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VOLUME 6 - ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2020

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LOCAL NEWS

New Pharmacy Will Open in Niverville

■ Red River Co-op has signed a lease agreement to open a brand new pharmacy at the Heritage Centre, on Second Avenue.

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LOCAL NEWS

St. Adolphe Daycare Nears Finish

■ The St. Adolphe Child Care Centre is getting close to opening its doors at 327 Main Street, providing relief to many local families. The final renovations are underway, and the centre anticipates that they will be open in the early spring.

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Oh, for the Love of Doughnuts...

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Niverville Doctors Talk Candidly About Clinic Future

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The Citizen

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The Niverville Citizen is published monthly and distributed through Canada Post to all those with a postal box in Niverville, Il-des-Chênes, St. Adolphe, Ste. Agathe, New Bothwell, Otterburne, and Tourond. Additional copies are manually distributed to businesses in the aforementioned communities, as well as the town of Landmark. The paper is printed in Canada by Derksen Printers Ltd. Republishing of this paper in whole or in part without prior approval is strictly prohibited.

The advertising deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the 15th of each month. The paper will be distributed the last week of every month.

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Niverville Doctors Talk Candidly About Clinic Future

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Life is fragile and can change dramatically in the blink of an eye. The husband-and-wife physician team of Drs. Chris and Mairi Burnett can attest to that, as Mairi was recently diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cells in her bone marrow.

Not only is Mairi's future uncertain, but so is the couple's medical clinic of nearly 15 years, Niverville Open Health.

Now they speak candidly about the difficulties they've faced in the past few months as well as the uncertainty of the road ahead—and what that might mean to the community as a whole.

DIAGNOSIS AND PROGNOSIS

Last fall, Mairi unwittingly transitioned from medical practitioner to patient. Her symptoms of fatigue and breathlessness, which at first she chalked up to age and lack of exercise, eventually resulted in a barrage of tests and a cancer diagnosis.

Multiple myeloma, she says, causes a person to become anemic and prevents the blood from clotting properly. As well, sufferers become extremely susceptible to infection and bone fractures. The immune system is also significantly compromised.

"We've picked it up relatively early," Mairi says. "So my left arm and my skull are the only bones that were picked up as being affected [so far]. Those are the ones that the marrow has been changed enough to see it on an X-ray."



Drs. Chris and Mairi Burnett of Niverville Open Health.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

She adds, though, that this kind of cancer is incurable. Remission is the best case scenario for any multiple myeloma patient, and even if remission is achieved a patient likely has to undergo regular and ongoing treatments over the course of their lifetime.

"Best case scenario is that I'll be back to normal by September or October," says Mairi. "Worst case scenario is that I don't respond to the treatment and then I just get worse and worse."

Dr. Mairi's chemotherapy treatments began in late fall. But just four treatments in, she was struck down with pneumonia, likely a result of being exposed to a sick patient at the clinic. A lengthy hospital stay and round of intravenous antibiotics left Mairi with no choice but to give up her practice.

Now, back on chemotherapy, the next few months will indicate whether the chemo has been effective in killing off enough cancer cells in her bones. If it has, Mairi will be looking at a bone marrow

transplant come spring.

"The [transplant] doesn't get rid of all the [cancer] cells," says husband Chris, "so there's still going to be little pockets of it somewhere and you hope that it's going to be a long time before it comes back."

RAMIFICATIONS FOR OPEN HEALTH

When Chris and Mairi became aware of the full scope of what she was facing, they chose not to renew the contract of their one physician assistant, who required their availability in order to practice at the Open Health clinic.

"That left us, in December, with one physician contributing to the overhead—myself," Chris says. "[Without Mairi and the physician assistant], we had just lost about 60 percent of the income for the clinic."

Ever since, Chris has been putting 100 percent of his salary back into the business in order to pay the overhead, just to keep the clinic doors open.

In January, he finally reached out to Niverville's town council and the Niverville Heritage Holdings board for assistance in finding a solution.

"If we can't find a solution, I'm going to run out of savings and we're going to have to close the clinic," Chris says. "I don't want to do that. I want to stay here working... and I'd like to work for another ten years. I think if Mairi comes back it will be part-time, but obviously we can't continue paying the costs of the whole clinic."

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD

As of late January, town council has engaged the services of Kathy McPhail, former CEO of Southern Health-Santé Sud. McPhail has been commissioned to research and create a report which will assess the current threats to Niverville's medical clinic, look for new opportunities, and make recommendations on short- and long-term solutions for the clinic.

Chris says this is a wise move, as he puts great stock in McPhail's expertise.

"I think we can trust her to look at the needs of the town rather than the needs of Chris Burnett," Chris says.

In the meantime, he'll be faced with eliminating some staff members to help alleviate some of the financial burden.

As for the mental healthcare and public healthcare workers at Open Health, as well as the dietician and chronic disease nurse, their salaries are paid through the regional health authority and they are not at risk of losing their jobs because of the Burnetts' situation. But if the clinic is forced to shut down, their location may be at risk.

While one might expect it to be an easy solution to just look for new doctors to take up residence at the clinic, Chris says it's not that simple. Finding physicians that are willing to travel outside city limits and pay a percentage of their income to clinic overhead is a challenge for most rural clinics.

Approximately 15 years

ago, Chris says, Winkler was faced with a similar situation. The six doctors they had were leaving for jobs elsewhere, leaving the city at a loss until an arms-length corporation turned the clinic into a not-for-profit entity, paying physician salaries and providing management of the clinic.

Those six departing doctors have since led to the successful acquisition of 40 physicians today. While this may be a solution for Niverville, Chris cannot speculate on the feasibility of such a model here. In the meantime, he waits to see the outcome of the report.

STRUGGLES AND SUPPORT

"I think the hardest thing for me is, at a time when I'm supposed to be supporting my wife through this, I'm in for the battle of my life for the business," Chris says. "I'm coming home [after a full day at the clinic] and I'm retreating for another four hours of [paper]work in the evening."

For Mairi, reconciling herself with the fact that her career has come to an abrupt halt has been a big challenge.

"To suddenly go from working extremely hard... to not doing any medical work is quite hard," she says. "Part of me understands that I can't do the job right now, but my mind [is saying something else]."

But the community and client support in the past few months has gone a long way to buoying her spirits during this difficult time.

"We've been here for over 14 years now and I've sort of felt on the edge of the community, because I'm a doctor," Mairi says, referring to the arms-length relationship that usually occurs between professionals and their clients. "This [illness] has just blown that open. [There's been] so much support from the community that I've really felt a part of it in a huge way like I'd never really felt as much before. I feel embraced, like it's my family now and not just my community."

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New Pharmacy Will Open in Town of Niverville

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Adding to the ever-expanding retail options in Niverville, Red River Co-op Pharmacy will be among the next wave of businesses to open its doors in the community.

Opening in mid- to late-summer of this year, the standalone pharmacy will be located at the Niverville Heritage Centre next to the dental office at 101 Second Avenue South.

"We have reached a lease agreement with the Heritage Centre and have finalized the store layout," says Todd McNaughton, Pharmacy Operations Manager for Red River Co-op. "We will be sending out the project to tender in the next number of weeks."

The 1,500-square-foot store will offer all the traditional pharmacy services, including professional counselling on medications and blister packs, flu shots, and shingles vaccinations.

A blood pressure testing machine will be located in-house for clients to use.

As well, customers can expect a full range of over-the-counter products such as confectionary items and health products like braces, crutches, walking canes, walkers, and compression stockings.

"We intend to be open seven days a week to meet the needs of the community and will provide delivery services as well," McNaughton says.



TODD MCNAUGHTON

Until recently, Red River Co-op was a name that was synonymous only with gas bars around Manitoba. In 2014, however, the cooperative branched into grocery sales with the acquisition of a number of Safeway locations around the city of Winnipeg.

Operating now as Red River Co-op Food Stores, the company naturally progressed into the pharmaceutical business, as each of their acquired grocery stores had pre-existing pharmacies.

The Red River Co-op Pharmacy in Niverville will be the company's second standalone pharmacy location in Manitoba. The other is located at 1425 Main Street in Winnipeg.

McNaughton is responsible for oversight of operations for their soon-to-be five pharmacies. His other job is to look for new opportunities and communities to expand into. He's thrilled over the prospect of a Niverville location and feels that the store

will have something unique to offer the growing community.

"Our pharmacy will be an aesthetically appealing, modern facility," McNaughton says.

He adds that the location was chosen for its proximity to the medical and dental offices as well as the seniors housing, which means seniors living at the complex will have access to the pharmacy without having to leave the building.

"This just seemed a natural fit for us and would complement the existing amenities," says McNaughton.

And while the pharmacy will be in no way affiliated with Country Snacks and the Red River Co-op gas bar on Main Street Niverville, Co-op members will enjoy the same benefits.

"If you are already a Red River Co-op member or sign up to become one, you will be able to use this same [member] number at our pharmacy and enjoy the benefits of our Co-op Equity/Cash Back program on the full price of prescriptions and all purchases in the pharmacy," adds McNaughton. "As we are a truly local company with deep roots in communities, we are very excited to be coming to Niverville and expanding our offering in the community."

McNaughton says that, as the pharmacy develops and expands, Red River Co-op will likely be in a position to provide some employment opportunities to the local community down the road.

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HSD Superintendent Reflects on Impending Retirement

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Earlier this month, Hanover School Division superintendent Randy Dueck announced his plans to retire at the end of the current school year, bringing an end to a tenure that has lasted seven and a half years and seen tremendous growth and change.

Dueck's career began 33 years ago at the Blumenort School, where he says he taught "everything."

"I was primarily a Grade Seven homeroom teacher assigned social studies," he says. "But yes, I taught everything, and I taught everything from Grade Five to Grade Nine in my time there."

After seven years in Blumenort, Dueck took a leave of absence, picked up his family, and made a big move overseas—to Lithuania, where he worked for one year at Lithuania Christian College.

"In Lithuania I was teaching adult students, teaching them primarily speaking skills as an ESL teacher," he says. "It was a fascinating experience, a transformative experience for myself and my family. There's really nothing like that or comparable to that here in the Manitoba public school system."

Coming home from Lithuania, Dueck returned to teach for one more year in Blumenort. But in 1996, he took his first leap into school administration, serving as principal at Steinbach Christian High School, a private school position he held for nine years.

Looking back, he says there wasn't much difference between his private school and

public school experiences.

"At Steinbach Christian High School, I think around that time we had 165 students, so it was a small school. In many ways, it was maybe not all that different in terms of how the school functioned as a Nine-to-Twelve school as Landmark Collegiate would have been. It was about the same size as Landmark Collegiate, teaching the same courses as Landmark Collegiate... but with a decidedly Christian perspective and teaching Bible courses and things like that as well."

In 2005, he left Steinbach Christian High School and once again crossed the ocean to pick up some international experience. For one year, he worked at a well-regarded international baccalaureate school in India, serving as Vice Principal for Academic Affairs.

"I would say it was an elite private school," he says, reflecting on that period in his life. "The school had been around for 105 years, so it was very well established and had a very positive profile in the country. That experience, while it still [involved] teaching and working with some of the same grades, there were a lot of difference with the kind of kids there and the [Indian school] curriculum that we taught."

The next stage in Dueck's career took him to Steinbach Junior High School, which has since been renamed Stonybrook Middle School. He occupied the role of vice principal there for a year.

One year later, in June 2007, he was promoted to assistant superintendent of the Hanover School Division.

On January 1, 2013 he began his tenure as superintendent.



Superintendent Randy Dueck.

HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION

Although the position of superintendent is highly administrative, Dueck says that he still sees himself primarily as a teacher and thinks in those terms. This comes across strongly in his thoughts on the highlights of his time as superintendent.

"I would say the number one highlight for me has been being able to work on the Deeper Learning Plan," he says.

The Deeper Learning Plan began with a process by which students, teachers, principals, trustees, parents, and community members started meeting together to articulate answers to a fundamental question: what should students in the Hanover School Division be learning? Dueck says that through this project they've worked to identify the skills, values, dispositions, and knowledge that are necessary for grads to be successful.

"We've had just a lot of input," Dueck says. "We've talked about critical thinking

and creativity, and being good citizens, and being of good character, and collaborating with one another. And that all came from a real grassroots perspective. It didn't come from the top down. It came from out there in the field, from stakeholders, from the people interested in the education of our kids just saying, 'This is what's important to us'... We want students to be academically engaged. They're doing the right work. But even more than that, we also want them to be intellectually engaged, so they're actually thinking about the work they're doing, and processing it, and growing their brains. And then our students mentioned to us that we need them to be emotionally engaged, because if they're not emotionally engaged they're not really learning... A big, big project!"

Dueck lists other major accomplishments during his term, including the addition that was built at the Steinbach Regional Secondary

School—and of course Niverville High School.

"That's the one school that basically, from stem to stern, I've been the superintendent from concept to opening the doors. There's the uniqueness of that project, where we're working together with the town of Niverville and on developing a campus concept there with the Community Resource Centre. I think it's a gem of a building, and the possibilities of what that campus will be like are amazing."

Despite having accomplished so much, the division has also faced a series of controversies while on Dueck's watch. Among them have been school lockdowns, threats that required the involvement of the RCMP, and very public battles regarding LGBTQ representation both in the curriculum and in the physical hallways and classrooms, in the form of Gay-Straight Alliances. Recently, a pair of high school students in Niverville went to the media after arguing that school staff shut down their planned protest against a local politician.

"You know, those are always difficult challenges," Dueck reflects. "Out of a crisis situation, what we really hope for is a learning experience, that as a result of the crisis we have learned something and we're better—we'll be better the next time. And I think that is really true. We've had some of those in Niverville. We've come a long, long way from some of the first crises during my time here until now, where we have a solid divisional crisis team that gathers. These are people who know what to do. We know what we want to communicate. We have a very

strong, detailed crisis plan and we do our best to keep the parents or whoever's engaged or involved in the crisis in communication as much as is possible, so that people aren't having to guess or, you know, imagine on social media what is actually going on or not."

However, Dueck is careful not to get too far ahead of himself. Although he has announced his retirement, he still has another five months on the job. Over the course of the next few months, the division will be securing staff for the upcoming school year, a process which Dueck will oversee.

"The work I have ahead of me is to make sure there's as great a staff as possible in place for September, and so again, obviously I want that to be as good as is possible. So I'll be doing my best work there."

And the board will be choosing Dueck's replacement in the next little while. Dueck intends to do whatever he can to provide that replacement with whatever they need to be prepared to step into the role.

"I hope for nothing but the very best for Hanover School Division," he says. "There may be some loose ends that I feel I need to wrap up during my time, so that when I do finally pass that torch or baton or whatever it is, I'm passing it on to somebody and saying, 'Here you go. Here's a division that's in as great a shape as I can possibly leave it for you. All the best with it.'"

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REPAIRS & PARTS ON ALL MAKES & MODELS

St. Adolphe Child Care Centre Plans for Spring Opening

By Sara Beth Dacombe

Despite concerns over whether renovations would be finished on time to avoid losing grant funding and daycare spots in Ritchot, the St. Adolphe Child Care Centre is in the process of hiring new staff and completing renovations.

The centre is set to open as early as next month.

The plan for the centre was unconventional, seeing the RM of Ritchot take on a \$1 million loan out of its own surplus fund to pay for the project. The centre leases the building and is fundraising to repay as soon as possible a portion of the loan toward construction. The centre will repay the rest of the loan over time, providing the operation is revenue-positive.

The RM is responsible to repay the \$1 million to its own surplus fund whether or not the centre succeeds.

HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

There was opposition to this plan among the public, and among Ritchot's own council members, but the borrowing structure was approved in March 2019 in the wake of public outcry and pressure from the provincial government to proceed. Previously awarded government funding for childcare carried a deadline.

The funding had been initially applied for and awarded while the centre was still in talks with a potential developer, Niverville Heritage Holdings Inc. (NHHI). In November 2017, Ritchot's council passed a resolution to decline NHHI's offer to help create a seniors housing and daycare facility at 420 Main Street, citing "too much unknown risk." This created a situation where the local daycare felt it needed to secure its own space.

At the time of the vote, three out of five Ritchot councillors.

END OF CONSTRUCTION

As to the centre's construction progress and completion date, Ritchot's CAO Mitch Duval provide an update.



Renovations underway at 372 Main Street St. Adolphe. ST. ADOLPHE CHILD CARE CENTRE

"We're getting very close to construction completion and we will be going through the building to see if there are any deficiencies with the contractor, and then we'll make sure to address those," says Duval. "As far as opening goes, we had been looking at January 1, and that didn't happen due to a few minor construction delays, but we are not far off. The occupancy permit will be applied for shortly."

Regarding the relationship with the RM, Kori Plesiuk, board chair for the St. Adolphe Child Care Centre, says, "The RM has been phenomenal with helping with meeting with the contractors. They've been encouraging and forward-looking as far as showing this will be something great within the community. The biggest things are in place and things are going really good. A few of us got to do a walk-through recently and it's going really well. We are mostly on track."

The daycare building, located at 372 Main Street in what was once an RV dealership, required significant renovations to ensure it was sound and free of contaminants to meet the province's strict daycare building codes.

The building design has been able to maintain, and even highlight, a few pre-existing quirks.

"One of the coolest things is we are keeping the chimney swift, sometimes called the 'St. Adolphe

bird," says Plesiuk. "There is a chimney [in the building] that the birds migrate into that we decided to keep in place so that the birds can maintain their natural migratory pattern in our area. This is a learning tool we are using with the kids and a lot of thought has been put into it keeping this feature. Certain design elements of the building have been added with this bird theme in mind, circular holes in the walls and such, like we are in a birdhouse."

The centre features a big kitchen and lots of natural light. The outdoor spaces, including the parent drop-off area, parking lot entrance and exit, have also been started, but are not complete yet.

"There will be staff parking to the north of the building with outlets and a convenient drop-off loop to the southwest of the building," Plesiuk adds. "Parents can go around the loop to safely drop off kids with a good transition and traffic flow there."

The centre's next steps are to install the main appliances and finish hiring staff.

"We already have a director in place, but we are still looking for resumes for Early Childhood Educators (ECE) and Child Care Assistants (CCA)," Plesiuk says. "We need at least one ECE3 or ECE2 in each room to meet provincial requirements, so we will need a few extra staff to make sure

we have what we need in our new larger space."

Lana Redmond, current director of the St. Adolphe Child Care Centre, says, "Once you get into the building and seek occupancy permits and stuff, there can be delays, but we want to let parents know we will likely be opening at the end of February or mid-March."

Parents should know that the centre is projected to be at full operating capacity when it opens, but they have a wait list to which they are gladly adding names.

"This centre was absolutely needed, and I feel better for St. Adolphe and the surrounding areas that they now at least have this additional option," says Redmond. "We already have a wait list that's pretty long, but I always encourage parents to put their children on the wait list, as well as any other childcare centres' wait lists. That is your best chance of getting a spot somewhere."

ONGOING FUNDRAISING

Fundraising initiatives are ongoing and the board feels positive about those efforts and community response. The centre needs to contribute to the financial partnership with the RM as well as cover outstanding funds needed for furnishings, toys, and a play structure.

"Fundraising has been going really, really well," says Plesiuk. "We have a trivia night coming up on January 24 at St. Adolphe Motor Inn, a local business who has been really, really supportive. We still have a big sponsorship fundraiser coming up where you can sponsor a certain playset or other, and friends and family can donate and you can get a plaque with your name on it inside the centre."

So far, major sponsors of the St. Adolphe Child Care Centre include Tourond Creek (a \$20,000 sponsorship towards the hub and climbing wall) and Caisse Financier Group (a \$5,000 sponsorship for the library).

IN BRIEF

Niverville Presents 2020 Capital Budget

By Sara Beth Dacombe

Just prior to Niverville's council meeting on January 21, the community's 2020 capital budget was unveiled at an open house event that saw just two residents come out. The highlights of the budget include many environmental health and development initiatives, like lighting for walking paths, completing the wetlands park, and improvements to the Centennial Arena.

Sewer and water projects will continue to receive attention as the town begins its 13-year sewer renewal program, set to begin in 2021, and pursues further installation of hydrants.

Other departmental projects have a particular focus on emergency preparedness, an increased RCMP budget, and roadway projects. Among those road projects are the paving of Sixth Avenue South to Sheffield Way, rebuilding Cedar Drive, and sidewalk repairs throughout the community.

The new budget sets a two percent municipal tax increase, which is in line with the regular rate of increase the town has implemented annually since 2010.

"The two percent increase is essentially in line with the rate of inflation," says Mayor Myron Dyck, who also addressed the minimal open house attendance. "Transparency of government is important, so we as a council wanted to provide the opportunity at least to make this type of presentation to the public. The information is also provided online and announced on social media."

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CITIZEN POLL

Would you be in favour of the Town of Niverville offering financial support to help keep the Open Health medical clinic open, were such an option officially proposed?

- ☐ Yes. The local health clinic provides an indispensable service and public funding on behalf of the town might be required to keep it afloat.
- ☐ No. The local government has no business getting financially involved in a privately owned health clinic.
- ☐ Have another opinion? Share your thoughts in a comment online.

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LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

Are you concerned about franchise businesses moving into your community and putting pressure on the small businesses already there?

Yes.	No.	Unsure
13%	82%	5%

YOUR COMMENTS:

Competition does indeed bring innovation. If a new store suddenly pops up, the local business will already have the advantage because of its loyal pre-existing customer base. If the local small business wants to keep its monopoly on the market, it will do something about it and keep up its good customer relations. There is always something nice about the small business. It's not the "greedy-corporate type" mega-franchise that is always trying to scam you out of your money with cheap product after cheap product. One thing that most small businesses know how to do is interact with their customers. They provide real service. A lot of the time, the customer knows every employee by name. Quality is key in the realm of the small business. Customers see that, and if they wish to keep that same quality they will obviously stay loyal to "their" store. In the end, the government has no business meddling in the free market. After all, it is the "free market", so why not let it run its course?

- A. Q. G. ROGULZINSKI

Yes and no. Pressure/competition is not a negative thing. It may be uncomfortable for the small business owners; however, the hope would be that it would be incentive to reevaluate and make sure they are offering the best possible service or product or their community. The downside is that often a chain is able to offer similar goods and services at a lower price than a sole proprietor. As the article states, our wallets determine who stays and who goes. In a pinch a lower cost and convenience almost always wins.

Any stores but Walmart! Competition and expansion is good for the community.

New businesses in town benefit the local consumer. More choice create options, and local owners create ways to improve their offerings or differentiate themselves from one another. When there is only one option to choose from a business can become complacent. Several options to choose from push the businesses to become better - longer hours, better service, better pricing, more options, improved location, etc. As more amenities establish themselves in town, it will draw more people to the community - whether to live or enjoy some of the offerings we can provide, which is a benefit to all local businesses. Growth is good, more businesses are positive and it will be of benefit to everyone in town.

Each business offers their own uniqueness... not everyone likes the same style food... for instance, same style pizza, same Chinese... for the bigger corporations like Walmart... some like to shop for the cheap prices, yet some don't shop because of the cheap prices.

Open Health: What Happens Now?

By Sara Beth Dacombe

The Town of Niverville is investigating what form their involvement could take in helping the Niverville Open Health medical clinic stay open. Since Drs. Chris and Mairi Burnett went public about their personal health crisis, the clinic's struggle to remain open has become a significant issue.

Dr. Mairi will not be continuing at the practice for the foreseeable future and Dr. Chris needs to reduce his hours to care for her in the wake of her cancer diagnosis. The pair has also chosen not to renew the contract of one physician assistant who was practicing under a teaching and observation arrangement, and who required their availability in order to practice at Open Health.

Since Dr. Chris first spoke with the board of Niverville Heritage Holdings Inc., the various organizations involved have been coordinating. The Town of Niverville has also spoken with Dr. Chris and is pursuing a feasibility study before deciding if and how they can get involved.

According to a town communiqué regarding Open Health, council has engaged Kathy McPhail, former CEO of Southern Health-Santé

Sud, as an independent expert to produce the report. The report will focus on assessing the short- and long-term sustainability of Niverville Open Health and provide recommendations for action.

The report will be provided to council on or before February 14, and the town plans to release more information on February 17.

"At this stage, a lot of what the town is doing is waiting for the report," says CAO Eric King. "Ms. McPhail has started meeting with people and the town would not want to skew the outcome of the report. So at this stage we are waiting the couple of weeks to see the recommendations that come from her report. We have full faith in Ms. McPhail providing an independent report that will help improve the sustainability of healthcare services to our region."

McPhail has more than 45 years of experience in healthcare. She worked as a nurse and eventually moved into administrative roles.

In May 2012, McPhail took on the role of CEO of Southern Health-Santé Sud until her retirement in April 2017. Over her career, McPhail spent more than 10 years as CEO of a health region.

CLINIC FUNDING

The current funding model supporting Open Health is complicated. According to the clinic's website, the organizational structure is described as "a special cooperation between the Town of Niverville, who had the vision, and [Southern Health], who provided the staff."

When asked for clarification on the existing cooperation between the town and the clinic, King says, "The town does not provide any funds to this private enterprise. The clinic is owned and operated solely by the doctors. No funds have ever been granted to them."

Southern Health pays for the salaries of provincial healthcare staff who work out of the clinic but does not contribute other financial support, such as in the form of rent.

"The mental healthcare and public healthcare workers at Open Health, as well as the dietician and chronic disease nurse, are Southern Health-Santé Sud employees," says Alan Wiebe, media specialist for Southern Health. "Southern Health does lease half the space from Open Health and... pays for half the salary of one admin support position."

Niverville Heritage

Holdings Inc. would not comment on the leasing structure of the clinic space.

It is not uncommon for doctors to bear the bulk of the overhead costs associated with running a clinic. Doctors are paid by either fee-for-service (where they bill the province for services rendered) or salary (paid by the province), or a blend of the two. According to the Canadian Institute of Health Information (CIHI), for most doctors the fees billed to the province are used to cover the cost of running their practice and do not directly translate into actual take-home pay.

There is some question as to whether there exists a precedent for a town or rural municipality to enter into any type of arrangement for temporary or ongoing financial support of a medical clinic.

In a 2015 report conducted by the Rural Health Services Review Committee under the Government of Alberta, "many communities reported spending significant municipal dollars on such things as buildings, retention bonuses, housing, and relocation for physician recruitment with varying degrees of success."



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Little Flower Shop Gets Big Win at Wedding Show

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

The Little Flower Shop may sound like a modest little business, but it's making a mark on the wedding industry in southeast Manitoba in a big way. This year, the Little Flower Shop took the esteemed award of Best Double Booth Overall at the Wonderful Wedding Show held at the RBC Convention Centre on January 18-19.

Owner Peggy Wiebe has entered her floral business in the Wonderful Wedding Show on and off for the past 21 years, demonstrating her floral arranging prowess for bridal couples for decades. This is her fourth win at the show.

"There is 130,000 square feet of [space at the show, filled with booths], so winning an award is significant for us as a small business in the wedding industry," Wiebe says. "For me, it means that we are capturing the attention of the brides we are looking forward to working with."

Every year Wiebe enters a booth at the show, it requires new energy to create a visual effect that incorporates the latest wedding trends and inspires the new brides-to-be. This year's booth had all of those elements in just the right measure.

"We noticed that gold is still the powerhouse tone and velvet linens and drapes are a hot trend which is coming in strong for 2020 and 2021," Wiebe says. "There is a real appeal for whimsical and



The Little Flower Shop's display at the 2020 Wonderful Wedding Show.

NEFFI BERGEN WEDDING PHOTOGRAPHY

natural settings. Couples seem to be trending towards simplicity with the right balance between too much and not enough. We love that couples are wanting to add more natural products like branches and moss, mixed greens, and of course fresh flowers to bring together their desired look."

To call herself a floral expert would not be an overstatement. She's been in business for 27 years, bringing joy and beauty to people's lives through her artistic creations.

For almost 20 years, the Little Flower Shop operated out of the Victoria Plaza in Steinbach. Eventually, Wiebe moved the business to her home property on Prefontaine Road between Niverville and Île-des-Chênes. It's a vantage point that means she can offer more affordable delivery service to 16 rural communities and the city of Winnipeg.

From her customized boutique, Wiebe offers a wide range of products for every occasion, including floral arrangements in both fresh and silk, plants, gourmet gift

baskets, fresh-cut flowers, and custom home decor items such as decorative outdoor pots.

For special events, Wiebe also carries about everything a bridal couple or event planner could need.

"We have a large variety of event rentals, including pipe and drape, chandeliers, Chiavari chairs, candelabras, and vases of all sizes and styles, as well as several unique props and decorative backdrop items," says Wiebe. "We also offer full styling, delivery, setup, and takedown."

Wiebe and her team have provided décor for weddings all around Manitoba and into Ontario.

"The thing that sets us apart," says Wiebe, "is that we put a huge emphasis on adding personalized details into each client's wedding, which captures the magic of their relationship and sets their special day apart."

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Rendering of the CRRC.

TOWN OF NIVERVILLE

CRRC Fundraising Enters Final Stretch

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

There's been buzz in Niverville surrounding the upcoming Community Resource and Recreation Centre (CRRC), which is what one would expect when the federal and provincial governments make a local investment of more than \$11 million.

Clear evidence that the CRRC is only a year away can be seen in the rising 99,000-square-foot steel structure next to the high school. By early 2021, the building's many amenities should be in full use.

Working behind the scenes is Friends of Niverville, a volunteer fundraising committee that's been campaigning since long before the announcement was made. Their mission is to raise the final \$3.2 million left over after the government grants are taken into account, including \$5 million from the Town of Niverville. The entire build has been estimated at \$19.5 million.

Clarence Braun and Libby Hanna are co-chairs of the core steering committee and they are backed by dedicated volunteers who work to pull off the fundraisers.

Braun is heading up the corporate end of the campaign, hoping to raise about \$2.2 million through the facility's naming rights.

"One of the challenges of raising \$3.5 million dollars in Niverville is that we don't have [very many] generational businesses within Niverville," Braun says, adding that it's often the multigenerational family businesses that are in a position to make large donations.

He adds, though, that the community is surrounded by a vibrant agricultural community and some larger donations are rolling in from very generous farmers.

By far the biggest sponsorship opportunity will be the right to name

the entire facility and have that name emblazoned on the exterior of the building. This privilege will come at a cost of a cool \$1 million, and Braun says he's got at least one party very interested.

But that's only one way to get your name on the building. Naming rights can be secured on the 36,000-square-foot multiuse fieldhouse, the impressive new arena, the two-storey playground facility, or the link that connects the CRRC to Niverville High School.

As well, your name could appear on one of the two multipurpose rooms or on one of the eight change rooms. Braun says this has been a popular option, and at present the change rooms have been sponsored by local individuals or businesses.

But Friends of Niverville wants to give everyone a chance to see their names in the new facility, so naming rights are being attached to the 500 fieldhouse spectator seats as well as the 500 arena seats.

"It's the support of the grassroots that you really need," says Braun regarding the seat-sponsorship campaign. "You need the million-dollar donation, but that's just one [donor]. You need the community support behind this, too, and that's where the seat sale will be the greatest indication of community support for the project."

Hanna is busy gearing up for a spring door-to-door blitz to help sell the seats.

"Our largest fundraising effort is going to be through the sale of having your name on a seat in the new CRRC," Hanna says. "For a \$1,000 donation, you can... leave your mark for all time. There are grandparents who have bought a seat in each of their grandchildren's name, a family buying a seat in their family name, as well as many individuals who have bought a seat for each member of

their household."

Buying a seat doesn't mean you have the right to sit there at games. It simply provides a fun way to have your name on something tangible.

Tax receipts are available for all sizes of donations and sponsors can make their donations in installments over the entire year if a single large donation isn't an option.

Every donor, big or small, will also have an opportunity to see their name on a creatively designed donor wall that will greet guests as they walk through the doors.

"If we have a kid in the elementary school that wants to put \$25 towards this [facility], their name will be recognized on this wall," says Braun.

A portion of the wall will also be dedicated to the donors who have chosen to remain anonymous. Braun says a number of people have opened their wallets with large donations but have indicated a preference for no public recognition.

Friends of Niverville have been planning events since 2016 when the first pancake breakfast was held. Since then, the committee has hosted three annual galas, each raising between \$30,000 and \$40,000. The next gala is being planned for May 2020, and this year will have a masquerade theme.

Barbecues, NHL drafts, Chase the Ace, and Touch-a-truck events are just some of the many other fundraisers that have been happening. December 2019 saw the first-ever Christmas Town event.

Bigway Bucks continue to be available for purchase at the Niverville Credit Union and town office. They are available in \$20 increments and are redeemable for groceries at Niverville Bigway. In turn, Bigway will donate 10 percent back to the CRRC.

"We all shop there anyway, so why not make a donation at the same time?" Hanna says.

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A Ray of Sunshine: The Life of Annie Harder

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Few people embody joy and contentment the way Annie Harder does. Annie is a resident of the Heritage Life Personal Care Home and an almost lifelong resident of Niverville. To those who know her, she is a ray of sunshine.

Annie was born in Chaco, Paraguay, the youngest of 12 children. She came into this world with an unusual genetic disorder called osteogenesis imperfecta, also known as brittle bone disease. As a newborn, her limbs were like that of a rag doll.

As she grew, she needed to be handled with kid gloves. Doctors predicted she wouldn't live past 12.

"I proved them wrong," says Annie with a grin, now 59 years old. "They don't always know."

At six, Annie and her family moved to Niverville and made the community their permanent home.

Annie managed to walk until she was nine, but she could never run and play like the other children. She was kept home from school for most of her childhood. The risk of breaking bones was too great for her parents to risk.

"My mom always said I was a very content child," Annie says, in spite of her sheltered life.

Eventually, as her legs began to weaken, she rode a tricycle around the house and, by 12, became bound to a wheelchair. Over the course of her childhood, she experienced breaks in almost every bone in her body, including about 20 to her arms alone.

"I never was unhappy," Annie says. "I would always be happy for kids that could run and play but I would never, never envy anybody... By the grace of God, I knew I could handle this."

Annie grew up in a family who lived by a strong faith in God. This, she believes, set the tone for her to be able to accept and find joy in her lot in life.

"I believed that God could heal me



Annie Harder of Niverville.

BRENDASAWATZKY

if he wanted to, and I still do, but it's in his time," Annie says. "If he wants to heal me, fine. But if not, he'll give me grace to bear it."

At 16 years old, her parents made arrangements with the Niverville Elementary School to allow Annie to attend classes for the first time. She was placed in a Grade Four class, but one week in it all came to an end.

A student who'd been instructed by the teacher to wheel Annie home accidentally bumped her wheelchair against a curb and toppled Annie to the ground. Her broken bones were severe enough to warrant keeping her at home and out of harm's way once again.

While at home, Annie learned vicariously through her siblings' education. Her parents had never learned English, so at 16 they hired a local tutor to bring Annie's own education up to speed.

In spite of her delicate physical state, Annie was able to enjoy a

number of road trips with her parents, visiting the Watrous Hot Springs in Manitou and touring the Black Hills of South Dakota. She even revisited her childhood home in Chaco.

For the majority of her life, Annie's mother was her primary caregiver. She never conceded that role to anyone else until she turned 82 and simply couldn't manage any longer.

With Annie's father already passed on, the pair eventually moved into the Niverville Credit Union Manor—as roommates.

"I liked it there," Annie says. "I could go out more."

By this time, both Annie and her mother had electric scooters and the two would venture outdoors almost every day, taking joyrides around town.

"We raced down the streets," Annie jokes. "I took her out a lot... until her eyes got so bad and then I couldn't do it anymore."

Their roles slowly shifted, with

Annie taking on the caregiving responsibility for her mother. But as her mother's health continued to decline, the family had no choice but to place their mother in a personal care home.

Since Niverville was still two years away from getting their own care home, Annie's mom was taken away to live in Steinbach. Annie found the separation from her mother and lifelong friend almost unbearable.

"It was hard seeing her crying when I came to visit," says Annie, who admits that the separation was even more difficult for her mother.

When the Heritage Life Personal Care Home opened its doors for the first time, Annie's mom was among its first residents. Since Annie required the aid of a special lift to get in and out of bed, she made the transfer to the PCH as well.

By this time, Annie's mother's dementia was taking over and Annie found herself feeding her mother at

every mealtime.

"As long as she could hear my voice, she was fine," Annie says.

Her mother has since passed on and Annie misses having her in the room next door. But Annie hasn't skipped a beat, keeping herself busy by visiting other residents of the PCH all day long, every day.

In a place where dementia and death are the norm, Annie brings a special kind of hope and joy to the residents living around her.

"I love visiting people in here," Annie says. "I go around and see who's up... I always say I've been a senior all my life, because I've [spent my whole life] with seniors."

While she misses her home at the manor, she continues to hike across the building to play cards with her friends there. She also volunteers twice a week at the adult daycare, playing games with the aging.

Because of Annie's whimsical outlook, the personal care home has become her bed-and-breakfast, where her meals are always ready and her bed awaits.

"I'm never at home in the summer," Annie says of her continued freedom to scoot around town during the nicer months. "I like to be on the road every day."

She spends her time browsing the MCC Thrift Store shelves and eating meals with a sister who lives nearby. The food, she admits, tastes better at her sister's place.

Winter months are harder for Annie as the season feels interminably long. To alleviate her thirst for the outdoors, family members stop in regularly and take her on outings.

"Life is good," says Annie. "I don't allow myself to get depressed. I could. I would have reason to [be down]. When I first moved in here, I thought, 'Oh my goodness, am I just going to sit in my room and not come out?' But I'm glad I didn't."

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Disaster Relief Volunteer Shares Life-Changing Experiences

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

For many, the shoebox gift campaign called Operation Christmas Child is what the charitable organization Samaritan's Purse is known for. Few realize that this organization, founded in 1973, has long been providing disaster relief around the globe.

Lisa Letkeman of Niverville first discovered the joy of volunteering with Samaritan's Purse in 2017. Two years later, she's provided volunteer aid on seven different occasions at locations around Canada and the United States.

"My whole life, all I ever wanted to do was help people," Letkeman says. "I felt like I needed an adventure, to step out of my comfort zone and stop being afraid of life."

Letkeman openly admits that, throughout her adult life, she's struggled with some paralyzing fears. The most recent, and the one that pushed her to this new challenge, was the moment her youngest child graduated, leading her to reconcile with the fact that her role as a mother would no longer be the same.

It was a moment in her life that she calls her mid-life crisis—and it led to a number of meltdowns that worried her husband and friends.

"I just thought my life was over," she recalls. "It totally did me in because I'm really close to my kids."

Lisa did what many Christians do: she prayed for guidance, which she hoped would bring new meaning to her life. When she heard about Hurricane Harvey's destructive impact on areas of Texas in August 2017, she felt her answer had come.

Still, she had another major fear to overcome. Earlier in her adult life, she'd volunteered with another charitable organization in Europe which she describes as a "really awful experience," causing her to cut her time there short and return home.

But she pressed on anyway and began an online search for organizations that were providing aid to the communities in Texas. After discovering Samaritan's Purse, it all felt right.

By October 2017, she was on a plane headed for Pairland, Texas.

"I was almost in my mid-50s [when I decided to go] and I wondered, 'Can I even do this?'" she says.



Lisa Letkeman (in brown) with her team of volunteers.

LISA LETKEMAN

"But Samaritan's Purse [makes it easy]. It's a great organization."

Since then, she's been actively helping victims whose homes and lives have been devastated by hurricanes, floods, and tornadoes. Her travels have taken her to New Brunswick, Florida, Ontario, and Prince Edward Island for two- to five-week volunteer engagements.

Most Samaritan's Purse volunteers, she says, just show up when a call is put out. Letkeman has experienced times when she's the only volunteer to arrive and other times when they have more than enough. Volunteers only need to pay for their flight. Upon arrival, accommodations and food is provided by the organization.

"Samaritan's Purse has what they call Lighthouse Churches, and so when there's a disaster... the [local] church basically gives us free rein," says Letkeman. "They give us space in their building for us to set up cots to sleep."

Samaritan's Purse provides trailers with showers and demolition equipment as well as onsite cooks

to feed the work crews.

Volunteers are whisked off to the disaster site the day after arrival. In some cases, they may be put to work cleaning up fallen trees, branches, and debris. Other times, they dig into the arduous task of gutting homes that have been partially destroyed by floodwaters. The work crew's goal is to get the home ready for contractors to rebuild.

"In some places it's so humid and hot," Letkeman says. "The mould is often right to the ceiling or in the ceiling."

STORIES OF LOSS

The work also often entails removing and disposing of the homeowner's damaged furnishings and life possessions, something that brings an added level of poignancy to the task. Somewhere in the near vicinity, the devastated homeowner often looks on in tearful disbelief but with a grateful heart for the volunteer aid.

For this reason, Samaritan's Purse tasks each of its volunteers with a second mission: to provide a listening ear, even if it means laying down

the hammer for an hour so they can give the homeowner a chance to recount their story of loss.

Letkeman recalls with clarity one such situation: an older gentleman had recently lost his wife and now was faced with the indescribable pain of letting go of many of their cherished belongings due to flood damage. These were the very things that brought her memory to life for him.

Through encouragement and a patient, listening ear, Letkeman was able to help him reconcile with what needed to be done.

She still keeps some communication with him to this day.

While there is heartache behind every situation the volunteers attend to, for Letkeman the most heart-wrenching experience was the hurricane destruction she witnessed in Florida last year.

"It was like Armageddon there," says Letkeman. "I'd never had trouble keeping it together until [that experience]... It wasn't that I couldn't handle it, it's just that I was really broken by what I was seeing..."

talking to a mother who'd lost her kids because she was living in a car."

Working amongst the rubble, Letkeman and her team heard stories of families separated and split between relatives around the country, some families living in tents and others in their cars. Churches and fire halls were filled beyond capacity, trying to provide shelter and food for the many homeless and jobless residents.

Many of these same residents had no insurance on their homes due to the high-risk area they lived in. Most couldn't afford to live anywhere else.

TEAM LEADER

After just her second deployment with Samaritan's Purse, leaders within the organization encouraged Letkeman to become a team leader, which essentially gives her the position of job foreman. She accepted the challenge.

Since then, she's been organizing teams of five to 15 people as they are assigned to her. She provides oversight and encouragement to the volunteers who arrive, many of them women who need to be given the confidence to stretch their abilities and build new skills.

Between Samaritan's Purse and the benevolence of a supportive couple from Letkeman's home church, her flights are now covered. She also began attending annual training sessions last year where she learned the basics of safely dealing with mould and where she was provided some hands-on training in roofing and chainsaw use.

She says she's built strong relationships with the other team leaders. As well, with each of her excursions away, she's experienced the joy of making lasting friendships.

"For me and for most people at Samaritan's Purse, it's about the people connection," Letkeman says. "Not just the people you're working together with but the people that you're helping. There are so many God moments every day [on the job]."

As for returning home from each volunteer assignment, the transition isn't an easy one, she says. But instead of feeling guilt about the things she still has, she chooses instead to bask in a renewed sense of thankfulness.

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Commentary

Oh for the Love of Doughnuts

By Greg Fehr

Most often, the world of human interaction provides a lot of entertaining topics for commentators such as me to rant about. Usually these topics are important, timely, and relevant. Occasionally they are less important but at least interesting or entertaining enough to spend time talking about.

And at the oddest of times, the concerns of Joe Public are downright ridiculous.

I cannot be alone in thinking that if we're making national news—nay, international—about the snack choices of our federal government, perhaps we have nothing to complain about and are truly blessed. Either that or we're really bored and just looking for a fight.

Let's try to look at this for what it really is: about two weeks ago, our prime minister stopped by a Winnipeg doughnut shop to buy some local snacks.

For those of you who think *no* money should ever be spent by government, I have nothing to say. But stick me in a room with a bunch of politicians for a day of discussion and you better have some doughnuts for me. Most people won't argue with this, except the libertarians who



DEPOSITPHOTOS

don't think we need government at all.

For those of you who think Mr. Trudeau spent *too much* money on the doughnuts, give your bloody head a shake. Not only is this not the low-hanging fruit on the tree of government waste, I would suggest it isn't even a bud. We're talking about barely one-thousandth of a penny per taxpayer. Perhaps you think we need to analyze their breakfast choices, too, and make sure they only had the oatmeal and didn't splurge for the two-egg platter.

And now the most ridiculous of concerns—our prime minister's

failure to shop at the “local” Tim Hortons franchise. Please, as you're reading, take a pause now and ask yourself something: in what world is a multinational chain based out the United States a local choice?

I get that Tim Hortons has a local backstory. We love our historic hockey icons. But our Timmy's has been in the hands of Americans for many years, with most of the profits sucked out of the franchisees' pockets and into the hands of shareholders south of the border. Timmy's has been struggling to reclaim its Canadian identity for a while now... less due to a sense of national pride,

unfortunately, and more due to shareholder pressures in the face of declining sales.

Winnipeg-based Oh Doughnuts is truly local—owned by local entrepreneurs who support local supply chains wherever possible. The money put into their tills goes directly back into our local marketplace for supplies, employee wages, and owner investments.

Would it have made the news if Trudeau had stopped at the local Timmy's for a few dozen Honey Cruellers and Boston Cremes? Maybe a quick blurb on the back pages of the paper. The *Winnipeg Sun*

would likely have critiqued his choice of flavours, but even they wouldn't have put it on the front page.

And it's unlikely there would have been any increase in sales at that Tim Hortons location. Time will tell, but I would be very surprised if Oh Doughnuts doesn't see a spike in sales. Heck, I wouldn't be surprised to be driving down Broadway and see tourists taking a picture of themselves with a cool dozen in front of the sign, much like people snap selfies in front of Trump Tower in New York.

We might even catch the likes of *Daily Show* host Trevor Noah coming up north for a quick bite!

This exposure has immense value that will funnel into our local market, including all the extra taxation that goes along with it. This will make a difference to a local, independent entrepreneur.

To put it mildly, it would be of little consequence to the multinational chain.

Again, if this is truly anyone's biggest concern in today's world, we really have lost the ability to think critically and reasonably. As archaic as it may be, it may be time to pick up a newspaper and talk about some of the real challenges we face.

Why do Christians trust a book written over 2000 years ago? How do we find truth in our ever changing world? How are my relationships bigger than myself?

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Sports & Recreation

Novice Clippers Host Home Tournament

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

On the last weekend of January, the Novice Clippers hosted their annual home tournament, with all three Novice teams working hard to get themselves in a winning position.

The Novice A squad lost a tough first game to Springfield 10-3, but then bounced back in their second match against Lorette by a score of 4-2.

For the third game, against the Rat River Saints, they faced a scenario where they had to win to qualify for the finals.

"The boys played hard all weekend and got themselves into a win-and-you're-in situation on Saturday night against their rivals from Rat River," says team manager Chris Smook. "The Saints scored on the last shift of the game to take an 8-7 lead and win the game."

The loss created a three-way tie in the standings between the Clippers, Lorette, and Rat River for a spot in the finals.

"In the end, when all the numbers were added up, Lorette edged out the Clippers by one point in the tiebreaker and moved on," says Smook. "The Novice A team would like to thank the tournament coordinators for hosting a great weekend for all the novice Clipper Ice Sports teams."

The Novice B team began their tournament with a Friday match-up against the St. Adolphe Hawks.



The Novice B Clippers took home silver medals at their home tournament.

ASHLEY CHAMBERLAIN

"What a great start to the tournament it was!" says manager Ashley Chamberlain. "It was definitely a nail-biter, right up until the last minute when the Hawks scored to win the game."

The Novice Bs went on to win both of their next two round robin games, on Saturday, against the Gimli Vikings and Mitchell Mustangs. This qualified them for the final on Sunday afternoon.

"In the final, they faced off against St. Adolphe with another game full of exciting plays on both sides," Chamberlain says. "The Clippers started off up by two goals, but by the last three minutes of the game the score was tied. The St. Adolphe Hawks won gold with a fantastic goal near the very end of the game. The Clippers Novice B congratulates our friends from St. Adolphe on their gold medal and was proud to take home

silver."

Two Clippers team competed in Novice C, White and Blue, and they both found themselves playing together in the semi-finals. The White team came out on top, by a score of 8-1.

However, it was the Altona Maroons who emerged victorious in the C final, with the Kenora Hounds taking home silver.

"The CIS Executive would like to thank the businesses, parents, and attendees of our home tournament," adds Chamberlain. "Without support from the community, this would not be possible."

ATOM A STILL UNDEFEATED

In other Clippers news, the Atom A team has continued their undefeated league play. At the moment, assistant coach Travis Mason says the team is moving

through the toughest part of their schedule.

"The Clippers lead the league with only 13 goals against with three games remaining," says Mason. "The success has come from a complete team effort. Goalie Zadien McDonald-Horvath has had help from the defensive core of Luca Wotherspoon, Roc Wotherspoon, Carter Fast, and Brett Buros. They will end the season with games against the second and third place teams before they get ready for the playoffs."

On the strength of their season so far, the Atom A team has already booked their ticket to the Atom AA Provincials this March, to be held in Dauphin. The Clippers are just one of two teams representing the Eastman region. The other team comes from St. Adolphe.

"One of our team goals at the start of the season was to win Provincials, and the boys did what they needed to do to put them in position to achieve this goal," Mason says. "It's been a great year and every player continues to push each other to be better each day. I believe the success of the group has come due to how they have bonded as a group. The energy and confidence they carry when they walk into the arena has played a big part in where they're at today. The wins and losses are always the measuring point to a season, but I believe this group has achieved so much more by the lifetime bonds they're creating."

IN BRIEF

Novice B Clippers Play in Winnipeg Jets Challenge Cup

By Evan Braun

Late last year, the Novice B Clippers participated in the Winnipeg Jets Challenge Cup, which ran from December 21 until January 2 at the Bell MTS Ice Plex.

On December 22, the team came out strong in their first game, securing victory by a score of 12-8. The next game was even more dominant, with the Clippers jumping out to a 12-1 win, with Josh Ginter in the net.

The third game, on December 24, also resulted in a victory of 18-3.

"This Novice B team have been strong performers this season," says Ashley Chamberlain. "During our games all players are engaged in the plays, and team play is our primary goal. The coaches can often be seen helping the players on the bench strategize their plays so that our players are learning to work as a team."

The final game of the tournament took place December 31, and the Clippers once again roared to a big win, by a score of 17-4.

"The team was very excited going into their last game of the year, and everyone performed at their best," says Chamberlain.

The Player of the Game honour was awarded to Deklan Billey for his defensive plays throughout the game.



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Elks Pee wee B Continue Their Strong Season

By Dan Hoepfner

The Île-des-Chênes Elks Pee-wee B team continued their strong season this month, going 2-1-1 January to improve their overall record to 5-4-5. They are scoring an average of five goals per game while only allowing four goals against per game.

Head coach Patrick Poirier, and his assistant coaches Nick Hebert, Jean-Paul Lafleche, and Don Marion, have done an incredible job getting this team of 12- and 13-year-old boys and girls to play a strong defensive game. The team plays with speed, skill, and structure while making sure they are on

the right side of the puck.

The team claimed second place at Niverville's home tournament in December and are gearing up for another tournament in Teulon on February 8-9. They will then cap off their season with a trip to Souris for the Provincials in March.

THREE PLAYERS TO WATCH

In a game against Lorette in early February, Kylan Olson sparked the comeback by scoring two goals in the third period. However, there's more to Kylan's game than just scoring goals. He is a strong skater and has great hockey IQ. Kylan reminded me of a young Kyle Connor, Winnipeg Jets forward

and perennial 30+ goal-scorer.

Goalie Brody Marion made several solid positional saves and a couple of brilliant glove saves. Marion came up huge when tested throughout the game to help his team secure the win.

Caden Poirier plays a great defensive game. He uses his excellent speed and stickhandling to navigate through the defensive zone with poise and consistently gets in the right defensive position. Caden is reminiscent of a young Andrew Copp, Winnipeg Jets centre and defensive specialist.

"From the beginning of our season, I could not stress enough that if hockey is played

with heart, staying mentally focused on the game and by keeping it fun on and off the ice, it guarantees positive results no matter if we win or lose," says head coach Patrick Poirier. "At this age, in my opinion, hockey is a game of mistakes and continual learning is must. It is about teaching and wanting to learn on how to play smart, positional, and unselfish hockey. One player alone cannot be successful. It requires a group of players that love this game to work together as a collective unit to succeed. I believe our team has demonstrated that this year. Regardless of the standings, I couldn't be more proud of them this year!"

Jets Cannot Afford to Trade Another First-Round Pick

By Dan Hoepfner

Draft picks are the currency of the NHL. Teams love to acquire them and hate to lose them.

First-round draft picks are even more valuable to the Jets, a small-market team that's often overlooked by top-tier free agents. First-round draft picks are like gold to the Jets—and they cannot afford to continue trading these draft picks away.

General Manager Kevin Cheveldayoff has had success turning these high-end draft picks into strong NHL players. Mark Scheifele, Kyle Connor, Patrik Laine, Josh Morrissey, and Nikolaj Ehlers were all selected in the first round.

A total of 78 percent of Cheveldayoff's first-round draft picks between 2011 and 2017 have transitioned into regular NHL players, playing at least 60 percent of games in a single season, which ranks ninth among NHL teams. Given that these players' average selection was in the middle of the first round over that timeframe, Cheveldayoff and his scouts have done well.

Unfortunately, their success at the draft ends after the first round. Only one of his five second-round draft picks have played at least 60 percent of available games in any season since being drafted. That player, Nic Petan, played 54 games for

the Jets in the 2016-2017 season and has since been traded to the Toronto Maple Leafs.

Following the trade, Petan suited up for 21 NHL games over two seasons and currently plays for the Toronto Marlies, an American Hockey League team.

The Winnipeg Jets' second-round efficiency ranks twentieth in the NHL.

Adding a player or two before the trade deadline is a noble idea if the price is right. Consider for a moment that time when the Jets traded a first-round draft pick and a prospect to St. Louis in exchange for Paul Stastny. Would the Jets have traded Scheifele, Connor,

Morrissey, or Ehlers for Paul Stastny? I hope not, considering Stastny was an unrestricted free agent at the end of that season.

Based on Cheveldayoff's track record in the first round, the Jets probably traded away a good hockey player for a player classified as a rental.

Fans and NHL insiders continue to speculate about potential trades, but the Jets are a draft, develop, and retain team with a relatively shallow prospect pool. Cheveldayoff needs to continue to focus on the future of this franchise and rebuild the depth this franchise once had.

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Local kids meet players for the Manitoba Moose, who practiced with the team.

ELISSA LEAH

Visiting Moose Join Atom Clippers Practice

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The Atom C White Clippers got a boost on Tuesday, January 21 when a trio of Manitoba Moose crashed their practice skate at the Ste. Agathe arena. The initiative is part of the club's Community Practice Series.

The three Moose players were Logan Shaw, Cole Maier, and Logan Stanley. The team's head coach, Kevin Boone, ran the practice as normal, with Shaw and Maier participating and encouraging the kids, who are between nine and ten years of age.

Although Stanley did not skate, he was present on the bench and was available to sign autographs after the practice.

"The Community Practice Series gives youth hockey

players from six minor hockey teams in the Winnipeg area the chance to get on the ice with the Moose," reads a press release from the Moose. "Groups of Moose players attend each team's practice to assist coaches with drills, help players with skills, and sign autographs following the skate."

The Moose also sent players to five other community arenas that day to practice with minor hockey teams from around the province, including the River East Royals 9A1 Grey (Gateway Arena), the St. Vital Chill Red Atom A1 (Dakota Arena), the East St. Paul Crushers (East St. Paul Arena), the Grunthal Redwings Pee wee B and C (Grunthal Arena), and the Rockets Pee wee A2 White (Kirkfield Westwood).

All six winning teams were drawn from a total of 145

contest entries.

"In order to apply, you had to have available ice time on January 21," says Noelle Strain, parent and team manager. "I checked our schedule before I entered and it just happened that we had ice that day and during the hours they needed. So I entered the contest for our team, never thinking that we had a chance of winning or that the Moose would travel out here to see us."

However, the good news came a week before the event was scheduled to take place: the team had been selected.

She says that the players came upstairs after the practice to meet fans and sign autographs. Everyone in the community was welcome to come and watch that day's practice and meet the visiting Moose.



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Marathon runner Robyn Pohrebniuk.

ROBYN POHREBNIUK

Blood, Sweat, and Tears: Local Runner Conquers New York City Marathon

By Graham Schellenberg

Robyn Pohrebniuk was among the local competitors to race through New York City on November 3, 2019 among over 53,000 runners from around the world.

She finished in 7,483th place, with a time of three hours, 35 minutes, and 42 seconds.

Describing the marathon as a “bucket list kind of event,” Pohrebniuk says the opportunity to compete in New York City was an experience of a lifetime. With her best friend Lindsay in attendance, and family and friends cheering at home, she describes the support as heart-warming.

The New York City Marathon is one of six premiere races held worldwide, the others taking place in Boston, Tokyo, Berlin, London, and Chicago. The course

tracks through New York City’s five boroughs, spanning more than 42 kilometres in total.

Pohrebniuk says she has been running off and on since 2002.

“I started running mostly 5K and 10K events,” she says, “gradually working towards half-marathons and more recently full marathons.”

Full marathons are 26.2 miles, whereas half-marathons are... well, half that: 13.1 miles.

While scrolling through her Facebook feed one afternoon in 2018, Pohrebniuk noticed an advertisement for a virtual marathon sponsored by Strava, a popular social fitness network, which would qualify runners to compete in the 2019 New York City Marathon.

“Runners were required to run the full 26.2 miles to guarantee their entry to the

marathon,” she says. “Runners had to finish the virtual marathon in six hours and 30 minutes to guarantee their entry. This was my first full marathon. I ran it locally around Niverville and Ste. Agathe and finished in 3:39:11. Once I submitted my results, I was given entry to run the 2019 NYC Marathon.”

Pohrebniuk is now looking ahead toward the 2021 Boston Marathon, another prestigious international competition. With registration for Boston set to open in late-2020, she hopes her 2019 NYC Marathon time of 3:35:42 will be fast enough to guarantee her entry.

In terms of the training required for Boston, Pohrebniuk says she plans to begin this upcoming October.

“Blood, sweat, and tears for six months,” she says. “The training is the hard part. The race itself is the reward.”

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