarily high test positivity rates in communities like Steinbach and the RM of Hanover, the division closed all 19 of its schools to in-person learning. The only exceptions being made are for children of critical services workers, such as healthcare providers, and students with disabilities or special needs that preclude them from staying home.

"The decision to move Hanover School Division to the Critical (Red) level is not a reflection of school-based virus transmission," HSD interim superintendent Shelley Amos wrote to parents in a letter in mid-November. "Our schools continue to be safe places to learn. In consultation with Public Health and Manitoba Education, Hanover School Division is working on an action plan to respond to our communities' increased positivity rate."

Pallister has acknowledged throughout the last several weeks that many businesses across Manitoba are suffering due to the current restrictions. To provide additional support, the province announced a new wave of relief grants to help people bridge the gap.

The new Manitoba Bridge Grant provides \$5,000 upfront to businesses, not-for-profits, and charities directly impacted by the restrictions.

"We recognize that Manitoba businesses, not-for-profits and charities have made and continue to make sacrifices to protect the health and safety of our province," says Pallister.

The Manitoba Bridge Grant provides an immediate one-time payment of \$5,000 to small and medium-sized businesses, not-for-profit, and charitable organizations that have been directly ordered to temporarily cease operations or close their publicly accessible physical locations. This includes restaurants, bars, beverage rooms, brewpubs, microbreweries, distilleries, casinos, recreation and sport facilities, museums and galleries, theatres and concert halls, as well as organizations like charities, not-for-profits, and faith-based organizations that have been adversely impacted.

To pay for these grants, the province shifted \$100 million from other programs that had already run their course. If more money is required, the province has pledged to seek additional funding.

"Organizations required to close have identified an urgent need for financial support as they lose revenue and struggle to make rent payments, avoid staff layoffs, find new ways to safely offer services and pay for products they ordered prior to the mandated restrictions and closures," Pallister adds. "Right now, the most important thing we can do to help our small businesses is to reduce our COVID-19 cases."

The Manitoba Bridge Grant has the capacity to be extended automatically on January 1, 2021, to provide an additional \$5,000 to each organization should these public health orders remain in place. If required, the province would automatically process the second payment at that time with no further actions required from applicants.

A January payment would increase the program's total cost up to \$200 million.



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THE CITIZEN | DECEMBER 2020 **LOCAL NEWS** 

### **Niverville Business Expands to Second Location**

**By Evan Braun** 

⊠ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

A popular Niverville business has expanded to its second storefront. RuffMutts, which opened its first retail location just two years ago, has taken the step of opening a new shop in Altona. It's a big step for the locally owned and operated company.

"Once we saw that our business model worked here in Niverville, we've been keeping our eyes out for other possible locations," says Guy Britten, who runs the business with his wife, Amanda MacLean. "We were actually approached by one of the owners of the Altona Mall, so that started the ball rolling. It's a great location with required nothing but a coat of paint."

Many people would look at the world around us and wonder why now, in the midst of a global pandemic that has handicapped the local economy, is a good time to pull the trigger.

But Britten points out that opportunity dictates these



The RuffMutts Niverville team

**GUY BRITTEN** 

sorts of decision, and the opportunity was right.

"We looked at opening a RuffMutts in other locations, but finding the right place at the right price isn't easy," he savs. "For Altona, the decision was made before we went code red and before these latest restrictions. We like the population base they have. It's similar to Niverville."

The flagship store in Niverville sells pet food and other products. It also features a self-washing station, a dog daycare, and grooming services.

At least for now, Altona's store will only sell pet food

and merchandise.

"This made it easier for us to move in and set up quickly, and minimize lease hold improvements and other expenses," says Britten. "Expansion into those other areas is a possibility in the future."

Now that the process of getting the new location up and running is finished, Britten can look back and reflect on everything that's needed to happen behind the scenes to get to this point.

'Opening another store takes some planning and time. We definitely needed more support from our

current staff to make this happen," he says. "There are lots of considerations, and certainly there are nervous moments doing this. One reason, believe it or not, is the curiosity to see if the model we built will work elsewhere. It's no secret what we do when it comes to the selection of the food we sell; it's basically logic and a bit of math."

The main ingredient in the business's success, he says, is their choice of pet food, which is exclusively sourced from Canadian companies and Canadian ingredients.

"We spend a lot of time researching pet food and making sure the food we bring in is the best, not just in terms of quality but also in terms of price. That way you can get the best food available at your budget... People are always looking for quality pet food, and the fact they can save money with RuffMutts makes us a great option for pet parents, no matter the situation."

**INBRIEF** 

### **RCMP Raid Local Grow-Op, Make Arrest**

**By Evan Braun** 

⊠ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

On the morning of Tuesday, November 10, many locals noticed emergency vehicles attending to a location in the area around Leclaire Road, near its intersection with Highway 200, in the RM of Ritchot.

Since that time, the RCMP announced that the incident was a raid on a grow-op.

At 11:00 a.m. that day, the St. Pierre-Jolys RCMPwith the assistance of the East District Crime Reduction Enforcement Support Team (CREST), the Emergency Response Team (ERT), and the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST)executed a search warrant at a residence on Leclaire Road.

'Officers located a marijuana grow operation inside the residence," reads a statement from the police. "RCMP seized approximately 40 marijuana plants, 225 grams of dried marijuana, 18 firearms, other weapons, and drug paraphernalia."

A 37-year-old male has been arrested and is facing numerous charges in connection with the raid, including Possession of Illicit Cannabis, Possession of Cannabis for the Purpose of Selling, Cultivating more than four Cannabis Plants, and Cultivating Illicit Cannabis. These infractions all fall under the Cannabis

The individual is also facing criminal charges of Possession of a Prohibited Weapon, and four separate charges of Firearms Storage Contrary to Regulations.

The investigation is ongoing.





# Commentary

### I Won't Be Home for Christmas

### **By Daniel Dacombe**

As our healthcare and political leaders cast doubts on the chances of people holding holiday gatherings this year, public morale appears to be wearing thin. Symptoms of our collective exhaustion include: the ubiquitous conflicts on social media, vitriolic comments on news stories about the pandemic, and anti-mask protests.

In short, everyone is sick of COVID.

It must be acknowledged that the pandemic, and especially this second wave and the latest lockdown, is taking a toll on our mental health.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) published findings earlier this year indicating that 38 percent of Canadians surveyed reported worsening mental health due to the pandemic.

The findings also showed that not all Canadians have been affected equally. Compared to the general population, those who were already struggling with their mental health stated that they were twice as likely to have their mental health decline due to the pandemic, three times more likely to experience difficulties coping with the pandemic, and four times more likely to have suicidal thoughts.

In addition, people who live with a disability, people who are Indigenous or people of colour, and those who live in low-income households are being disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, both economically and psychologically.

Most concerningly, the CMHA found that across the board in Canada very few people with existing mental health struggles are accessing services due to the pandemic. Only two percent were accessing in-person services, while five percent utilized online resources and 14 percent have accessed virtual care.

Those numbers are perilously low. More people need



help, and fewer people are reaching out.

After the pandemic began, psychologists from Binghamton University in Upstate New York compared the situation to a natural disaster, pointing out that in the wake of hurricanes and floods, survivors tend to experience a number of mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, addictive behaviours, and sometimes post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

The difference, of course, is that the economic and physical displacement caused by most natural disasters is localized and comparably short-lived. With the pandemic, these effects are widespread and long-lasting.

Rightly, mental health experts around the world have been sounding the alarm.

We have to point out, though, that despite the psychological challenges imposed by lockdowns and physical distancing, almost none of these experts are suggesting that the world abandon the lockdown responses and ignore the ongoing pandemic. While some people in these fields deny the reality of the pandemic, they are by far the minority. The vast majority of experts, backed by the vast majority of evidence, support masks, physical distancing, and even lockdowns.

This is an incredibly important point to emphasize, and one we may need to be reminded of often lest in our frustration we begin to listen to voices that have no business giving public health advice simply because they're saying what we wish to hear.

As many great scientists have pointed out—the late Carl Sagan among them—it can be very dangerous to believe something simply because we want it to be true.

The severe impact currently being experienced by our healthcare system demonstrates the dire

circumstances we could find ourselves in should we ignore the current dangers. While the costs of the pandemic response are high, they pale in comparison to the potential collapse of the medical system.

Fortunately, having lived with the COVID-19 pandemic for almost an entire year, we've learned a great deal about how it has been affecting us—and about what can be done to mitigate those effects.

One mitigation is how we deliver mental health care. Earlier this year, a group of mental health experts from around the world came together to publish a paper in *Lancet Psychiatry*, one of the world's foremost academic journals. In their paper, they pointed out the possible course that COVID-19 would take and the most likely mental health outcomes that would result. They argued that virtual or remote mental

health therapy programs have the potential to fill the gaps in mental health service delivery in a time when in-person therapy is limited.

Manitoba has one of these systems. AbilitiCBT, an internet-based cognitive-behavioural therapy program, has been made available to all Manitobans during the pandemic. It connects people with a trained therapist and walks them through a virtual program designed to help them cope with mental health symptoms, especially anxiety.

The provincial government has made this program freely available to all Manitobans, and we urge everyone to take advantage of it.

Another way to reduce the mental health impact of the pandemic comes in how we approach the holidays. Health and mental health experts have been publishing tips, and they tend to cover the same general points.

1. Acknowledge the

difficult feelings that come with a physically distanced holiday. Missing family and friends is normal. Acknowledging our feelings, rather than ignoring them or coping in destructive ways, is healthy. For those who have children, this can set a good example of high emotional intelligence.

2. Be realistic about how different this season is going to be. These are extraordinary times. Choosing to accept this is much healthier than ruminating about how unhappy the reality of the pandemic makes us.

3. Reach out to family and friends. Isolation is becoming part of our lives, but it need not define our holidays. Phone calls and video calls can still help us stay connected during this time. Encourage friends and relatives who are struggling-and if you aren't sure if they're struggling, perhaps you should ask. Also, there are ways to make video calls more significant and meaningful; a virtual carol singalong has the potential to be chaotic, but also a source of fond memories (eventually).

4. Practice resilience. Human beings are surprisingly resilient, and the holidays can inspire this resilience in us. For an example of human resilience in the face of hardship, look no further than the Christmas Truce of 1914, when soldiers from the German and British armies on the Western Front during World War One left their trenches on Christmas Day to break bread and sing carols together. We may not be in literal trenches this year, but we can stand together against the threat that COVID-19 represents.

The truth is that the pandemic is taking a toll on us, and these holidays are going to be different.

But if we support each other, reach out for help when we need it, and seek opportunities to be resilient, we will be able to celebrate the holidays a year from now in a much brighter and safer world.





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### **Grandma's Christmas Gift** It Always Came in Two Parts.

We always had Grandma for Christmas day. She was widowed about the time I was 2. My parents looked out for her and in many ways she looked out for us 6 kids. Her Christmas gift always had two parts to it, both wrapped separate but tied together with a ribbon. One gift we needed; The other was the one we wanted.

The needed gift was easily identified, always wrapped in a soft, floppy package - PJ's, knitted sweater or maybe corduroys. The other we wanted – a toy that we tore open first and ran off to play before the wrapping fluttered to the carpet. Mom would call us back from playing with the wanted gift to open the needed gift, prompting us to show appreciation.

It makes me think of God's Gift of Salvation which is eternal life. In a way this gift comes in two parts, also wrapped together. The first part we are more prone to want. It's the Christmas child Jesus, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laying in a manger. A large portion of our world still stops to sing "Joy to the World", buy gifts and enjoy the flavours and celebrations of the season while we remember a baby that was born to be the Saviour of the World.

But what about the second part which completes God's full giving? Salvation could never be accomplished without the baby leaving the manger and 30+ years later we see a man hanging on a cruel cross, bearing our sins in His own body, paying the entire penalty of our sins and taking the place where we should be. It's on the cross where the gift was made complete, when we hear the words "It is Finished".

What was finished was the complete Gift of God which spans from a crib, to cross death and then resurrection from the tomb. It's been my observation that this part of the gift is needed but not so much wanted. I've also observed that once a person sees they need it, they'll want it and cry out like the Publican, "God, be merciful to me a Sinner", grasping for it like a drowning man lunging for a life ring. Then it becomes the gift that we both need and

God gives us a very specific time for this gift to be received – Its NOW.

2 Cor 6:2b says "Behold, NOW is the accepted time; Behold NOW is the day of Salvation". Maybe this Christmas Season you'll discover Gods completed gift which is eternal life through Jesus Christ. You can receive Gods Salvation today - you do not want to leave earth without it. "But as many as received Him, to them gave he the power (or right) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name. ~ John 1:12"

Ron Burley ~ www.177secondsermon.com

Ron has previously served as a volunteer Chaplain at the Winnipeg International Airport. He enjoys writing when the everyday events of life draw out a spiritual application.

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