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LOCAL NEWS

Understanding the Mask Debate

■ Are masks effective? Should you wear one, and if so, where and when? In this issue, we answer your mask questions.

Details on Pages 6-7



LOCAL NEWS

Plain and Simple: The History of One-Room Schoolhouses

■ Just about everyone over the age of 60 has memories of attending one-room schools in rural Manitoba. This month, Lesley Gaudry digs into their fascinating history.

Details on Pages 8-9

COMMENTARY

A Letter to a Neighbour

■ As COVID-19 cases rise in Hutterite colonies, so too does the stigma. But there is also so much for us to love and appreciate about our local colonies.

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SPORTS & RECREATION

It's Been a Busy Summer at Old Drovers Run

■ Golfers in Niverville have wrapped up tournaments this month, given out trophies, and raised money for a local family.

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Back to School

» DETAILS ON PAGES 3-4

JOEY VILLANUEVA

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BEN FUNK

Local Parents, School Division Respond to Back-to-School Plan

Sara Beth Dacombe

sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

On August 17, school divisions across Manitoba first announced their back-to-school plans. However, aspects of these initial plans have been subject to change in the days and weeks following.

In fact, one very large, province-wide change was announced just two days later: mask-wearing will be mandatory for all students from Grade 4 to Grade 12 while in school this fall.

The highlights of the overall plan so far include mandatory in-class attendance for children aged 7 to 18. This means that remote learning in September will not be an option for many, as it was for short time period in the spring of 2020.

According to directives from the province and the school divisions, parents are supposed to ensure their children participate in learning as outlined in the plan, or to register formally for home-schooling and indicate this choice to their school division.

THE PLAN

The plan, which Manitoba Education is calling Level 1: In-Class Learning, includes a few ways in which at-home or online learning will still be made available.

For example, while Kindergarten to Grade 8 students will return for five days of full in-class instruction per week, high school students in Grades 9 to 12 will experience some combination of in-class and remote learning, the exact contents of which are still subject to change.

Students who contact or have been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 will be required to follow Manitoba's public health guidelines. If that does happen, at-home learning packages will

be provided for students who are required to self-isolate or quarantine.

The plan also includes the precaution that if COVID-19 cases are detected in a school, the province may advise administrators to shut down classrooms or portions of buildings.

However, this option will be treated as a last resort.

In a phone interview with The Citizen in mid-August, interim superintendent of the Hanover School Division, Shelley Amos, confirmed that there is a plan in place for that scenario.

"If schools shut down, we pivot to remote learning, like we did in spring," says Amos. "Although we did that in a very quick crisis mode, we were able to do it. We've learned from that since then obviously. And so we will be increasing the quality of what we will offer."

Until the first case at a school occurs, the plan for prevention is comprehensive and based on applying the fundamentals of virus prevention.

For example, it will be up to parents to self-screen members of their family and decide whether to send their children to school. Any students exhibiting symptoms of respiratory illness, even minor symptoms, should not attend class.

As a result, it is fully expected that there will be a higher rate of student absenteeism this year.

Other protocols include extra hand-washing and sanitization stations, two metres of physical distancing whenever possible, cohorts for the purpose of contact tracing (groups of up to 75 individuals who use the same teachers or spaces), and increased cleaning and disinfecting throughout the day.

Decisions regarding appropriate

responses in the event of a positive case of COVID-19 will be made on a case by case basis, with Manitoba Public Health leading the response and providing guidance.

PARENTAL CONCERNS

For many parents, these back-to-school plans spark feelings of anxiety, anger, and the full spectrum in between.

The relatively low number of local COVID-19 case numbers was a measure of comfort for some, but that reassurance has been removed for many parents due to a spike of cases in the last few weeks.

A number of parents now see more and more reasons to be concerned as the first day of classes creeps closer.

"When our area's COVID-19 case numbers were very low, I felt okay with sending our girls back to school full-time, but now that numbers in our Niverville/Ritchot area are increasing it does make me nervous," says a parent of students attending Niverville Elementary School. "I do believe [Hanover School Division] and all divisions are trying their best to make school a safe environment for our children."

Since that time, it was revealed that the local cluster of cases came from a self-isolating Hutterite colony and did not represent a threat to the public.

However, that large rise in cases, although seemingly under control for the time being, could be seen as a preview of other outbreaks to come once in-school learning resumes.

This parent emphasizes that the topic is sensitive and controversial, and all families' decisions should be treated with respect.

(continued on page 4)

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IN BRIEF

Tracking Local COVID-19 Cases

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

In mid-August, the province began offering more detailed information about where in the province new cases of COVID-19 are being reported.

Previously, case counts in our area were at first lumped into the very large Southern Health region, but now we are able to track cases much closer to home.

The local health districts include Niverville/Ritchot, Hanover, Tache, Steinbach, and St. Pierre/DeSalaberry. These numbers are updated on The Citizen website every afternoon at 1:00 p.m.

A significant cluster arose in Niverville/Ritchot in late August, swelling to dozens of cases. At first it was unclear which community had been affected by this cluster, but it later was revealed that the cases were associated with a local Hutterite colony, which was self-isolating and taking the threat to public health very seriously.

There has so far been one death in Niverville/Ritchot, one death in Hanover, and three deaths in Steinbach.

In late August, an outbreak was declared at the Bethesda Place personal care home in Steinbach.

(continued from page 3)

"If a family decides to home-school or hire a private teacher, that is their own decision and we shouldn't judge them," this parent says. "Our family does plan to send our girls back to school full-time, but at times I do feel like a guinea pig in a science experiment."

Another parent said, "I'm not at all confident that we can handle or monitor the frequent hand-washing that is required or ensure the physical distancing necessary. Currently we don't have the space to allow it with the number of students we have enrolled. I don't think it's fair to expect teachers to do in-class and distance education. It's just too much. If home-schooling is an option, there are private tutors that can be hired and a lot of creative curriculum plans."

An overarching opinion communicated to The Citizen is that the class sizes in schools are a problem that predates COVID-19, but the onset of the virus has only made the trend more worrying.

Ever since Manitoba's provincial government lifted the cap on class size from 20, many schools have seen an increase in the number of students assigned to one classroom.

The number of children in a contained area is a concern when social distancing measures are among the fundamentals we keep getting reminded about in order to prevent the spread of the virus.

"The one component I haven't seen, and would like to, is the attempt to make classroom sizes smaller," says another parent. "I understand the cost and reorganization factor of this, but it would still be nice to see."

HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION RESPONSE

Amos responded to these reports of parental concerns by explaining the manner in which Hanover School Division follows the rec-

ommendations of Manitoba Public Health. She seeks to assure parents and families that all of these mandated protocols and guidelines will be followed closely.

"The reassurance I would give to our families is that we feel supported by Public Health," Amos says. "These [HSD] decisions are supported and informed by Public Health. They will help us lead the charge in decision-making."

But decision-making can change rapidly during this pandemic, and Amos says that the school division works closely with the province to ensure that there is a team-led approach, supported by the best and most current information possible.

"I want people to know that we care about them, we care about their children, we care about our children's families, and we care about our staff."

Shelley Amos | HSD Interim Superintendent

"We have regular calls with the Assistant Deputy Minister and the Deputy Minister for Education, as well as those who work underneath them," Amos explains. "We also have weekly calls with the [other] superintendents across Manitoba. We work with Manitoba school boards to stay in contact. We work with and look to these three groups for clarification and guidance. We've also had some of our own town halls with Dr. Roussin for superintendents and leaders, principals and vice principals. We get to hear directly from him and ask questions and get clarification, so those are helpful as well."

When asked if she feels Dr. Roussin has been listening

to educators, her response is emphatic: "Absolutely I do. I absolutely feel heard."

In the meantime, HSD administrators are in the process of reviewing the province's recently announced rapid response strategies. On that, Amos anticipates that more specific information will be made available to parents soon.

"Our intention will be to release a weekly update from the superintendent office," she adds. "Any new guidance we get, or new piece of the plan as it evolves, we will give an update on. One of the pieces of correspondence I am working on is to help parents to know exactly what we will do if a

classroom or school wing needs to be closed."

She emphasizes that communication is important and that the HSD is striving to provide direct that clear, frequent, and transparent communication with parents.

"And we are open to feedback," says Amos. "I want people to know that we care about them, we care about their children, we care about our children's families, and we care about our staff. We know there is a lot of anxiety and trepidation, but we also know that children learn best at schools. We look forward to seeing our children again in our schools, but at the same time providing a safe environment."

MANDATORY MASK-WEARING

The original plan released on August 17 included mandatory mask-wearing for bus drivers and bussed students, with only a strong recommendation for students in Grades 5 to 12 while in the classroom. The province's stance on this subject later changed, with in-school masks being made mandatory.

"Out of an abundance of caution, and having listened to the input of literally thousands and thousands of Manitobans, we will be requiring mandatory use of masks in schools for Grades 4 to 12, where physical distancing two metres apart is not possible," said Premier Brian Pallister at a news conference on Wednesday, August 19.

Most parents The Citizen spoke with have greeted this update with positivity, saying that they are willing to help their children acclimate to the new feeling of wearing a mask daily.

"Over the past months, as a family, we have been wearing a mask in all public places and our daughters are slowly getting more comfortable with this," says one local parent.

But others parents still don't see the situation as being safe, even with mandatory masks.

"My eight-year-old knows that he touches his face and mouth all day and he can't help it," another parent says. "The idea of voluntarily putting himself at risk actually gives him great anxiety. We as a family would rather put up with the insanity of home-schooling rather than subject him to an endless list of protocols that detract from his ability to learn. I want to be clear: I fully support children being in school—not only for the fact that teachers are specially trained to deliver the Manitoba curriculum to these age groups, but also for the social aspects which are critical to his enjoyment of life and the development of interpersonal skills. So I get all that."



Katie Knebel

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The winning team was Wm. Dyck & Sons. Pictured above, from left to right – Rod Peters, John Magri (presenting for Chamber), Tristan Schneider, Stephan Schneider (missing in picture Adam Tougas)

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Understanding the Mask Debate

By Sara Beth Dacombe

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Wearing masks to control the spread of COVID-19 has been hotly debated in Manitoba this summer, and the debate only seems to get more intense as time goes on.

Whether it's seen as an urgent need to protect ourselves and others, a simple personal preference, or an outright assault on our freedoms, opinions on this issue are creating a lot of tension.

Regardless of where you fall when it comes to this question, friends, family members, and perfect strangers are feeling united, divided, or outright militant about it.

So how are we doing out there?

PUBLIC HEALTH RECOMMENDATIONS

On April 18, The Citizen reported that masks were being recommended by health authorities the world over. At that time, the World Health Organization (WHO) said that if you're healthy, you only need to wear a mask if you're taking care of a person with COVID-19.¹

On April 3, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended that people should wear non-surgical cloth face coverings when going out in public during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Canadian government also recommends mask-wearing.²

Currently, the CDC recommends all people over the age of two should wear a mask in public settings, especially when social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.³

Additionally, the WHO suggests that fabric masks be worn by people who have no COVID-19 symptoms and yet are in close contact with others or visiting crowded places, including office buildings and grocery stores.

Ultimately, the WHO advises people to follow their local health authorities.⁴

Our local health authorities are the national and provincial health officials we read about most days in the news—and both Canada's and Manitoba's health recommendations closely follow those of the CDC and WHO.

In Manitoba, mask-wearing in public places is not yet mandatory, but with the rise of COVID-19 cases in our province in late summer, Manitoba's chief public health officer, Dr. Brent Roussin, has hinted that they may become a mandated public health effort soon.⁵

Masks have been mandated so far on Winnipeg transit buses, and many local businesses have required them. They have also since been mandated in the Prairie Mountain health region, including Brandon, due to a high concentration of cases there since mid-July.

Masks will also be mandatory for most students when classes resume in September.

LOCAL BUSINESSES ON MASK-WEARING

In Niverville and Ritchot, mask-wearing may become more commonplace as the rate of infection climbs. However, in a holistic sense, local businesses in our area aren't yet creating or implementing policies that require staff or customers to wear masks.

Throughout the area, many people seen in local businesses are not wearing masks, including places where six feet of social distancing space is either somewhat difficult to achieve or virtually impossible.

When asked, many businesses refused to comment on their specific mask-wearing policies, saying that the issue is too personal and inflammatory for them to take an official position.

Most businesses said they would require mask-wearing by staff and customers if it was mandated from the provincial health authorities. But even on the promise of anonymity, businesses we contacted were too reluctant to provide comment for publication.

One business did speak to The Citizen, however.

Rose Friesen, co-owner of Country Snacks in Niverville, said in mid-August they don't yet have an official mask policy for staff or customers. But she adds that their staff has access to masks if they want to wear one. The business has also installed a plexi-glass shield to protect customers and staff as they interact at the checkout. They've also implemented an augmented sanitization strategy to keep the store and bistro clean.

"We do see a fair amount of customers with masks coming in, and we welcome people however they want to come in," says Friesen. "We train our staff, we sanitize all the time, and, to be safe and efficient, we have logs about our cleaning. I think the changes from COVID-19, the cleaning, and being careful, that's going to continue for a long time."

Friesen also commented on the overall atmosphere in our community when it comes to wearing masks.

"We don't need to create a debate about it," says Friesen. "There's a lot of different personalities out there and everyone is coping with this differently. You can't come down on anyone who is strongly for it and strongly against it. Overall, we do not need to come down on one another for it."

MASK-WEARING IN RURAL MANITOBA

Specific to our situation in the rural southeast, many people wonder why we should wear masks when our case num-

bers are relatively low and our small towns are less densely populated.

We're geographically spread out. Many other people are experiencing anxiety and ask themselves if businesses or schools should require mask-wearing.

To provide more insight into this issue, The Citizen reached out to a local expert who's very well-acquainted with our specific corner of the world.

Dr. Alistair Brown, professor of Advanced Issues in Environment and Human Health at the University of Manitoba, has specialized knowledge in epidemiology, which is the study of the distribution, patterns, and determinants of health and disease conditions in human populations.

Dr. Brown is from Winnipeg and his wife Kendra (née Friesen), who also has a university-level biochemistry education, grew up in Niverville. They still have family in the Niverville area.

The number of COVID-19 cases in Manitoba is currently on the rise, most notably in areas outside of Winnipeg.

Dr. Brown has some thoughts on why this is likely happening.

"Since our active case load dropped to 1 near the end of July, the vast majority of cases have arisen in places outside of Winnipeg," says Dr. Brown. "I believe [there are] two main reasons: travel and a false sense of security. Smaller communities have a very distinct advantage and disadvantage during COVID. If well-regulated, numerous small communities have had basically zero cases... If a community is unfortunate, such as a [Hutterite] colony, where there is still a great deal of travel to surrounding communities, it only takes one person to start a disease cluster, and eventually an

outbreak."

Recent cases in Steinbach have seen workers from major retail outlets or restaurants test positive for COVID-19. While those cases were determined to be travel-related, Dr. Brown describes the common reaction we all experience now when we hear such announcements.

"Your eyes widen and you quickly check your bank history to see if you were there, because these workers are not being mandated to wear masks," says Dr. Brown. "From transmitting to others, to touching all of the products, to talking with other customers—to not wear a mask in a densely attended business is ludicrous... The most problematic aspect of COVID, besides perhaps not having any symptoms at all, is the long period of time you can be reproducing and shedding virus to others and not even know it. Then you get COVID, and your heart drops into your stomach thinking about all the people you care about, and how you potentially exposed them, especially at larger summer gatherings! This is the beauty of masks."

His wife Kendra, reflecting on friends and family in the rural southeast, points out that it's easy for people in small communities to assume they're living in a veritable bubble, removed from the rest of the world.

The feeling of knowing everyone, widely regarded as a perk of small-town living, may actually contribute to people's hesitancy in trying to decide whether to wear a mask. Kendra agrees that it initially felt silly to go into a local grocery store and be one of the only people wearing a mask.

"But I eventually decided that if I want everyone else to also wear a mask, then it has to start with someone," she says. "And if enough people do it,

hopefully it will become the norm."

Kendra says she now wears a mask to be courteous and to help do her part.

"Even though I may feel reasonably confident that I haven't been exposed to the virus, there is never a guarantee," she adds. "I would feel absolutely horrible if I didn't wear a mask and ended up exposing people who now need to quarantine, miss work or school, possibly be hospitalized, or die, and all the stress and anxiety that goes along with it. I also wear a mask to provide a bit of protection for myself. While masks are primarily meant to prevent infected people from spreading the virus, studies have shown that it can benefit the person wearing the mask as well, by decreasing the viral load the mask-wearer is exposed to, and therefore the severity of the illness."

CITATIONS

¹ "Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Advice for the Public: When and How to Use Masks," *World Health Organization*. Date of access: April 19, 2020 (<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>).

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SEPTEMBER 12
to OCTOBER 10

Q&A: Mask Confusion and Misinformation

By Sara Beth Dacombe

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More than ever, people today are turning to less traditional media to find information on issues including public health, COVID-19, and mask-wearing. These sources are often unregulated, saturated with non-experts or discredited experts, and fraught with misinformation.

As a result, Canadians are more prone to health misconceptions than ever before.

A McGill University PhD candidate published a study in July 2020 on COVID-19 misinformation and its impact on public health. This study found that the more people used social media as a source for COVID-19 information, the more they were exposed to misinformation and were likely to disregard proven public health recommendations such as physical distancing and mask-wearing.

More traditional media sources, local experts, and government health agencies continue to be upheld as the most credible sources for news information.

To help stop the spread of misinformation, Dr. Alistair Brown of Winnipeg participated in a short Q&A with The Citizen to review the

usefulness of masks, and explain their function.

Q. How do masks work?

A. In biological terms, there are different routes of entry for any foreign substance, both chemical and infectious disease.

In increasing order of putting yourself at risk, these routes of entry are dermal (the skin), GI tract (the stomach), respiratory (the lungs), and intraperitoneal (injection). In terms of what we are most likely to encounter in normal life, breathing in a virus is our greatest risk, so wearing masks is a no-brainer.

If a person has COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, and wears a mask, they are protecting the public from getting it from them.

If a person doesn't have COVID, then wearing a mask gives an additional level of protection from getting COVID if someone in the community has it.

If everyone wore a mask in public spaces, especially indoors, the transmission rate would drop significantly because there is double protection.

Q. But when the pandemic started, the CDC and Can-

ada Health both originally advised against wearing masks. Why did they change their position?

A. In the beginning, we have to appreciate how very little personal protective equipment (PPE) we had for the global population. So the WHO and the United States' CDC didn't advocate for everyone to wear masks, because if everyone ran out to buy them, there wouldn't be any stock for the frontline workers who needed them the most. These included N95 masks, surgical masks, and NIOSH vapour respirators.

Now that there's a decent amount of research on cloth/cotton masks being able to provide baseline protection from COVID based on probability (regardless of pore size), mask usage is clearly the main answer to the general public's protection right now.

Moreover, the extent by which COVID was being transmitted asymptotically just wasn't known at the early stages of this pandemic.

It would have been worse for the CDC and WHO to be prideful and dig in their heels, saying, "No, we stand by our initial decision." That's not how science or health policy works—which is good!

Q. Are there physical harms, such as reduced oxygen intake, that can actually arise from wearing masks?

A. No. And I mean this with all sincerity. Oxygen is a gas, and it's incredibly small.

Any masks produced and regulated to protect people from gaseous things simply don't work that way.

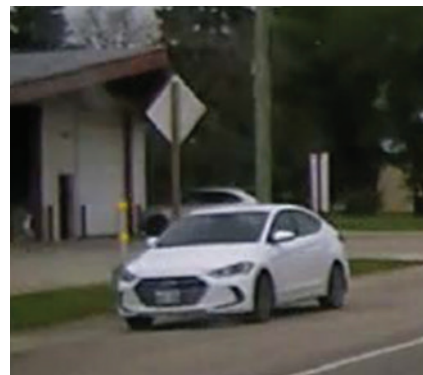
That's the reason why firefighters need to use oxygen tanks. Firefighting is a scenario where a respirator or mask won't help you.

NIOSH respirators also do something fundamentally different than the ordinary person doesn't really think about—they have a valve that allows normal airflow out.

So if you're painting, this is great. You are preventing organic contaminants from entering your lungs, because they are much larger than air, but you don't restrict the amount of air leaving your lungs.

If you have COVID-19, then that [NIOSH respirators] doesn't provide any protection at all against transmitting it to someone else. Even cloth masks would work better.

But the idea that you restrict oxygen to your lungs by wearing masks is essentially a new wives' tale that has no basis in science.



RCMP

RCMP Seek Public's Help in IDing Bank Robber

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

On Wednesday, August 26, the Niverville Credit Union branch in Landmark was robbed—and the RCMP are asking for the public's help in identifying the suspect.

The St. Pierre Jolys RCMP say the suspect entered the branch at 10:00 a.m. and proceeded to demand cash from

an employee. He entered the building dressed in a white-coloured hazmat suit and wearing a respirator over his face. He carried a white-board which he then used to communicate with the employee.

The robbery lasted about two minutes, and no weapon was produced.

The suspect, who left the scene with an undisclosed

amount of cash, was last seen getting into a white car parked near the bank.

Ken Rempel, CEO of Niverville Credit Union, has said that the employee acted according to training and followed the suspect's instructions, thus avoiding injuries. No clients were reportedly in the building at the time. He also has pointed out how rare a robbery is, noting that

it's been more than 20 years since the last time something like this happened.

If you have any information or can identify this suspect, please contact the St. Pierre Jolys RCMP at 204-433-7433. Anonymous tips can also be made through Manitoba Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477) or by visiting www.manitobacrimestoppers.com.

CITIZEN POLL

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

- ☐ Yes. A province-wide mandate would increase mask usage and help lower COVID-19 infections.
- ☐ No. The decision should be left to businesses to decide on their own.
- ☐ Have another opinion? Visit our website to vote and leave us a comment.

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LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

Should the Town of Niverville go further in order to attract and/or accommodate a cannabis retailer?

Yes.	No.
39%	61%

Marijuana should not ever be sold in town, or anywhere. Why should the Town go to even further lengths simply to bring in a store that sells recreational drugs? Seriously, can you people not see the absolute lunacy going on here? People wonder why rural crime has increased as of late; why the moral structure of our communities have degraded so much. Simply look at the obvious! The Town can't even decide whether or a narcotic should be sold in Town, the answer to which anyone with a conscience knows is a flat out "NO"!

-A.Q.G. Rogulzinski

I believe the town of Niverville has done a great job in working with the chamber to grow business and service. They have done a great job in handling the Cannabis process. If there is a market for retail cannabis in the area it will come. This is no longer a Town of Niverville concern as they have fulfilled their commitment and obligation, it is a market/consumer conversation.

Council needs to be replaced next election. It's time for change, the old guard must go. We need people who will take the future, and make it reality today. Not only with this issue but with others. Such as building code amendments. And a mass transit.

I'd love a retail space for marijuana. I'd love to work there and be a customer. It would save me loads of time and effort. I'd be happy to support another local business.

Councils handling of this issue has wasted the time of Cana, Brian Trotter, and that of everyone that showed up to vote. This issue was not an issue till the crying of a few played on councilors emotions. Certain council members owe a lot of people an apology.

Nothing we can say that will make a difference...some councilors didn't want it in the 1st place..obviously doesn't matter to them that the people voted for it.

CBD can help people in this town who need the additional properties. I know some of them and it would be easier if they could just get it here in town.

Yes, and get rid of the alcohol and opiates at the same time lol Those are the killers!

Plain and Simple: One-Room Schoolhouses in Rural Manitoba

By Lesley Gaudry

Throughout rural Manitoba, one-room schoolhouses used to dot the landscape. About 70 years ago, at their peak, there were more than 2,500 such schools on record in the province, and several generations of Manitobans got their start in life in these classrooms. Anyone who's older than 60 years old likely has some vivid memories of attending a one-room school.

It was a memorable era, a time when our parents and grandparents dutifully walked to school each day, uphill both ways, in bare feet, with their bucket lunch kits full of home-made sandwiches and honey treats.

It's an educational experience most students today, accustomed to air conditioning, locker-lined corridors, and large student bodies, wouldn't recognize.

GOVERNANCE

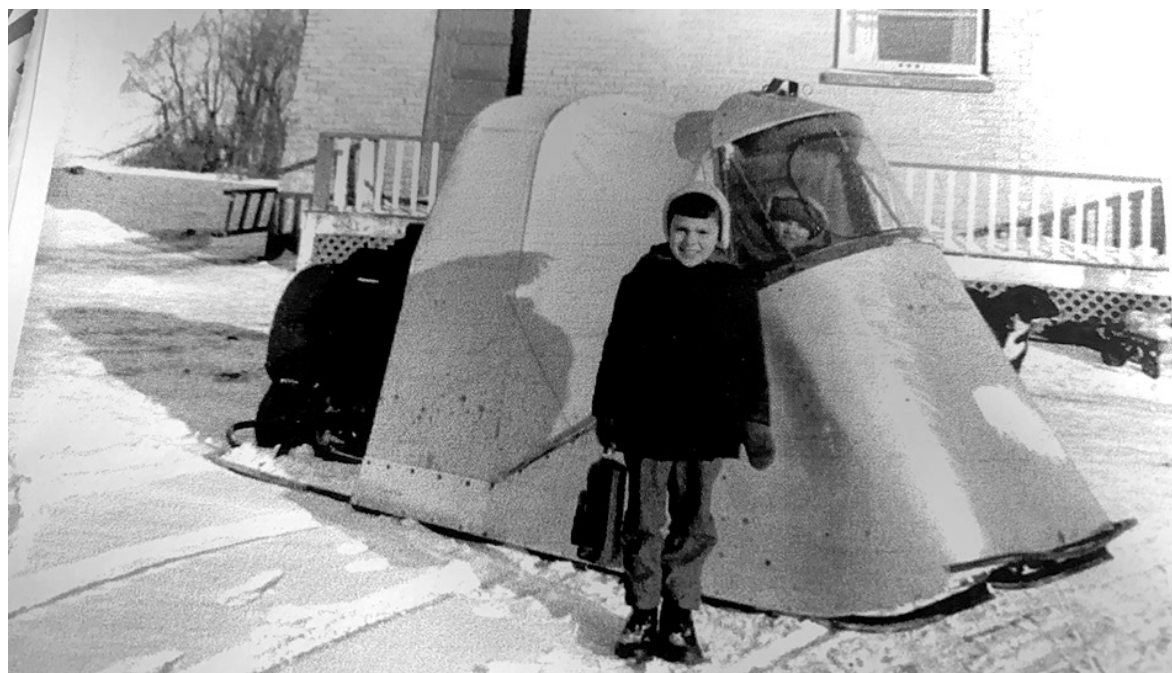
Although Manitoba's Department of Education has always been responsible for the administration of education, the governance of each individual schoolhouse was the purview of a locally elected board of ratepayers. This board was responsible for hiring teachers, levying taxes to provide their salaries, and making sure the school buildings themselves were kept in good working order.

There were often economic disparities between schools. For example, poorer districts had more trouble collecting taxes. In cases like these, school districts would have to apply to the Department of Education for grants to help cover their costs. In certain instances, they would be forced to hire teachers with less experience, to lower the salary.

However, the Department of Education was responsible overall to train teachers, provide core financing, set the curriculum, and ensure that teachers were competent and could follow the syllabus for each grade level, as set out by the province.¹

To keep track of the state of these one-room schoolhouses and make sure they were being kept to a high standard, school inspectors were appointed by the province to service a particular geographic area and visit each school a few times a year and report on it.

In addition to reporting on the schools and the quality of instruction there, these inspectors sometimes hosted training days or summer



Many students contended with icy conditions to get to and from their one-room school.

LORRINE JULIEN

sessions for teachers. They also worked to ensure that the schools encouraged healthy living and kept their properties in good condition.

A book by John Lehr and David McDowell, *Trailblazers*, records that in 1946 school inspectors made around \$2,400 per year.

BILINGUALISM AND CONSOLIDATION

In 1916, Manitoba's governing elite—mainly English Protestants—feared that bilingual schools would eventually lead to balkanization, the process of a larger region or state breaking up into smaller regions or states. This resulted in a change from a bilingual school system to a unilingual system—English only.

At the time, there were a relatively small number of bilingual schools (276) compared to the much larger number of unilingual schools in the province (more than 1,200). In fact, there were large areas completely devoid of bilingual schools.

Lehr and McDowell wrote about the abolishment of Manitoba's bilingual school system, calling it "a casualty of patriotic fervour inflamed by Allied propaganda and driven by resentment of special privileges given to Mennonite conscientious objectors and enemy aliens from Austria-Hungary. A good dose of anti-Catholic and anti-French prejudice also helped to seal the fate of bilingual schools in the province."²

One local woman, Claudette, has a vivid memory of this period of

time. Despite the province having abolished bilingual schools when she was a girl, her teacher still snuck French books into the hands of students.

"I remember we had to hide our French books when the inspector would come around," says Claudette.

Bilingual schools were re-established in 1971, after the Royal Commission on Bilingualism in the 1960s.

The Commission had been established to research the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada. Initially intended to address the question of French language rights, the Commission also examined cultural contributions of other ethnic groups.

The Pierre Elliott Trudeau government then adopted multiculturalism as an official state policy, becoming the first country in the world to do so.³

In the 1950s and 1960s, rural schools were consolidated, marking the end of the era of one-room schoolhouses. During this transitional period, local ratepayers approved the closure of schools and afterward students were bussed to larger schools in urban centres.

This consolidation of one-room schools mainly occurred due to the improvements in the provincial road infrastructure and network. Transportation by bus became more feasible over longer distances.

Parents were concerned about their children having to travel further away for school, but they were

assured there would be better educational opportunities at the consolidated schools.

Not all one-room schools were immediately consolidated, however. One of Manitoba's last one-room schoolhouses—Mason School No. 2149 in the Rural Municipality of Stanley, south of Morden—only closed its doors in 2002.⁴

THE TEACHERS

In 1910, three-quarters of all schoolteachers in rural Manitoba were female. In the mid-1930s, this changed slightly, but not enough to make a significant difference—and the gender divide led to teachers having a lower salary scale overall compared to other professions.

However, it should be noted that teaching was viewed by the immigrant community as being an elite profession, because teachers invariably became spokespeople and representatives for their particular cultural groups. From there, teaching often served as a path into more lucrative careers, like law or medicine, and away from manual labour.

The majority of teachers, being young, single, and female, received their training at Manitoba's Normal School, graduating with third-class, second-class, or third-class teaching certificates. Teachers could start their careers with third-class certificates, if they still lacked training in some Grade 12 subjects. To advance further, however, they needed to

complete additional studies through summer or university courses.

From the 1920s to the 1940s, the Normal School's curriculum included instruction in citizenship, classroom management, English literature and grammar, social studies, physical education, nature study, and music. Practice teaching was carried out in model classrooms and in neighbouring schools in Brandon.

Interestingly, after World War II, there was a shortage of teachers. However, married women didn't return to the profession because it wasn't culturally acceptable. Women were only supposed to fill these vacant positions if they had been widowed.

In addition to curriculum duties, supervising children, filling out report cards, and conducting home visits, teachers made reports for the school inspectors that summarized what each grade was doing at any given time. Most grades ended up learning the same materials, especially in the subjects of science and the arts. It was the only way for most teachers to efficiently handle the multi-grade classroom.⁵

"Teaching was plain and simple," says one teacher, Susan. "We had to teach a variety of grades, depending on the books we had. We assigned work from there. Extra explanations and projects... there wasn't as much of that as there is now."

But was it so plain and simple? Teachers had to look after more than the assigned provincial curriculum. For example, they would supervise the process of kids getting their immunizations—a part of the job their students typically didn't much look forward to.

"St. Adolphe School was a one-room schoolhouse at the corner of Highways 311 and 200," says Ellen. Today, that same property is home to the Whitetail Meadow event centre. "When the public health nurse used to come to give immunizations, the teacher would go and meet her at the entrance of the school. Students who hated needles would sneak out the windows and run away."

The teachers also provided instruction and organization for field days, nature days, outings, natural class, arts and music, Christmas concerts, spring concerts, and local drama productions and debates. Teachers also had to supervise kids during the lunchtime recess and all outdoor play.

"We did Christmas concerts

based on religion, with Christmas carols and nativity scenes,” says Susan. “We also did different plays. I sewed an angel once. Teachers were responsible for all of that.”

“I loved it when we had Christmas concerts at school,” says a former student, Lorraine. Clearly not all aspects of her school’s Christmas concerts were religious in nature. “The highlight was when Santa would appear at the end and give them a paper bag with an orange in it.”

Teaching salaries fluctuated. In the late 1920s, teachers made between \$720 and \$900 per year. The exact amount was dependent on which local school district a teacher worked for.

However, the Great Depression impacted these salaries, bringing the average down to just \$430 per year.

The pension movement actually began during the Depression era. In 1934, teachers started to receive a pension in the form of a retirement deduction, usually \$4.80 per month.

Teachers often lived in the nearby teacherage, a small house or cottage within walking distance of the school. If they did so, they were usually also responsible for heating the schoolhouse in the winter months.

If the teacherage was far from an actual town, teachers were known to catch rides on Eaton’s delivery trucks. Either that, or they’d have to walk for miles to get around or hitch rides from neighbours.

“I taught in a one-room schoolhouse from Kindergarten to Grade Nine,” another teacher, Vern, recalls. “I remember arriving there and thinking we were in a very isolated place. It was cold and the middle of winter—I was greeted by a loaf of bread, half a cherry pie, and one antler from a recent white-tailed deer kill.”

They had to teach anywhere from eight to 44 children for 200 days of the year. Whatever the situation, managing so many students of different ages presented a complicated challenge—especially when it came to troublemakers.

“The boys were teasers and would taunt the teacher sometimes,” says Martha, now 99 years young. “One time, one of the boys stole the strap and ran across the road to bury it in the field... Once the teacher, Rose-Anna Rioux, found out the strap was missing, she was livid. She insisted on finding out who the culprit was. No matter how much she persisted, none of the kids would tell her. Not even the young ones.”

In this particular classroom, there were 32 students from Grades One to Eight, and Martha says they were all very loyal to one another. Not only that, but they were happy to know the strap was gone!

“The teacher intended to keep the kids at school till one of them would tell her where the strap was,” Martha says. “Around suppertime,

her husband, Michel Desrosiers, came by the school to see why his wife had not come home from school yet. He was surprised to see all the students still in school. Even after his wife explained what was going on, he told her to give it up, because at this point the kids were surely not going to tell her where the strap was or who took it.”

Oriole, who taught in a one-room school, has many memories of student shenanigans. One day, while writing on the blackboard, she heard a noise coming from outside the school. Curious, she went out into the yard to see what was going on.

“A couple of boys were into mischief already,” says Oriole. “I rang the bell and all the students came back, but you could see a cloud following this patch of boys. They were smoking and trying to hide it. They thought I didn’t notice.”

That certainly wasn’t the only occasion she had to deal with such troublemakers.

“One time I was riding my bike back to the teacherage and I had to go down a steep bank and up the other side,” she adds. “Halfway down, I was speeding and got a terrible pain on my side. I hung onto the handlebars as best I could and got to the bottom and took my sweater off. A bumble bee flew out! I found out the next day that [a student] had put it on my desk, and it had crawled and hid in my sweater.”

She also remembers almost being hit by a ball that a student threw right through one of the school’s windows—it sailed through the glass and missed her by an inch. “In winter time, I used to teach my students to square-dance at recess,” Oriole says. “You either kept your class busy or they kept you busy.”

THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Many one-room schoolhouses were built based on a blueprint supplied by the provincial government—although this wasn’t always the case, particularly if local ratepayers had a hand in the construction or provided building materials.

The schools usually had one room—or, in some cases, two. They had a woodstove, no plumbing (at least until electrification came into effect during the 1950s), and were furnished with a blackboard, desks, a bell, and a few pictures of the British royal family.

Interestingly, Ukrainian schools had a picture of Taras Shevchenko, a famous poet and artist.

The first task of a teacher was sometimes to start the fire and warm up the schoolhouse if there was no local caretaker. This task might also be assigned to a senior male student, whose job it would be to fill the

furnace with wood or coal.

In winter, understandably, the room started out very cold first thing in the morning.

“When we would arrive in the morning, if the fire didn’t work at first we would wear our outside gear inside and move our desks close to the furnace and then back up as it got warmer,” says Claudette. “Sometimes the school was so cold that the ink froze in the inkwells. We would put them close to the furnace and wait until they thawed before we could use the fountain pens.”

Then, later in the day, the students sometimes helped clean out the furnace.

“In the winter, we would empty the ashes in the yard somewhere,” Claudette adds. “But in the summer, we had to be more careful. If there was dry grass, we had to watch not to start a grass fire.”

Because the schoolhouses had no running water, they usually came equipped with a water pail and a dipper for all the children to use. One

“I taught in a one-room schoolhouse... I remember arriving there and thinking we were in a very isolated place. It was cold and the middle of winter.”

Vern | Former Teacher

family would bring water in the morning, and then a student would act as caretaker and sweep the floor at the end of the day. It wasn’t uncommon for all students to have to tidy up the classroom in the afternoon before anyone was allowed to leave.

Most one-room schools also had an outhouse, a flagpole, and a barn or shed to house the horses used for transportation. The outhouse toilet paper most often consisted of old Eaton’s catalogue pages, or the green wrappers used to cover Christmas oranges.

“I went to a one-room schoolhouse with 42 kids, eight grades, and one teacher,” says Marilyn, a student who attended Plankey Plains School in southern Manitoba. “There was a small barn in the back for horses.”

However, Marilyn’s main memory of school has more to do with an embarrassing academic struggle.

“I remember I got a mistake on our weekly spelling test and had to write it 500 times. ‘Burnt’ was the word I got wrong. I still remember it!”

The schoolyards usually had baseball diamonds or grass fields and the children entertained themselves with balls or tires. There was limited sports equipment, and games usually needed to include all

age groups. Skipping ropes, jacks, and cards were common recreation items.

Gophers often made holes in schoolyards, so students would try to catch them, with the teachers taking the animals’ tails to the local government office afterward. Those government officials paid out one cent per gopher tail!

In the early days, one-room schoolhouses were used for more than just education. They were also the social centres of their respective communities since they would host concerts, dances, picnics, and in some instances church services.

According to an article published by the Manitoba Historical Society, “When rural folk were asked where they lived, many would respond with the name of their school district, because it was the only geographic label with which they were familiar.”⁶

GETTING TO AND FROM SCHOOL

Manitoba’s rural landscape is vast, and the population sparse—and much sparser 70 years ago than it is today. This meant that there had to be a school within a few miles of most families.

In those days, prior to bussing being introduced during the 1950s, children were mostly expected to get themselves to school.

The most common modes of transportation included walking or horse-and-buggy. If you got there by horse-and-buggy, the horse would be kept either in the backyard of the schoolhouse or in the adjacent barn or shed. Students then had to go check on their horses during recesses and lunch hours.

In the winter, a buggy had to be replaced with a sleigh, or “cutter.” Because it was so cold, students had to wrap blankets around themselves to keep warm. It wasn’t unusual for children as young as six to drive a few miles each way, and parents never really knew for sure whether their children had made it safely to school until they got home at the end of the day.

Some students were lucky enough to have a neighbour who would drive them to school with a snowmobile and tarp covering. Other families built their own covered trailers large enough to pile in all the neighbourhood kids.

“In the winter, Dad would drive his snow machine and pull us in a sled along with other kids from the neighbourhood,” says Lorraine. “We would drive anglophone kids and we all became friends even though I didn’t speak much English when I started school. I got more comfortable with them and broke down the language barrier.”

Attendance was never one

hundred percent, since there were so many transportation barriers, such as snowstorms, flooding, and crossing rivers and streams during spring thaw and winter freeze-up.

“When we walked to school in the springtime, there were lots of iced-up ditches,” Susan recalls. “We would run across the ditch and slide and hopefully not break through. If we did, we would get to school and put some of our clothes near the woodstove to dry them out.”

“We used to have to cross the Red River to get to school,” says another student. “We would use a boat and then in the springtime we would sometimes jump from ice float to ice float to get across.”

Martha recalls having to walk one and a half miles to get to school.

“One day, on our way home from school, the road had gotten washed away earlier after a big storm,” Martha says. “When we got to the washed-out part of the road, we were contemplating how to cross it when a man from down the road happened to show up with his team of horses. He got down from his cart. He had big rubber boots and crossed the washed-out part of the road and carried all of us kids, one under each arm, across.”

And of course another transportation barrier was vehicle breakdown. Nowadays, it comes in the form of flat tires. Back then, the same sort of problem took on a new dimension.

“One time, we were taking the horse-and-buggy to school and the wheel fell off,” another student says. “Luckily we weren’t too far away from a neighbouring farm and the man helped us fix it. We were late for school that day and got a talking to... even though it wasn’t our fault.”

Religious and cultural holidays also affected attendance for those of immigrant backgrounds, and in the spring and fall many children had to stay home from school to help out on the family farm either with labour or assisting with childcare of younger siblings.

Kids also missed school often in the winter due to influenza, and they weren’t allowed to go to school if they lacked the proper footwear.⁷

CITATIONS

¹ John Lehr and David McDowell, *Trailblazers: The Lives and Times of Michael Ewanchuk and Muriel (Smith) Ewanchuk* (Winnipeg, MB: Carpathia Publishers, 2011), 99.

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⁴ Gordon Goldsborough, “Manitoba’s Historic One-Room Schoolhouses,” *Manitoba Historical Society*. Date of access: August 30, 2020 (http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/mb_history/74/oneroomschools.shtml).

⁵ Lehr and McDowell, *Trailblazers*.

⁶ Goldsborough, “Manitoba’s Historic One-Room Schoolhouses.”

⁷ Lehr and McDowell, *Trailblazers*, 75.

IN BRIEF

Province Seeks Public Feedback on Rural Crime

By Evan Braun

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The provincial government is seeking feedback from the public on proposed measures to combat rural crime through a new online questionnaire.

"Our government is committed to keeping Manitobans safe wherever they live," says Justice Minister Cliff Cullen. "It will be critical to consult with law enforcement on this issue, but we want to hear from people in rural, northern, and remote areas, as well as other Manitobans, about their experiences with crime, so we can ensure the justice system responds to their needs."

Cullen notes that the province is considering whether to adopt legislation from other provinces to improve Manitoba's trespass and occupiers' liability laws and discourage stolen metal sales.

This could include amendments to the Petty Trespass Act, to ensure the law is easier to enforce and to prevent confrontations between landowners and trespassers, and to the Occupiers Liability Act, to

ensure a landowner's legal responsibility for injury is fair and reasonable when someone is on their property without permission.

"Community safety and crime prevention are among the top priorities of Manitoba municipalities, and local councils have been ringing the alarm on increasing rural crime rates," says Ralph Groening, President of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. "We commend the provincial government for seeking feedback from rural Manitoba to help combat rural crime and protect Manitobans in partnership with municipal officials and stakeholders."

Manitoba Justice has announced that they will engage with a number of stakeholders regarding proposed changes, including law enforcement agencies, municipalities, agricultural organizations, business groups, and Indigenous leadership.

Until the end of October, Manitobans at large are invited to provide feedback through a public engagement questionnaire at <https://engagemb.ca>.

Growing Minds Opens New Location Amid Preschool Funding Concerns



An inside look at the new Growing Minds location in the Niverville High School.

✉ GROWING MINDS CHILDCARE CENTRE

Sara Beth Dacombe

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Growing Minds in Niverville opened its new facility at the high school on July 20. The soft opening was for a limited number of children due to the current situation with COVID-19.

The not-for-profit childcare facility has been operating in Niverville since its first location at the Heritage Centre in September 2008. At that time, it was licensed for 52 children, although they quickly expanded to include 127 spaces for infants and preschool-aged children. Upon launching a program for school-age children, Growing Minds opened a second location on Main Street.

"Based on the number of daily calls and emails we receive, as well as our extensive wait list, we recognized a great need in the community for additional space," says

Rhonda Kenning, executive director of Growing Minds. "The new high school location presented a great opportunity for us to expand the business and continue to provide quality care to the community."

Across the three locations now operated by Growing Minds, they now host 82 spots at the Heritage Centre for children between three months and five years, 45 spots on Main Street for children six to 12 years old, and 74 spots at the Niverville High School for children between three months and five years.

Growing Minds says they have enjoyed an extremely supportive relationship with the Town of Niverville and all their spots are licensed under the provincial government. They are supported financially by the generosity of the community as well as funding provided by parent fees and allotments from the provincial government.

PROVINCES PROPOSES ELIMINATING PARENT FEE CAP

While funding for childcare spaces has remained the same, the province recently revealed that they are considering changes to nursery school programming.

These changes could include the cancellation of the enhanced nursery grant, a program which provides financial support to nursery programs and enables parent fees to be set at \$5 per day. The province is also considering lifting the cap on parent fees to allow unlicensed childcare operators to raise their fees.

"We are keeping up with the current happenings in the childcare field," says Kenning. "Although the elimination of nursery school funding does not impact us directly, the proposed changes to removing the cap on parent fees could have a devastating effect not only on families but

on centres as well."

Kenning explains that childcare centres are under pressure to increase their income in an effort to raise employee wages to more market-competitive levels.

She says the environment being created by the province will certainly increase the competition between centres already impacted by a shortage of early childhood educators.

"Now more than ever, it is imperative that the Government of Manitoba recognize the importance of early childhood education and the important role it plays in supporting families and our economy," she says. "A well-funded public system is of the utmost importance."

But Kenning adds that now is actually a good time for families looking for infant or preschool age care to inquire about open spots.

Although Growing Minds has always had a very long wait list, there may be openings for the high school location, since many families are not yet ready to return to their formal childcare arrangements due to COVID-19, creating openings.

"Families [may not be] ready to return to care, or their situations due to COVID simply do not permit them to commit to a space at this time," says Kenning of the exceptional childcare situation in Manitoba.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Interested parents can contact the Niverville High School location of Growing Minds at 204-797-3185 or by email: office2@growing-mindscc.ca



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The St. Adolphe Child Care Centre in St. Adolphe.

JOEY VILLANUEVA

St. Adolphe Daycare Open, Registration Full

By Sara Beth Dacombe

sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

It's a familiar story by now—these are stressful times for schools, preschools, and childcare centres. As September begins, the St. Adolphe Child Care Centre is also setting itself up to operate differently.

Lana Redmond, director of St. Adolphe Child Care Inc., says the centre is open and operating, but there will be no grand opening event.

"We're open, but we're not having a ribbon-cutting or open house because of the pandemic," says Redmond. "We definitely want to do something to open our doors

to the community and say thank you, but we can't. It's about the protection of the children."

The centre is operating with minimal and essential in-person involvement only. Board meetings are proceeding, but events or meetings the centre usually holds that attract broader attendance, like their annual general meeting or parent welcome events, are all postponed indefinitely.

Parent contact at the dropoff and pickup areas is being strictly regulated, and the other expected social distancing and sanitization protocols are in place as well.

"Like all childcare centres,

we're keeping parental access points and length of time at this points to a minimum," says Redmond. "We've increased our cleaning and sanitization. There's a lot of extra work involved at this time and we're doing our best to ensure that children and families are protected. Of course, when the schools open as well, things will get even tougher."

The centre's registrations are full, but it is a wait list situation. Redmond says inquiries for care can be made by registering your child's name with the Manitoba Child Care wait list or by phoning the centre directly to inquire about availability.

Back to school Stay strong, stay safe



Ron R. Schuler

MLA for Springfield-Ritchot

Ron@RonSchuler.com

STAIN REMOVAL - 101

In 1966 our family was renting a home on the west coast. A suitable small acreage for a family of 8. The landlord, Ed Broadley, had full views of his rental property across his 4 acre slightly sloping strawberry patch. Our parents were meticulous in upkeep, especially since the morning coffee view for Ed was our family and his rental. Oh, not forgetting to mention that every car that came over the hill and down our road had full views of our home as well. As somewhat typical in those early days, the garage walls were finished with an interlocking asphalt shingle – ours light green. One morning, my brother (who must have been reading a war novel) wandered over to the garage wall with a stick and a gallon can of roofing tar. As only Leonardo da Vinci could, he meticulously painted a four foot square swastika, perfectly facing Ed Broadleys living room window. I can tell you now that there is nothing that takes the tar stain out of a light green asphalt shingle, as my father feverishly tried. It reminds us of the stains of sin that seem to haunt us and seem so visible. We try to clean them, scrub them, bury them, but the scourge of them is hauntingly apparent. It's not till we come to the cross and grasp what Robert Lowry understood in 1876 when he penned the questions in song "What can wash away my sin? What can make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, precious is the flow, that cleanses white as snow." You can be clean. It's free for the asking. 1 John 1:9 says "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Romans 10:9 "That if you shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God has raised Him from the death, thou shalt be saved." Salvation is Gods wonderful free gift to man.

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.

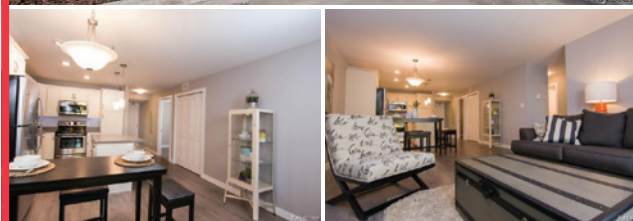
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Local Brewers Serve Up Craft Beer

By Sara Beth Dacombe

sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

Local talent is a trademark of Bistro 290, an eatery in Niverville where two local men were recently able to promote their company at a craft beer tasting night.

On August 13, Michael Raftis and Scott Sawatzky showcased all the artisanal offerings of Trans Canada Brewing Co. (TCB) at one of the Bistro's many events planned to highlight great local food and people's passion for it. The events have been a big success.

"I live in Niverville and first heard about the Bistro in the Citizen newspaper," says Raftis. "I was going to talk with them about carrying Trans Canada beer, and to my pleasant surprise they ordered before we first made contact!"

TCB's brewery, taproom, and retail store is located in the southwest corner of Winnipeg, on Kenaston Boulevard, but Raftis has often heard from rural customers that they would like to see representatives from local breweries more often.

Having events like this one in our local communities enables people to stay close to home while still being able to enjoy the things they love. Craft beer, in particular, is a passionate hobby for many, and one that often comes with a lot of research and awareness in the consumer to cultivate such a deep appreciation for both art and taste.

TCB says they always make sure to give beer enthusiasts a top-notch experience. At their August 13 event, their



Michael Raftis and Scott Sawatzky bring their Trans Canada brews to Bistro 290.

SHEREEN RASHWAN

attention to detail inspired them to use locally brewed Negash Coffee to create a flavour-infused beer with a unique touch.

"I heard a couple comments about how it was great to have something like this so close to home," says Raftis. "And there were a lot of comments around the special beer cask that we brought, a Maibock aged for two years in bourbon barrels and infused with cold steeped Yirgacheffe coffee from Negash Coffee. The majority of people mentioned they have not seen a cask before, or experienced an actual cask being tapped in-person. For a stronger, flavoured beer, surprisingly a lot of people mentioned they enjoyed it."

The one-of-a-kind coffee-infused lager was the creation of Sawatzky. However, TCB is also home to a core line-up of beers that includes a light amber ale, a pilsner, a blueberry ale, and an IPA.

Raftis says that TCB loves to introduce people to new kinds of beer they might not have tried before—and they develop different seasonal

beers throughout the year to keep things interesting.

For example, fruity beers are becoming more popular among a variety of beer connoisseurs and the company recently featured a summery varietal called Country Sour Guava.

"For obvious reasons, there have not been many events this year, and we are still developing our approach to these events," Raftis says. "It is an evolving situation and we are reviewing as an organization on a weekly basis and making adjustments when needed."

TCB's tasting event was neither the first craft beer night hosted at Bistro 290, nor will it be the last.

Owner Shereen Rashwan explains that the unique events the restaurant has been hosting since she first opened her doors in the spring have all been based on local interest.

"Every craft beer night is going to feature new beers," says Rashwan. "We want to showcase as many local breweries as possible! The beers are both purchased by the Bistro and donated by the

respective vendors. Our first craft beer night that took place on July 16 and showcased Little Brown Jug, Lake of the Woods, and One Great City."

Bistro 290 has previously hosted special events showcasing foods from the Mennonite tradition and cuisine from El Salvador. August events included gin-tasting from Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits as well as Capital K Distillery.

"[The Mennonite event] was the previous owner Louise Stott-Hiebert's ideal!" says Rashwan. "On October 3, the Bistro will be welcoming Winnipeg artist Gabriela Ocejo and wine expert Flavia Fernandez Fabio for our Argentina night. What do we mean by this? Music, wine, and a sample of a traditional Argentinean dish."

Rashwan says that tickets to all these events are going to be presold. They can be purchased either at the Bistro or online. Preselling tickets means the event organizers can make sure they have the appropriate amount of supplies for each event and can create a seating plan to ensure that all groups are spaced six feet apart.

She adds that the restaurant will still offer patio seating for regular business, but in-house dining will not be available during event times.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ The Bistro is open to hearing from creative individuals who have ideas for food-related events. Contact shereen@bistro290.com with a brief description of your event idea. More details about Bistro 290's upcoming events can be found on their Facebook page.

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First Peek Inside Niverville's CRRC

Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

On Tuesday, August 18, the Town of Niverville offered a tour for the media to check in on the progress of the new Community Resource and Recreation Centre (CRRC), which will reach completion in the spring of 2021.

This is a delay from the original projection, which had been this upcoming fall.

Steve Fast, owner of general contractor Von Ast Construction, explained that the delays are due in part to supply shortages due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Aluminum became hard to come by for a while, as it was being used to support the plexi-glass shields many businesses were putting up for COVID," said Fast. "But now we're back up and running. Supplies from the States kept moving, though, as the borders were not closed to building materials, which we're thankful for."

Fast went on to describe the design-build model used to plan out the energy-efficient building and its progress to date. So far the centre's foundation, supports, and roof are nearly complete. The only concrete remaining to be poured is the rink floor, where the ice will sit, and the indoor corridor that will link the centre to the Niverville High School. Once those are complete, the foundation will be considered to be done.

The interior is now beginning to take shape, including the arena space and masonry walls for dressing rooms, the second level in the middle of the building, and the multiuse fieldhouse on the opposite side of the arena.

The large multiuse fieldhouse and arena spaces are separated by thick cinderblocks which form the walls of the dressing rooms and bathrooms. The floor above the dressing rooms are pre-cast hollow core concrete that were placed on top of the cinderblock walls individually by a crane to a



The team behind the CRRC.

✉ SARA BETH DACOMBE

high degree of precision.

The second floor space above the dressing rooms will house breakout rooms and meeting rooms. A running track will follow the perimeter of the second level of the fieldhouse.

The fully accessible building will also have a historical space on the second floor which will present Niverville's growth in a public exhibit, curated by a University of Alberta professor. This exhibit will feature a glass wall, enabling visitors to view the indoor playground.

A geothermal energy system, provided by a company called Earth4U, will support the heating and cooling of the building, making it much more efficient to run than the existing arena. The pipes are currently visible at the north side of the arena space, but they run underneath the building and football fields by the high school to convert the heat of the ground into energy, controlling the temperature of the entire centre.

Ductwork for the building is just beginning to get underway.

"[Geothermal pipes] are buried underground and provide heating and cooling for air so that you don't need to use natural gas or

electricity," said Town of Niverville CAO Eric King.

"And it will be less costly to cool the ice area in this arena than the old arena," said town councillor John Funk.

Fast also spoke to the efficiency of the building being able to keep the ice area cool and the rest of the building warm. "The panels for the walls of the building are thick," he said. "Four-inch by 22-inch. It's an entirely different build."

The area known to the builders as the fieldhouse will be home to a gymnasium-like space with hardwood floors, but it will be customizable for meetings and other public functions. The town foresees that it will be used for large group gatherings, such as high school graduations, concerts, town receptions, and Remembrance Day ceremonies—just to name a few possibilities.

Next on the list for the construction plan is the electrical work, which has so far been roughed in. Pipes have been installed in the ground, ready for the lines to be fed through, and transformers are ready for hookup from the exterior. Steel studs and more interior framework are also scheduled to go up shortly. And the interior design plans have already been

finalized by the design-build team and the town.

The arena is intended to support up to Midget 3 hockey, but where it will really shine is in its support for community recreation.

"This is grassroots," said King. "This isn't about having all 22-year-olds who hope to be in the NHL next year. This is about five-year-olds having the same opportunity to play on ice as the 22-year-olds. And it's not just about sports, at the end of the day. It's about community and education. The networking with the high school is invaluable, too."

The CRRC's mandate is to serve the needs of the entire community, people of all ages, year-round. This became especially evident as the team talked about where the commercial kitchens will be located, as well as the corridor link to the high school, enabling students to enjoy the building, receive a variety of other types of training, and conduct project work in the spacious and unique centre.

"Thirty-two years ago, when I first ran for council, this was on my platform, that we were going to build this," said a visibly pleased Funk.

IN BRIEF

Virtual Terry Fox Run Set for September

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

For its fortieth anniversary, the annual Terry Fox Run is coming to southeast Manitoba, including Niverville and the communities of Ritchot. The event will take place on Sunday, September 20—and, like so many events scheduled this year, will take place virtually, with runners uniting in spirit if not in person.

"Families can participate safely wherever they'd like—around the block, through the neighbourhood, or in their own backyard," says Breanne Nemez, an events coordinator for the Terry Fox Foundation. "Whether families choose to walk, ride, swim or skateboard, the common goal will be to raise much-needed funds for Canadian cancer research and to honour Terry's 40-year legacy."

In 1980, Manitoba-born Terry Fox began his Marathon of Hope and brought Canadians together to help improve the lives of those battling cancer. Canadians have since raised more than \$800 million for cancer research.

In an effort to support the virtual run, a new Terry Fox Foundation app was launched on July 28 to keep users inspired and connected.

"Terry always wanted every person to be able to participate, no matter their age, ability, or fitness level, which is why the run is non-competitive with no minimum distance required," says Nemez. "Families are invited to register for the 2020 event and unite in spirit with Canadians from coast to coast, to coast with a common goal to end cancer."



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Commentary

We Need to Stop Demonizing Antidepressants

By Daniel Dacombe

All over Facebook, you'll see these posts by well-meaning, health-conscious people: an inspirational photo, perhaps a river, or a forest, or a sunset—something peaceful. It catches your eye as you scroll through your feed, not just because of the image but because of the words, superimposed overtop, something like "Nature is the best antidepressant."

This type of meme, one that disparages antidepressants or other medications for mental illness (and the people who take them), is alarmingly common on social media.

These memes tend to focus on nature, exercise, or natural remedies as an alternative to antidepressants, and most of them seem relatively benign. Nothing is wrong with going for a walk in nature, after all.

But others are more aggressive—calling these medications poison, or worse, and claiming that those who take them are weak. Some memes even spread the viewpoint that you cannot hold Christian or other religious beliefs if you're taking these medications.

While memes are rarely a good source of information, if we're exposed to them frequently enough they often take root in our minds.

But if you're one of those people who have had to take antidepressants or antipsychotics, they may cause you very real psychological harm at a time when you're already in a precarious state of mental health.

It would be impossible to report all of these memes or remove them from Facebook—they are, unfortunately, a part of our social media landscape.

What we can do, though, is spread accurate information about

antidepressants and other medications for mental illnesses, and challenge misinformation and stigma when we find it.

And in order to do so, we need to properly understand the nature of mental illness and the history of the medications we use to treat them.

Our brains are neurochemical machines. If we feel something in our brains, it's because a chemical is causing it. Our feelings are made up of these chemicals, called neurotransmitters, and they exist in a delicate balance in our brains.

If the brain has low levels of certain neurotransmitters, it can cause us to experience very negative feelings.

For instance, the neurotransmitter serotonin is responsible for regulating a person's mood, memory, and behaviour. When we have low serotonin, we tend to experience a condition commonly called depression.

By contrast, if the brain has high levels of other neurotransmitters, it can cause other effects, such as psychosis—for example, seeing or hearing things that aren't real. These days, this is well understood in the fields of medicine and psychology.

For centuries, however, we were unaware of the neurochemical nature of our brains. Mental health issues were blamed on moral or spiritual causes. Especially in cases where an individual experienced symptoms of psychosis, it was often blamed on demon possession. It was rare for people to seek out other causes.

Though there were some who did, such as Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi, a ninth-century Islamic physician who was one of the first in history to suggest viewing mental illness from a medical perspective.

Even into the modern era, when we began to understand that mental illnesses were disorders of the brain, we lacked understanding of the causes. This resulted in a shortage of proper treatment, and even into the twentieth century we often resorted to placing individuals into so-called "asylums."

These institutions did little more than house the individuals who were, in some cases, experiencing such severe psychosis that they were unable to function in daily life. The facilities were underfunded and understaffed. The doctors and nurses did their best, but without proper treatment they could only do so much.

Indeed, mentally ill people were vanishing into these institutions, never to be seen again by their families and friends.

And then an accident happened. During the 1930s and 1950s, a French pharmaceutical company searched for superior medications for different ailments. They synthesized a variety of chemicals, including thiorazine, which was used as a sedative for surgical patients.

However, one French doctor, named Dr. Henri Laborit, took note of some unexpected effects of thiorazine on some surgical patients who also exhibited psychotic symptoms. The medication, in fact, seemed to lessen the effects of their mental illness.

So on January 19, 1952, Laborit administered thiorazine to a patient as a primary treatment for psychosis for the first time—and it worked.

Other doctors began using thiorazine for their psychotic patients, and those patients, too, began to improve.

Antidepressants were discovered by accident around the same time by two American physicians, Dr. Irving Selikoff and Dr. Edward

Robitzek. They, too, were searching for something completely different—in their case, an anti-tuberculosis drug—and in the process they discovered that the chemicals they were using seemed to improve the moods of the people taking them.

Two psychiatrists, Dr. Max Lurie and Dr. Harry Salzer, soon learned of this discovery and started administering these chemicals to their patients—and it worked.

It worked so well that they came up with a name for this new category of drug: antidepressants.

The news spread and more and more doctors began using these medications, which soon made their way into the asylum system.

The floodgates opened. People housed in these institutions suddenly could be discharged, sent home to their families.

In 1950, more than 550,000 people lived in the asylum system in the United States. That number dropped to 337,000 in 1970, 150,000 in 1980, and only 120,000 in 1990. These drops came despite steady increases in the general population.

The discovery of thiorazine has been compared to the discovery of penicillin—it changed the landscape of mental health forever. Lives were restored. Asylums were shut down.

It was like a miracle. This is not to say that these medications don't have their issues. Thiorazine had crippling side effects, and the early antidepressants (which are now classified as MAO inhibitors) sometimes did more harm than good.

But it was a start.

Now, we have a better understanding of the drugs we prescribe. Modern antidepressants mostly fall into a category called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), which boost the level of

serotonin available to the brain and allow people to function in society instead of being institutionalized. While the drugs do have some side effects, they are generally mild.

And despite what the Facebook memes say, these antidepressants are not addictive.

In fact, modern antipsychotics are very carefully calibrated and allow many people to maintain normal lives and relationships. Life is better now for people with mental health symptoms—better than it's ever been—thanks to these medications.

In one respect, those memes have a kernel of truth. Going out into nature, getting more exercise, and participating in a religious community can all improve our mental health, it's true. But no amount of jogging can bring your serotonin up to a normal level if it's greatly depleted. No amount of trees will alleviate the symptoms of psychosis.

Many people need the help offered by medicine and psychology in order to maintain a normal life. This doesn't make them weak any more than an individual with diabetes is weak for needing insulin. Why would we judge one and not the other?

So when you see memes or other posts on social media that speak negatively about antidepressants or the people who take them, consider taking the opportunity to provide some education. Speak out on behalf of those who may be scrolling by and could be needing help with their mental health. They may need your voice more than you know, and you could be the one who pushes someone to finally seek treatment—treatment that will work.

Because from what we've learned, the best antidepressant is actually an antidepressant.

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The Crystal Springs Hutterite colony southeast of Ste. Agathe.

GOOGLE

A Letter to My Neighbour

By Lesley Gaudry

Dear Neighbour,

I am sitting here writing this letter at 10:00 p.m., utterly exhausted. However, despite how tired I am, I can't help but feel grateful—grateful that my community has some pretty amazing people in it, including a Hutterite colony just south of us.

I am not Hutterite, nor could I be, but I respect their culture and their great sense of kindness, faith, and citizenship.

Hutterites show up.

You may have noticed that Hutterites have gotten a bad rap lately in the media and people are quick to blame and discriminate against them (or remain complicit). Some colonies have experienced hate calls and even threats against their families.

What I have experienced over the last 18 hours is actually the opposite. I refuse to linger on those sentiments of hurt and discrimination.

Instead we pulled into action and created a community of care.

My community wants the Hutterite community to know that we understand they are going through some very trying times right now with lockdowns, loss of income due to tradeshow closures and loss of business, sickness, and loss of workers to complete communal tasks and labour that would normally be done with efficiency like no other during harvest time.

Yes, we know that the Hutterite community is having a really tough time right now. COVID doesn't discriminate, and neither should we.

I'll repeat that: COVID doesn't discriminate, and neither should we.

We wish our friends and neighbours the best rest and recovery possible and we hope that they know, despite us not being able to be there in person to help them, that we are sending them our love, prayers, and healing energies.

More than 30 people and four local businesses in the last 18 hours have donated goods and treats for a community care package to send to our neighbours.

Oh, and if we never took the time to properly thank you—because in true Hutterite spirit, you are too humble or don't want the recognition—let us say:

- Thank you for volunteering to make hundreds of face masks for people all over Manitoba, Canada, and in other countries when the urgent need was there in March. You worked into the night, still woke up for your children in the morning, and never complained. You also asked for nothing in return.

- Thank you for making and donating copious amounts of food for community and healthcare events when you could have been playing baseball or going on family picnics.

- Thank you for volunteering hundreds of hours, at all times of day and night, to assist our firefighters with bushfires as part of the Eastman Mutual Aid District.

- Thank you for donating, year after year, to the Canadian Blood Services, which has provided countless patients with lifesaving blood and blood products. Since January 2020, 81 Hutterite colonies have regularly donated blood in 15 mobile donor centres. Combined, they booked more than 550 appointments. It is fair to ask, when is the last time we went

out of our way to donate blood during a pandemic?

- Thank you for volunteering year after year during our flood crises to sandbag and provide sandwiches. You come with smiles and the strongest and fastest sandbagging technique I have ever witnessed. You also ask for nothing in return.

Nobody wants this pandemic and no one wants to feel like a target because they've been exposed to or have developed COVID.

Again, COVID doesn't discriminate, and neither should we.

So from myself and the rest of the community that cares, we are happy you are our neighbours. We thank you for all that you do, and we are here for you.

It is my hope that in the future, when we are out in the community and we see our Hutterite neighbours, we won't stare and walk the other way.

It is my hope that we will realize that we are all in this together. We can adhere to social distancing guidelines, smile underneath our masks, and nod to each other. We can acknowledge each other as people and as neighbours.

And maybe one day soon, hopefully in the not so distant future, we can line up early at the St. Malo Farmers Market on a Saturday morning to taste those delicious Hutterite homemade donuts. We will conduct business together again in person, and we will say a heartfelt thank you for all that you do for our community.

With love and prayers,
—Your Neighbours
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Reminder that **September 30th, 2020 5:00 p.m.** is the deadline for property tax, waste collection and utility payments in the Town of Niverville. Early payments are encouraged as procedures for payments may change due to COVID-19.

Please consider using one of the following contactless options for submitting your payment: Mail to: (along with the bottom portion of your tax statement(s)) to: **Town of Niverville, Box 267, Niverville, Manitoba R0A 1E0.**

Drop Box: located at the front of the administration office at 329 Bronstone Drive. The drop box is checked Monday to Friday and at 5 p.m. on the due date. Payments dropped off after 5 p.m. on September 30, 2020 will be considered late and will be subject to a penalty. Please make cheque or money order payable to the Town of Niverville.

Internet banking: electronically through some financial institutions. To ensure electronic payments will not be subject to a late penalty, **please allow at least 3 business days for bank processing.**

Online Portal: niverville.ws.townsuite.com. Sign up key is provided on the back of your water/sewer bill.

****Statements currently showing arrears will have additional penalties – please call the Town Office or log into your eServices account for a current balance. Note that penalties are posted on the first of each month.**

Questions? Contact feedback@whereyoubelong.ca or call 204-388-4600

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Upcoming Events

2020 Golf Tournament

Be a part of the Southeast Commerce Group's first event as a multi-regional Chamber of Commerce. Gather your co-workers or register as an individual for an afternoon of networking, fun, and of course golfing! A fun filled afternoon with golfing challenges and prizes to be won! Golfers will play a 9-hole game. Tournament will be held in a Texas scramble format with shotgun start. Players will be served a hot dog lunch prior to tee-off. A steak meal and award ceremony will take place in the clubhouse after the tournament.

- Date: Thursday September 17th, 2020
- Location: Lorette Golf Course, 150 Fairway Dr, Lorette, MB
- Registration begins at: 12:30PM
- Tee Time: 1:30PM

Email info@southeastcommerce.com or visit www.southeastcommerce.com/shop to reserve your tickets and sponsorship opportunities. Tickets will be available for purchase until Tuesday September 8th, 2020 at 11:59PM

We ask that players self-screen prior to attending the event with the Shared Health Self Screening Tool and do not attend if feeling ill. Social distancing protocols will be followed according to the Province of Manitoba's Public Health Orders

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Jordan and Heather St. Cyr, with their four children.

JORDAN ST. CYR

Masters Tourney Golfers Raise Money for Local Family

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

A group of local golfers gathered on Sunday, August 16 for their annual Masters tournament. In past years, this has been a week-end-long competition held at an out-of-town course. This year, for the first time in the event's 18-year history, the tournament had to be scaled down, with COVID restrictions in place.

"This year, it was a one-day event held in our own backyard at Old Drovers Run in Niverville," says organizer Ray Dowse. "It's the first time we've played the Niverville Masters at the home course."

While the players of this annual tournament inevitably have a great time, and this year was no exception despite the changes wrought by the pandemic, the principal goal of the event is to raise money for a local family in need.

For the 2020 tournament, the players were able to raise \$6,540 for Jordan and Heather St. Cyr, and specifically for their daughter Emery.

Emery was born nearly two years ago with a rare brain condition called Sturge-Weber syndrome, a neurological disorder which is marked by a distinctive

stain on the forehead, scalp, or around the eye.

The day after Emery was born, an MRI revealed the condition, and her parents were informed that the left side of her brain was dying. The diagnosis changed the St. Cyr family forever.

In her first year, Emery endured multiple seizures and many trips to the emergency room. After trial and error, her doctors identified a medication that, when taken twice a day, helps to control the symptoms.

As a part of her treatment, she must be taken to many medical appointments to monitor the progression of her condition, and her symptoms are in a constant state of flux. The family regularly sees new specialists, and new treatments and surgeries are always on the table.

The money which has been donated will be used to help with the mounting costs of Emery's care and offer some security in the face of so much uncertainty.

"We continue to be blown away by the love and support shown to us," Jordan St. Cyr says on behalf of his family. "Thank you so much to the Niverville Masters tournament for honoring our family with this gift. We are grateful beyond words and humbled to be a part of such

a great community."

In total, the Niverville Masters has raised more than \$53,000 in the past 18 years, according to Dowse.

"About seven years ago, we started raising funds for specific families and to make a difference for those who may have needs or demands in their lives that many of us don't experience," Dowse says.

In the earlier years of the competition, the golfers had raised money for a generic charity, although this strategy changed in 2013.

"Since that change, the tournament has developed a greater purpose than just the golf event, with the players really stepping up their contributions to help make an impact," Dowse adds. "This year we had 40 players total, averaging out to approximately \$165 donation per player."

As for the event itself, the golfers took to the course under sunny skies—although the strong wind presented a challenge.

Two golfers in particular finished with extremely strong scores. Travis Mason took first place, winning the Green Jacket for the first time. He shot six birdies, as well as an eagle, to arrive at a final score of 80. Ryan Billey came in a close second, with a

score of 81.

A secondary prize, the Gold Jacket, is given to the player who shoots the lowest net score when applying handicaps. Collin Magne took that title this year, shooting a net 62. Ryan Billey also came in second in this category, with a net score of 66.

In the 18-year history of the tournament, there have been nine previous winners—all of whom participated in 2020. The past winners teed off each hole from the championship tee box, whereas the rest of the field used the regular tee box.

Due to the pandemic, sitdown food service wasn't possible this year, but Niverville Pizzeria and the local Dairy Queen stepped forward to provide food at the course during the round itself.

"Brad, the course pro at Old Drovers Run, ensured all COVID protocol was adhered to," says Dowse. "Also he was very hospitable to the group, helping us run a very successful event this year using significantly different tee-off locations on the front nine and back nine, making it feel as though 18 different holes were played during the day even though it is a nine-hole course... Overall, it was a great day of golf!"

IN BRIEF

First-Time Winners Clinch ODR Men's League

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The men's league at Old Drovers Run in Niverville has a new pair of first-time champions. After a competitive final round of golf on Thursday, August 27, the trophy went to Cory Funk and Kurt Funk.

This year's playoffs began with 32 teams. In the first round, the two-time defending champions Ray Dowse and Bryan Trotter were ousted early, dropping their game against Richard Phelan and Joey Mayers.

Kurt and Corey Funk started off their playoff run with a win against Greg Griffin and Neil Friesen in the first round. In round two, they knocked off Matt Exner and Keith Parsons. The pair then played well and notched a victory against Chris Loeppky and Trevor Batenshuk in round three.

For the semifinals, the tournament came down to four teams: Kurt Funk and Cory Funk, Colin Magne and Darren Petty, Travis Mason and Dwight Heppner, and Jeff Spencer and Ryan Brunel.

The Funk duo came out on top against Magne and Petty, moving on to the final round against Mason and Heppner. The Funks brought their A-game and had given themselves a sizable lead after six holes. The win was sealed on the eighth hole, with a timely birdie from Cory Funk.

The 2019 champions, Dowse and Trotter, were on hand after the round to present Kurt and Cory Funk with their 2020 men's league championship trophy.

"We were grateful that there was a league this year," says Kurt Funk. "Thanks to ODR and the men's night guys for always making it fun."

Cory Funk echoed this sentiment: "We were very happy to be involved in the men's league at ODR Golf this year. Thank you to everyone who puts work into making it happen."

This year, a total of 68 players participated in the league.



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The **Citizen**

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Save the Date – the 40th Anniversary Virtual Terry Fox Run is happening in NIVERVILLE on September 20th! This year we are uniting in spirit, not in person – One Day, Your Way! Join us wherever you are – in your neighbourhood, backyard, down the street or around the block. Walk, ride, swim or skateboard! Visit terryfox.org/run to register your family to help raise funds for Canadian cancer research while honouring a Canadian hero.

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Colouring Contest



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Last Months Winner: Vashdeep, age 5



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