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LOCAL NEWS

Doctors Awarded for Excellence

■ A pair of family physicians, Drs. Mairi and Chris Burnett, were the recipients this past month of Medals of Excellence from Doctors Manitoba. The married couple have been practicing in Niverville for many years.

Details on Page 3

LOCAL NEWS

New Pharmacy Opens in Niverville

■ Red River Co-op has unveiled its new pharmacy in Niverville, its sixth in the province and first in a rural area.

Details on Page 6

LOCAL NEWS

Coming to Grips with Vaccine Hesitancy

■ Despite clear scientific evidence and benefits, many people in our communities are not yet getting their shot.

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COMMENTARY

Learning About More than Academics

■ Are students falling behind due to disruptions this year? One local teacher says we're asking the wrong questions.

Details on Page 16



Boaters, Get Ready to Launch in Ste. Agathe

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NIVERVILLE, we are excited to serve your great community!

Red River Co-op's second stand-alone pharmacy is now open at the Heritage Centre in Niverville! We already have a gas bar in the community and now we are excited to add a pharmacy as well. That means you can use the same Red River Co-op number you use for your fuel and earn equity on the full price of your prescriptions. In 2020, members earned 4% back on the full cost of their prescriptions. Whether it be prescriptions, hygiene items or snacks, Red River Co-op members can use their member number for all purchases made in the pharmacy.

The pharmacy will be open:
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opioid replacement therapy, blister packing and compounding services.

Inside the Red River Co-op pharmacy, you'll find all the personal care items you'd expect from a quality pharmacy. We also sell toiletries, infant care items, sunscreen and bug sprays, assorted cards and gift wrapping and gift cards, and a wide variety of snacks and drinks.

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Niverville Doctors Awarded for Excellence

Chris and Mairi Burnett's integrated health care approach sets them apart.

By Dave Baxter

A pair of doctors who have been fixtures in the local healthcare community for more than a decade have been awarded and honoured for the work they do to deliver care to the residents of Niverville.

On May 10, it was announced that Drs. Mairi and Chris Burnett had been awarded Medals of Excellence by Doctors Manitoba, an organization that works to provide resources and support to physicians working in Manitoba.

The married couple have operated the Open Health Niverville clinic in town for years and Mairi says one of the things that has always set them apart from other practices in the province is the consistent sharing of ideas and information between all the physicians who work at the clinic.

"There is just a great team spirit here," Mairi says. "And it's great because we are all willing to cross boundaries and knock on the doors of those with other areas of expertise and say, 'Can I talk to you about this patient and what they might need?' When you have that really good interaction back and forth, ultimately the patients get better care. We are utilizing the experience of everyone to help us care for our patients."

The couple moved to Niverville in 2005 and began working to set up their practice.

Mairi says that from the moment they arrived in town they knew they wanted to create a healthcare clinic where physicians worked as a team and shared ideas and knowledge.

"Chris and I really like the concept of integrated healthcare and the integrating and mingling of all the services," Mairi says. "So we got to work on creating our vision and it worked very well, and the practice took off at the same time that the community was really growing."

Mairi adds that she and her husband are sometimes uncomfortable with the idea of awards, as they



Drs. Mairi and Chris Burnett had been awarded Medals of Excellence by Doctors Manitoba, an organization that works to provide resources and support to physicians working in Manitoba.

simply do what they do to provide care and not to be recognized.

However, they both very much appreciate this particular honour and what it stands for.

"It was a huge honour," Mairi says. "My husband is really not into awards and honours, but I truly believe he is a visionary and his vision for the clinic has come to life over the years and it's not just a vision anymore. To see that develop has been great for us, and we have been working as a team to facilitate this, so this is really a team honour for everyone involved with the clinic."

Mairi had her own health scare recently, as in the fall of 2019 she was diagnosed with multiple myeloma, a cancer of the plasma cells in her bone marrow.

She took a leave of absence at that time but returned to work in November 2020, as the cancer is now in remission.

Mairi says that the support of friends, colleagues, and the residents of Niverville have helped her to get through what was one of the most difficult periods of her life.

"That was a real challenge, but there was so much support," she says. "The town and the people

have all been amazing. They have been so supportive."

The diagnosis also left the future of the clinic in doubt as the couple weren't sure if they would have the means to keep it running.

But in the winter of 2020 the Town of Niverville stepped in and purchased the clinic to allow it to stay open and allow the Burnetts to continue working.

"It's been an excellent partnership, and it's allowed us to keep doing what we do and continue providing care in the community," Mairi says.

In a statement, Doctors Manitoba president Dr. Kristjan Thompson says that the organization feels it is important to recognize local doctors for the work they do, which is even more important this year as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc on our healthcare systems.

"In this pandemic year, we are celebrating doctors who have helped protect us from, and others who have continued to care for their patients despite, the disruptions and uncertainty the pandemic has caused," Thompson says.

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Coming to Grips with Vaccine Hesitancy

Local pastor says his role in talking about vaccines is limited.

By Dave Baxter

A Niverville pastor says he is open to speaking with members of his congregation about the COVID-19 vaccines—but he also doesn't necessarily think his role is to change people's minds. And many many people's minds simply won't be changed.

David Funk is the lead pastor at Niverville Community Fellowship, a congregation that he says has a wide array of demographics ranging from young families to seniors in their eighties and nineties.

Since it was first announced that approved COVID-19 vaccines would be available in Manitoba, Funk says that he has seen some in his congregation eager to get vaccinated, while others are hesitant to get the shot.

"We are seeing that hesitancy," Funk says. "There has definitely been some hesitancy, there is nervousness, and sometimes there is outright opposition."

Funk did not want to comment on specific reasons he has heard from some in his congregation about why they are hesitant, since many of those reasons have been shared with him in private conversations.

However, he did say that a lot of hesitancy comes from a belief system rather than because of health concerns over possible side effects from the vaccines.

"I would say a common denominator has been some kind of scepticism or distrust of who the information about the vaccines is coming from," Funk says.

And with vaccine misinformation and conspiracy theories running rampant online, Funk says he can try to get the correct information out to his congregation about what is true and what isn't, while also realizing that some will never be convinced.

"My role as a pastor is not to address people on the level of if you are right or wrong necessarily, it's just not what I am there for, and it's



David Funk, lead pastor at Niverville Community Fellowship, said that he believes he is doing all that he can to convince those in his congregation to get vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus.

DAVE BAXTER

rarely effective," Funk says. "If there is hesitancy and it is really strong, I can talk until I'm blue in the face and I am not going to change their minds. My strategy if someone is concerned is to encounter them as a human being, and give them a safe, compassionate ear, and let them know I want to understand where they are coming from, and understand they are loved and appreciated no matter what decision they make."

Funk was asked if he believes he has a responsibility to try and counter information that he knows is false when it comes up from members of his congregation.

"I wish it was that simple, but I'm afraid it's not," Funk says. "In many

cases, they have already got their sources of information that they consider authoritative, and I'm not going to change their minds."

Funk added that he personally believes in the effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines, and he hopes that through personally being vaccinated he can be an example to others who are opposed or on the fence.

"They know I have been vaccinated, so that tells them a lot," Funk says. "We, as leaders, can set a positive example by getting the vaccine ourselves."

While Funk has seen vaccine hesitancy among some in his congregation, the manager of a Niverville-based not-for-profit says he

is seeing that same concern and hesitancy from many of those whom he works with and deals with on a regular basis.

"I know there is still quite a bit of hesitancy about the vaccine from our volunteers and from some of our patrons," said Gerald Loeppky, general manager of the Niverville MCC Thrift Shop, in early May. "I was fortunate to get my first vaccine, as did my wife, but we have volunteers here that have a different belief system than I do, and I find it somewhat unfortunate."

Loeppky has said that he hopes to see the province do a better job of communicating what can and cannot go back to normal as more Manitobans get vaccinated, as a way

to incentivize getting the vaccines.

"I really appreciate what the Saskatchewan government did recently when they put out a strategy and a road map for reopening, and basically said, 'The road to reopening runs through the vaccine clinic,' and I thought that made so much sense," Loeppky said. "It lets the people know where things will go as more and more get vaccinated and it really gives the power back to the people so they can decide."

The Citizen reached out to the mayors of both the Town of Niverville and the RM of Ritchot to ask if their councils are doing anything to communicate to residents the importance of getting the vaccine, and both mayors said they believe that communication needs to come from the province and not from municipal councils.

Both mayors declined to be interviewed.

"This is provincial jurisdiction, as they have jurisdiction on healthcare," wrote Niverville Mayor Myron Dyck in an email. "I believe people are more than aware of the vaccine, as the province is sending out much communication, and are making their personal decisions accordingly."

Ritchot Mayor Chris Ewen also released a written statement emphasizing that those looking for information on the vaccine should seek that info from the province, and that Ritchot's council has not had any conversations regarding sharing accurate vaccine information.

"Council has not discussed this," Ewen wrote. "We continue to host emergency meetings with our emergency coordinator to ensure all public health orders are shared and implemented in Ritchot to the best of our ability. Any information we receive from the province is passed through our Connect software or available online."

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Chicken Chef to Install Patio

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

On Tuesday, May 18, the owners of Niverville's Chicken Chef appeared before town council to request permission to convert a portion of their parking lot into a patio to facilitate outdoor dining this summer.

Owners Laura and Tim Mulvena told council that they plan to close the Main Street entrance as well as the parking area immediately to the east of the restaurant. Their plan is to construct a 390-square-foot concrete pad in this area with a three-foot high fence around it.

This new patio will have a 20-seat capacity and will be licensed to serve alcohol.

Laura stated that when she and her co-owners first took ownership of this location, they noticed there weren't a lot of patio options in the town and they already intended to create one.

She pointed out that other Chicken Chef locations have licensed patios and have experienced success with them.



Chicken Chef on Main Street Niverville.

EVAN BRAUN

The Mulvenas also confirmed that they will still maintain the required number of parking stalls for the restaurant, with 18 stalls remaining on the south side of the building. The lot will be upgraded to clearly demarcate these spots.

Although they don't plan to pave the parking lot at this time, they plan to use dust control on the area to ensure that outdoor diners aren't bothered by dust

being blown around by the wind.

CAO Eric King confirmed that Chicken Chef had their liquor service approved by council on January 21, 2020 and that council had previously approved three picnic tables on June 23, 2020.

Laura's initial request was for outdoor liquor service to run from 11:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m., but Councillor Chris Wiebe suggested that this service be expanded by

an hour, until 10:00 p.m., since summer weather can make outdoor dining suitable later in the evening.

Councillor Wiebe made a motion for this to be added to the proposal, and with this amendment the request from the Mulvenas was unanimously approved and carried.

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Red River Co-op Pharmacy Opens in Niverville

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

Niverville is home to a new Red River Co-op Pharmacy. The business, which was first announced early last year, opened its doors for the first time on Monday, May 17. They are located at the Heritage Centre at 103-101 Second Avenue South.

The pharmacy opened without fanfare, according to Kelly Romas, Director of Marketing for Red River Cooperative Ltd—and she says this was done for a reason. Due to the strict COVID-19 restrictions in Manitoba right now, the company opted not to host a grand opening that would encourage people to gather and potentially break current health guidelines.

“But we are open and ready to welcome the community of Niverville!” she says.

The long construction process was also affected by COVID-19. Work began in December 2020 and was anticipated to conclude earlier in the spring.

However, although the process went smoothly, there were some delays due to periodic shortages of materials, a common occurrence across all industries during the pandemic.

Romas says this is Red River Co-op's sixth pharmacy location in Manitoba, and the first in a rural area. The other five locations can be found in Winnipeg.

The location of the pharmacy was selected to take advantage of the town's centralization of health services, with Open Health Niverville—home to the local medical



Inside the new Red River Co-op Pharmacy in Niverville.

clinic and lab—operating out of an adjoining building. Also, the Niverville Heritage Dental Centre is right next door.

The campus of the Heritage Centre is also home to the Heritage Life Personal Care Home, Niverville Credit Union Manor, and retirement living life lease condominiums. The addition of the pharmacy means that many senior citizens can now pick up their medications and necessities without even having to step outside.

“Our pharmacists do medication reviews, blood pressure checks, flu shots and vaccinations, offer over-the-counter medication advice, opioid replacement therapy, blister packing, and level A compounding,” says Romas. “Inside the Red River Co-op Pharmacy you'll find all the personal

care items you'd expect from a quality pharmacy. We also sell toiletries, infant care items, sunscreen and bug sprays, assorted cards and gift-wrapping and gift cards, and a wide variety of snacks and drinks.”

Customers with existing memberships with the Red River Co-op gas bar will be able to use their number to earn more cash back.

Romas also confirms that members can earn equity on the full price of their prescriptions.

“In 2020, Red River Co-op members earned four percent back on the full cost of their prescriptions,” she says. “Whether it be prescriptions, hygiene items, or snacks, Red River Co-op members can use their member number for all purchases made in the pharmacy.”

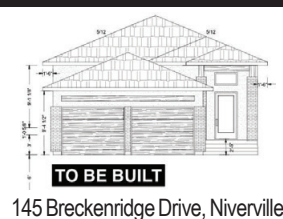
New customers may bring their

prescriptions to the pharmacy for fulfillment at any time.

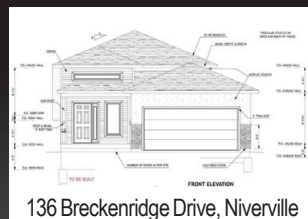
“Customers who currently have prescriptions through another pharmacy can simply visit our pharmacy team and they will coordinate with your previous pharmacy to transfer prescriptions over,” Romas adds. “It is a very simple process and our team will take care of everything.”

The Niverville pharmacy currently has two pharmacists: pharmacy manager Kaeleigh Bowles, as well as Gilbert Leung. They are actively searching for a pharmacy assistant to join their team in a part-time capacity.

The hours of the new pharmacy are 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on weekdays, and on Saturdays from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.



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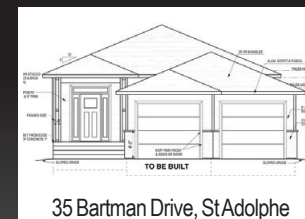
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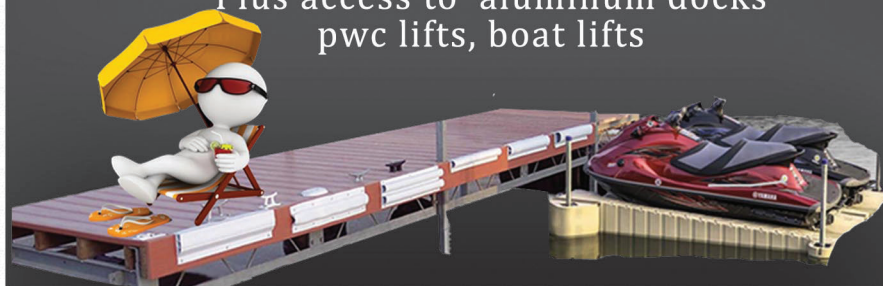


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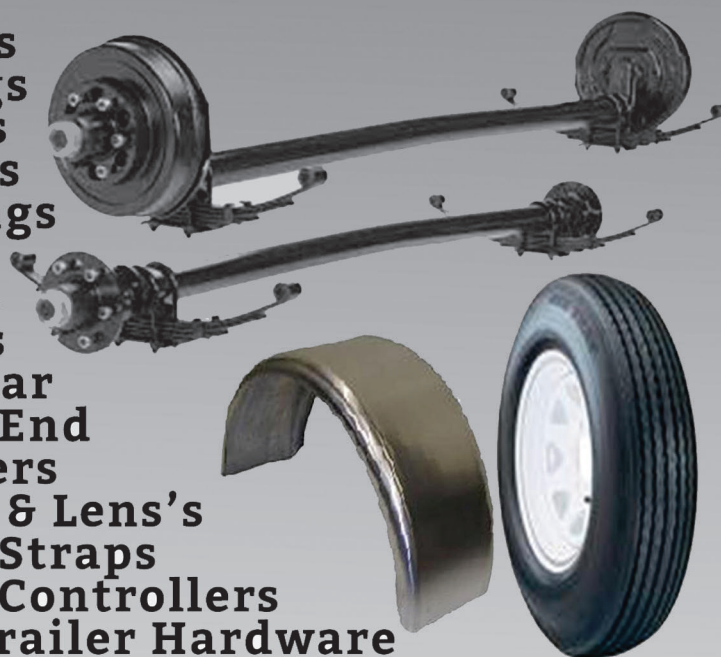
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It was this week in the Morris Tim Horton's drive thru that I was the recipient of a Pay It Forward kindness. My lunch was paid in full. The kind man in the forest green Jeep with a dealer plate, drove off before I could honk or make some gesture of gratefulness. It is fun to respond back and do those things which put a smile on our face and others. One of my sons paid it forward recently with the large van behind him being \$83.00 fuller than he thought. It's fun when it is \$10 or even \$20. Would we do it less if every payment forward were over \$50? In 2007, International **Pay it Forward Day** was started and has spread to over 70 countries. The initial goal was that these good deeds should accomplish something that the other person **cannot accomplish on their own**. Now to do that might take real giving. I can only think of one gift that universally fits the great need of all people; It is **SALVATION - GOD'S GIFT TO MAN**. This is such great news because none of us deserve God's love and forgiveness. We could never earn it by being good enough or rich enough to pay for it. The fact is we all deserve Hell (that's eternal separation from God), but God loved us so much that he died on a cross to pay the penalty for our sins that you and I deserved. "When we were without strength (could not help ourselves), in due time Christ died for the ungodly." (Rom 5:6). This was a debt that none of us had the ability to pay on our own. The good news is that He did not stay dead; He rose again and has returned to Heaven where He wants you to be forever with Him. The Bible tells us that we must receive this **Free Gift** that God has to offer. This is man's greatest need. A Saviour who would take away our sin and guilt before a Holy God and provide a perfect atoning sacrifice on a cruel cross. It was on the Cross where this gift was Paid Forward. So, it's true that "God so loved the world that He **GAVE** his only begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). That is why the greatest gift ever given is the "Gift of God which is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom 6:23). If it were a gift we worked for, it would no longer be a gift. **We receive this gift by faith**. Have you ever wondered where your soul will be for eternity? God offers this gift of eternal life today. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). The Gospel is urgent. "Behold, now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of Salvation" (2 Cor 6:12).

Ron and Nancy Burley www.sermon4u.com

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Province Announces Plan to Expand Broadband Services

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

This week, it was announced that the provincial government has signed a memorandum of understanding to connect more than 125,000 unserved or underseved Manitobans to reliable high-speed internet services.

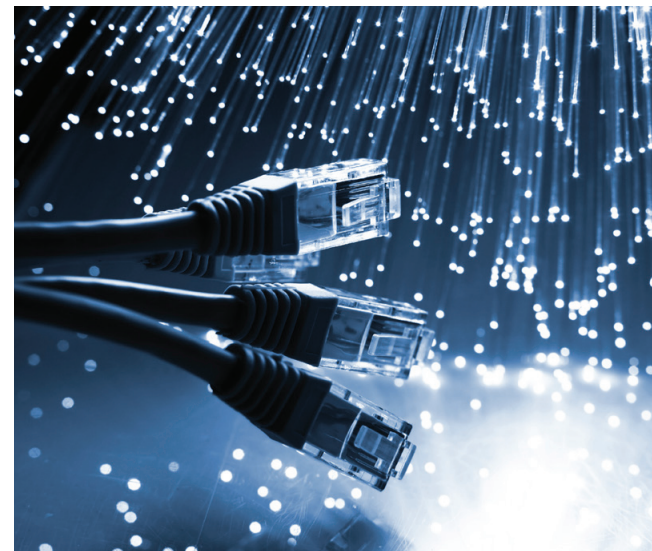
The province has awarded the contract to Xplornet Communications Inc.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the importance of broadband connectivity and the need to ensure Manitobans have access to critical and timely information and services no matter where they live, work, or travel in Manitoba," says Premier Brian Pallister. "We recognize the social and economic benefit of a connected Manitoba, and we are pleased to partner with Xplornet, one of Canada's leading broadband service providers, to provide reliable, high-speed internet and cell services to Manitobans who have gone without these services for far too long."

The agreement between the province and Xplornet will provide broadband services to approximately 270 rural communities and 30 First Nations.

The agreement will also connect about 350 communities with cellphone access.

Many local communities in the rural southeast will benefit from this broadband investment, including Île-des-Chênes, New Bothwell, Otterburne, Landmark, Lorette, Blumenort, Kleefeld, and



DEPOSITPHOTOS

Mitchell.

"Xplornet looks forward to collaborating with the government of Manitoba and accelerating our facilities-based network investment plans to deliver improved speeds and unlimited data plans at affordable prices to rural Manitoban homes and businesses," says Allison Lenehan, President and CEO of Xplornet.

The project will utilize thousands of kilometres of fibre-optic cable owned by Manitoba Hydro.

Much of this network's capacity is unused. It was created to communicate with northern hydroelectric facilities and transmit data.

Through this agreement, the government will make the Manitoba Hydro network's surplus capacity available to Xplornet to expand its broadband and cellphone services to Manitobans, with services

being provided as early as the upcoming fall.

"This innovative agreement makes use of an existing resource already in place that will help protect Manitobans and advance the connectivity between Manitobans and communities throughout the province," Reg Helwer, Minister of Central Services. "Access to Manitoba Hydro's fibre-optic network and tower infrastructure will also greatly reduce the capital investments Xplornet needs to expand into rural and remote communities, allowing for a positive return on investment and the quick delivery of service to Manitobans."

The Manitoba government, Manitoba Hydro, and Manitoba Hydro Telecom will be collaborating to finalize the contract in the coming weeks.

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Inside Look: How Niverville MCC Has Coped with Pandemic

By Dave Baxter

The last year has been one of challenges and tragedy at the Niverville MCC Thrift Shop, but the volunteers and employees who keep the store running say they are adjusting to this new normal and doing everything they can to keep their employees and customers safe.

"We've had to take a lot of extra steps to keep everything running and we've dealt with things I never thought I would see in my lifetime," Niverville MCC general manager Gerald Loeppky says.

It was more than a year ago, in March 2020, that the world seemed to stand still and the scope of the COVID-19 pandemic set in. Very quickly, businesses across the country and here in Manitoba began to shut down.

The effects were felt immediately at Niverville MCC, a not-for-profit that has run in the community for more than 45 years and contributes hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to development and peace projects run by the Mennonite Central Committee.

"We were operating normally last March, just like everyone else, and then the word from the government came to shut down business and we were given a date," Loeppky says.

Although the store was given a few days before they had to shut down last spring, Loeppky said they decided to take no chances and shut the doors immediately.

"With this store, 90 percent of the people working here are volunteers, and most of them are seniors over the age of 70, so because of the risks we just took the step to shut the whole



Niverville MCC Thrift Shop general manager Gerald Loeppky, seen here in the shop, says the store has been working to stay open and stay safe while dealing with the effects of the pandemic.

DAVE BAXTER

thing down," he says. "We didn't know much about this virus at first, and we weren't going to take any chances."

Since March 2020, the store has been forced to close its doors twice. They shut down for eight weeks in the spring and another eight weeks in the fall, leading to tens of thousands of dollars lost in 2020.

"We typically contribute more than \$250,000 per year, but in total we were closed 16 weeks of 2020 so we lost about \$80,000 from what we would normally bring in," Loeppky says.

And while the organization suffered financial losses, they also dealt with the tragic loss of one of their own as last fall. An MCC employee tested positive for COVID-19, and not long after that diagnosis lost their battle with the virus.

"That was just a total shock for everyone and really left us wondering what we were going to do and if we

should even be open," Loeppky says. "That hit everyone really hard."

After the positive case came to light, the store was also forced to quarantine six of their volunteers for two weeks.

While the pandemic has caused hardship for those who run the store, Loeppky says he also believes that closing down the shop has been a major hit to the residents of Niverville and has shown just how important the shop really is to the town.

"We have a lot of customers that rely very much on this store," he says. "There are so many customers that just don't have the means to shop at the retail stores. This is where they do their shopping because they are not in a position to buy stuff at retail price. That's just a reality for a lot of families."

Loeppky adds that they could see just how important the shop is to the community by the way customers came back in droves both times they

reopened.

"When we opened back up, we had lineups down the sidewalk," he says. "We opened at 10:00 and people were already lining up at 9:00. And by 9:30, I could not see the end of the line."

That steady stream of customers led to some of the most profitable days the store has ever seen, even shattering a record for single-day sales.

"Our best day before COVID, we brought in about \$4,000. But our best day after the shutdown was in December of last year, and that day we brought in \$7,400 in sales," Loeppky says. "We almost doubled our best day ever, and when we have opened back up we have really brought in more dollars per week than we have ever seen before."

But with the steady stream of customers came a whole new set of challenges. For example, they've only been able to operate at 25 percent

capacity and have had to find ways to keep the store safe.

"There's really been no rulebook for this," Loeppky says. "When you get new information you have to readjust, so for us if we open today this is what it looks like. But if we get more info tomorrow, then things can change. That picture is constantly changing."

Some of the changes the store has been forced to make include installing plexiglass shields for the cashiers, creating strict social distancing guidelines, monitoring how many customers can be in the store at one time, and having customers bag their own items.

While Loeppky says he appreciates the importance of the shop for its customers and for the money it raises, he also knows how important it is for the volunteers who give their time there.

"It's keeping them active both mentally and physically, and that's such a huge benefit for seniors because it's keeping them healthy," he says.

As volunteers and employees at MCC Niverville continue to move forward while doing what they can to stay safe, Loeppky hopes that with vaccines being administered in the province they can get back to normal sometime in the near future, and bring in the kind of dollars they typically bring in for the Mennonite Central Committee.

"The hope for 2021 and going into 2022 is that we get back on track fiscally," he says. "A year from now if we keep seeing people getting vaccinated, we really hope we can get back to normal. There will be a lot of work to do to get there, but it's something we know we can accomplish."

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DEPOSITPHOTOS

Online Event to Connect Entrepreneurs with Experts, Investors

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The Town of Niverville is partnering with the Niverville Chamber of Commerce to help give local businesses a leg up. On the evening of June 21, they will jointly host an online event that will award up to \$5,000 in fellowships through the Western Canada Founder Institute.

The event will give entrepreneurs the opportunity to pitch their business ideas to a panel of local mentors, as well as top investors and experts from across Canada, for ratings and feedback.

"As part of its commitment to building a thriving community for entrepreneurs to live, the Town of Niverville has been looking for ways to bring opportunities like this forward," says Eric King, CAO for the Town of Niverville. "Our partnership with the Founder Institute and Niverville Chamber of Commerce is an exciting step in this direction and we are looking forward to this unique live and

interactive event."

The live, two-hour event will allow as many participants as possible to present and receive feedback. Afterwards, up to five participants will be selected to receive fellowships, valued at \$1,000 each.

Viewers who aren't presenting will also be able to watch the event.

All entrepreneurs are invited to apply to pitch. This includes anyone who wants feedback from leading entrepreneurs, has an early-stage startup, has an idea for a startup or a tech company, or who needs practice and expert advice on pitching.

"We anticipate the experience will be similar to the popular CBC show *Dragon's Den*, where participants will face a panel of experts and investors," adds King.

Brenda Desjardins, executive director for the Niverville Chamber of Commerce, is eager to see as many people get involved as possible.

"We encourage all interested entrepreneurs to apply," says

Desjardins. "Sitting in the 'hot seat' may seem intimidating, but since the event is online, it removes some of the pressure of an in-person presentation. Plus, the community is committed to producing an atmosphere that is supportive of fresh ideas, no matter how new they are to the business world. It should be fun, and the opportunity to connect with experts and investors is valuable, and possibly life-changing."

Local experts who are participating in the event include Scott Wallace, founder of Wallace Wallace and Edward Properties, and Bryan Trottier, owner of Trotco Electric. They will provide feedback and aid in the selection of the final recipients.

Accepted program applicants will be enrolled in a fellowship to join a global accelerator program which gives entrepreneurs access to a support network of more than 15,000 mentors and thousands of alumni from around the world. The program also offers people a comprehensive education and

structured support to take an idea from genesis to the funding/growth stage.

Through their global network, the Western Canada Founder Institute boasts a portfolio of companies worth an estimated value of about \$30 billion, and their graduates have collectively raised \$975 million and created 25,000 jobs.

The Town of Niverville is one of Manitoba's fastest growing urban centres and among the top 20 fastest growing towns in Canada. The Niverville Chamber of Commerce exists to encourage sustainable economic development through advocacy for and support of local business.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ Event page: <https://fi.co/e/254306>
Information about the fellowship: <https://fi.co/join/Niverville>
■ Apply to pitch your business idea: <https://forms.gle/kpRWdFRvgLD2GXs28>

IN BRIEF

Niverville Seeks to Expand Water Treatment Plant

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

On Tuesday, May 11, the Town of Niverville held a very brief special council meeting to approve the borrowing of funds to expand the Spruce Drive water treatment plant.

The estimated cost of the expansion is \$10 million, with the town required to provide half of that balance.

The other 50 percent will come from the Manitoba Water Services Board, which has approved \$3.25 million in funding for the project. Grants from the province over the next few years are expected to cover the remaining \$1.75 million.

Niverville's portion will come from this proposal to borrow \$4 million against future water development levies. The remaining \$1 million is currently coming from the town's water utility reserve fund.

Six minor clarifying and wording amendments from the province were read at the meeting and the resolution was unanimously approved after these amendments were added.

The resolution will now go to the municipal board for approval.

According to CAO Eric King, the project will most likely happen in two phases. Phase one will be the treatment plant itself, which will be tendered this summer. The second phase will begin once the \$1.75 million from the province is secured. That phase will involve expanding the source to maximum capacity.



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the 15th day of July, 2021.

DATED at Winnipeg, Manitoba,
this 3rd day of June, 2021.

MLT AIKINS LLP
Per: Harmanjit Mavi
Solicitors for the Estate

Local Teen Seeks to Connect Young People with Visual Impairments

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

Taliah Braun was born in July 2007 with what she calls “a difference.” A few days after her birth, her doctor noticed that one of her eyes wouldn’t open—and after a visit to a specialist, she was diagnosed with paediatric congenital microphthalmia.

In layman’s terms, she was completely blind in her left eye.

Taliah was given a prosthetic cover shell for her eye and since then has gone about her otherwise typical life. She says that she has managed very well and has experienced few difficulties with her eye or with her eyesight. She doesn’t experience any pain as a result of her condition except for when she gets a new prosthesis and the muscles around her eye need to get used to it.

Fortunately, Taliah has excellent vision in her right eye, but she wears non-prescription glasses to protect that eye from any potential harm.

She strongly dislikes wearing the glasses, though, and feels that having to wear them is one of the hard parts of living with her visual difference.

Another difficulty has been that younger people sometimes comment on her eye, which can make her feel badly about herself or embarrassed by her difference.

But as she’s gotten older, those comments don’t come as often.

She credits that, in part, to her ocularist, who has been



Taliah Braun of Niverville.

creating amazingly realistic eyes for her.

Nonetheless, the greatest burden of being born this way is that Taliah sometimes has felt alone and isolated.

She adds that sometimes she has felt like the only kid in the world who’s going through this particular journey.

It turns out, there are many others out there.

Some time back, Taliah and her parents began to search for other people going through a similar life experience. They achieved some early success by reaching out to *New York Times* bestselling author Lisa Bevere, who also has a prosthetic eye.

Taliah was encouraged to hear back from Bevere, but she still felt that something was missing since Bevere was both not her age and lived very far away.

“I wish there was a way that someone would understand exactly what it was like,” she

said to her parents one day.

Around that same time, Taliah watched a documentary series called *Marvel Hero Project*. Each episode of that program showcased a child with a difference and a project that he or she had created to help those around them.

That was when Taliah struck upon a new idea: “Why don’t I use my differences to help others to feel like they’re not alone?”

With a little help from her parents, Taliah has created a website of her own, called Vision Village. Vision Village shares important information, as well as a few inspirational stories, about Taliah and her medical team.

A key feature is that other kids with eye conditions will have an opportunity to use the site to find pen pals to communicate with, allowing them to share their experiences.

Once the site was created, Taliah created promotional

postcards and asked her eye specialists if they would be willing to share them with the patients. Not only were the doctors receptive to the idea, they were excited to help. They also began sharing the site amongst their colleagues in other hospitals and other cities.

“I started to notice that I’m not alone,” Taliah says.

In response to her new venture, Taliah recently received a request from *Brio*, a kids magazine by Focus on the Family. A future issue will include a write-up about her story and about Vision Village.

If you know of a young person who has overcome a challenge, particularly one connected with vision, Taliah wants to help share that story and connect them to others who can relate to their experiences.

Taliah’s father, local author David Braun, adds that they are considering registering Vision Village as a charity, although they haven’t done so yet. They have received some early financial donations which so far have been funnelled into the expenses of maintaining the website and printing postcards.

“My hope for the future is that kids feel that they’re wanted and seen, and that they’re not alone,” Taliah says. “No one should feel alone, you know?”

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ If you or anyone you know has a visual difference, check out Taliah’s website: www.wearevisionvillage.org



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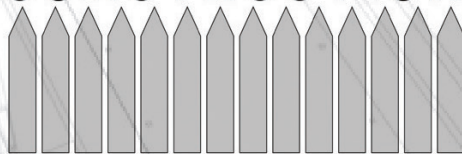
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COVID's Deadly Third Wave Rolls Over Manitoba

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Manitoba may have been the last province in Canada to get hit with a third wave of COVID-19 cases, but the situation here has quickly escalated over the course of the last month to become, by the numbers, the most severe outbreak in terms of infections and hospitalizations per capita.

Not only is Manitoba the worst-hit province in Canada at the moment, it's also the worst-hit jurisdiction anywhere in North America, behind all U.S. states and even Mexico.

The first round of strengthened public health orders came in late April, and like clockwork they were strengthened and extended every week to follow until the end of May.

The current orders are set to last until at least mid-June, and in fact they are expected by most Manitobans to continue well beyond then, albeit in an altered form.

It began on April 26, when chief provincial public health officer Dr. Brent Roussin revealed modelling numbers that showed Manitoba being on track to exceed even the province's worst-case scenario for hospital admissions.

Among the wide-ranging orders, all indoor gatherings were forbidden at this time.

"Despite our best collective efforts and having some of the strictest public health orders in the country, Manitoba's case numbers continue to rise, which threatens the ability of our healthcare system to care for those in need," said Premier Brian Pallister at a press briefing.

Nonetheless, cases rose.

On May 9, the orders were strengthened yet again, this time forcing the closure of restaurants, bars, patios, gyms, and museums. Outdoor gatherings were limited to five people, but they had to occur on public property, such as playgrounds, golf courses, parks, and sports fields.

The decision was also made to send Winnipeg and Brandon

students to remote learning, to prevent rising transmission in schools.

Throughout the following week, a couple of rural school divisions in southeastern Manitoba also went to remote learning, especially in the hard-hit areas around Winkler and Morden.

Dr. Roussin assured Manitobans this was all a temporary, short-term solution.

The measures weren't enough, because cases rose precipitously towards the middle of May.

Three days later, on May 12, Manitoba announced a terrifying 587 new cases.

For the next few days, that seemed to be the peak. One week later, however, Manitobans were in for a rude awakening when, on May 19, another 602 cases were added to the province's tally in a single day.

Around this time, the hospitalization rate became unsustainable.

With ICU capacity reached, patients began being sent out of province, first to various cities throughout Ontario, and later to Saskatchewan. At the time of this writing, nearly 40 patients from Manitoba are being treated elsewhere, with that number increasing by four or five per day.

The strongest public health orders came into force ahead of the Victoria Day long weekend, banning all gatherings of any kind between members of different households, even outdoor ones on public property.

These rules were initially billed to last the length of the long weekend, but they were then extended to the end of the following week. Then they were extended again for two additional weeks.

They are currently set to expire on June 12.

"Manitobans must stay home as much as possible for the next two weeks so our hospitals and our medical teams have the capacity to care for Manitobans when they need it," said Pallister. "We need the full participation of all Manitobans for these strict public health measures to work so we can bend our COVID curve back down and get

back to doing some of the things we love and miss."

In addition to retailers having to restrict capacity to 10 percent, employers are also now required to allow their employees to work from home if at all possible. Also, only one member of a household is allowed to enter a store, with some exceptions, such as a single parent with children or someone who requires a caregiver.

"We are implementing these new, strengthened public health orders because our health system is facing critical pressures that are not sustainable. Manitoba's ICU numbers and hospitalizations are extremely high and are still expected to climb in this third wave," said Dr. Roussin. "The public health orders outline what we need to do. We need to stay home and work from home if possible, and only go out for essential items when absolutely necessary and do not gather with anyone outside your household. We recognize the next few weeks will be tough, but our health system depends on all Manitobans doing their part."

Although the hospitalization situation has continued to spiral out of control at the start of June, the daily case counts have dropped steadily for the past week.

Meanwhile, the border with neighbouring Ontario will continue to remain closed until June 16, with the Ontario government then set to either open up to summer traffic or extend the ban by two-week increments.

Many Manitobans with properties or vacation plans in northwestern Ontario are fervently hoping and praying the border situation sorts itself out before the official start of summer at the end of June.

Providing some hope at the end of the tunnel, Manitoba has begun booking second dose vaccine appointments. Everyone who wishes to receive a first dose is expected to receive one by the latter half of June, with the second doses continuing throughout the month of August.

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Commentary

Learning Is About More than Academics

By Mark Reimer

I'm inspired by the students in my Grade Seven class who log in to their Google classroom and throw themselves at the work assigned to them by the eighth teacher they've had in this very strange year.

They aren't falling behind in learning.

Rather, they're learning what is required of them to make it through this strange COVID-changed world and educational experience.

No. Like countless people before them who found themselves in such troubling, complicated times, they are not falling behind in anything.

Every time someone suggests that the students are falling behind—whether they be “experts,” “educators,” “parents,” or anyone else—it shows me that they've bought into the notion that only academics matter, that there is value in standardized testing, that there is such a thing as “grade level performance,” and that schools can somehow address the reality of the students' socioeconomic circumstances and adjust everyone's academic outcomes to fit into the same box.

For years I had colleagues who told me that unless students read Shakespeare, they wouldn't turn out to be good citizens, because for some reason certain pieces of literature are supposedly

life-giving, or at least life-changing, for all who read it.

When I was teaching at the University of Iowa, I was told that I was part of the best educational institute in the United States, and that the education system of Iowa was second to none.

I then taught at a high school in Manitoba that was called “the divisional flagship,” the so-called “best school” in the division, the ones at which all students in the division should register for their best chance at enlightenment and success.

The politicians placed in charge of education for each province have instituted standardized exams to measure student performance, and they've done it against the advice of Colleges of Education and grade-school teachers.

And yet think tanks have suggested that memorizing details and ramping up standardized tests for students in primary, middle, and high schools might somehow prepare them to be more complete, contributing citizens when they graduate.

This is not the case.

To keep up with all this provincial pressure, well-meaning teachers have looked for and implemented assessments that purport to reveal what grade level students are performing at. This requires a belief that

corporations, not educators, can produce materials that reflect learning theory and subject area expertise.

What kind of corporations am I talking about? Printing companies, for example, produce school materials for marketing purposes.

In the end, it's about selling resources.

Corporations also offer business models for education, and for the sake of business it's highly desirable to fit all students into the same box, even if that doesn't work for real-life classrooms.

After more than 35 years of teaching students all the way from Grade Four through those earning their Masters of Education in three countries, and spending almost ten years learning about teaching, another handful of years teaching canoeing, 25 years of teaching young people to play volleyball, and spending ten years running a project in Ecuador with close to two hundred volunteers, none of those ideas work for me.

I know dozens of people in Puerto Lopez, Ecuador who have never heard of Shakespeare, much less read anything he wrote—even though, yes, his work has been translated into Spanish. They have written no provincial exams, and in fact they have a very different system of education than those found in Iowa or Manitoba.

And yet they find a way to be valuable contributors to society.

A 21-year-old I worked with became a key organizer in a massive COVID-19 relief effort that provided food hampers to 1,500 families on three occasions over a four-month period last year when no one could work, and therefore they couldn't buy food.

Another young person, a 20-year-old, has adopted a village full of elderly people living with disabilities and is making sure they have enough food and clothing to survive the pandemic.

When I taught in Niverville, I had a student for three years who found school extremely difficult, but he learned how to study, and he worked so hard that when he graduated—with an average barely above 50 percent—many people in the community knew he was the employee they wanted because he knew how to work hard in the face of challenges.

He's been a very successful businessperson for many years, not to mention a caring, generous, and compassionate community member who has improved the lives of countless people over the past few decades.

Another one of my former students, despite having never written a provincial exam, is a published author as well as an owner and editor of a community newspaper.

This year, I worked with a student who didn't know the alphabet or how to read in any of the four languages he speaks.

But he did know how to operate almost every piece of farm machinery and knew exactly what to do during seeding and harvest time from the age of six.

There is no question that students who are allowed to attend classes only every other day, or those who are working with their eighth teacher of the year, or those who live in homes that don't believe that COVID is a serious trauma or that vaccines work are having a difficult time placing value on their academics. The constant state of change has entirely destroyed the continuity of their learning and their ability to focus on academics.

But learning is about so much more than academics.

I've committed decades to teaching, and learning to teach, and have come to understand that there are indeed many beautiful, amazing, inspiring, creative lessons being taught in schools.

And in students' homes.

And on job sites.

And on the beach.

In Canada, the United States, and Ecuador.

I've come to understand that the change in teaching English Language Arts as a literature course to a literacy

course opens the door to multi-literacies that allow students who have difficulty decoding letters on a page to demonstrate in many and varied ways that they know and understand so much about themselves, their neighbours, and life around them.

It's become clear that provincial and standardized exams are tools for politicians, not for educators.

It's clear that comments about “grade level” performance are hand-in-glove with political pressures that are used to bully and shame students—and their parents—into a box.

I'm grateful every time I read that some people are sharing stories about surviving war zones for years without schooling, that mental health matters more than test scores in any given year, that learning isn't restricted to classrooms, that people can rise above immediate circumstances when they aren't shamed, and that when we support each other, we can succeed.

We don't need to be in the same box when it comes to what we've learned, or will learn.

We only need to be in the same box when it comes to loving our neighbours, caring for those around us, and offering every support we can to the people with whom we cross paths.

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CITIZEN POLL

Do you know a child whom you suspect has fallen behind this school year due to pandemic-related disruptions to education?

- ☐ Yes. Changes to education this year have resulted in a poorer overall quality of education for our students.
- ☐ No. Despite this year's struggles, I believe the quality of our children's education hasn't been adversely affected.
- ☐ Have a more nuanced opinion? Leave us a comment online.

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LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

Have you gotten, or do you plan to get, a COVID-19 vaccination?

Yes.	No/Not Sure.
63%	37%

YOUR COMMENTS:

Anyone in my family that can get the vaccine, will get the vaccine. As healthcare is a primary occupation in my family and extended family, we trust and understand the importance of getting ahead of these viruses and diseases. Vaccinating is the safe and effective way to doing this. Unfortunately, the wide use of social media used today has only exasperated the spread of negative and false information to the public. Regrettably, social media ignorance is a dangerous disease that we DON'T have a vaccination for. - **Jessica P.**

Been vaccinated since January. However, I do not want my family to be vaccinated. I do not appreciate how non-vaccinated people are being shamed into getting vaccinated. I'm in the medical field.

I got my first shot. Will get second when available. At the same time, I respect people's right to make medical choices for themselves and say no if they feel anxious about it. I'm shocked that pro-vax and anti-vax people are so disrespectful toward each other. So many claim to be "anti-bullying" but what I see amounts to just that.

Well, I got it, wound up with a delayed allergic reaction 11 days later and am now being monitored by public health. Would I do it again? Yes. Will I get a second dose? Yes.

Vaccination is a personal decision and all personal medical information is protected by PHIA. The efforts to shame people into taking vaccinations is unconscionable.

Given the FACTS, not myths... not media reports... the FACTS, it's safe and it prevents and protects. Like every medication or vaccine you take from the flu shot to a regular ibuprofen pill, there are risks involved.

We are doing our bit of ridding this world of COVID-19 by having gotten inoculated with the vaccine. Nice article on the psychology of religious belief and misinformation which prompted our vote. It's sad that it's being communicated as it is happening around the world. Would be interesting to see what the Niverville populous thinks about vaccination in addition to social distancing and mask wearing.

Got my first dose already!

I hope the Christian community finally sees the light and gets on board with the professional advice of our doctors and health care professionals or we will be seeing an increase in Covid 19 variant cases and unfortunately more deaths of not only the seniors but people of all age groups.

Vaccine is essential to get our lives back to normal.

I appreciate every single person that gets a vaccination as this is the path to ending this.

Please Get Vaccinated

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

As I grow older, I realize more and more how much I rely on experts. I have, like we all do, gathered a team of specialists in my life. From a doctor to an accountant to a mechanic, I go to them when I have shortfalls in my own knowledge.

Recently it seems that more of us have stopped listening to experts and started listening to a very vocal minority. It's easy to think, for example, "I hate wearing a mask!" and then find information supporting the fact that masks are "bad."

It's so easy to do this, in fact, that there's a name for it: confirmation bias. Britannica defines it like this: "the tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with one's existing beliefs... People are especially likely to process information to support their own beliefs when the issue is highly important or self-relevant."

The problem there lies in the last part—we are especially likely to do it when the issue at hand is very important in general or very important to us in the moment.

Confirmation bias can create wild conspiracy theories. A theory gets posted online, and then it gains traction. Before you know it, a supposition becomes what some will come to consider a "fact."

Consider the shape of the earth. As early as 600 BCE, humans knew the earth was round. By examining the physical properties of the planet, such as the way shadows move and the way the sun rises and falls, early scientists could determine that the earth was roughly spherical.

Recently, however, flat earth theories have taken off.

According to a YouGov poll in 2018, only 66 percent of millennials firmly believe that the earth is round.

Sixty-six percent!

Can we not trust thousands of years of science? Can we not trust our own knowledge?

Our own eyes?

It seems to be the same with COVID-19. We see the effects of this virus with our own eyes. We all complain—well, almost all—about not seeing loved ones, having to wear masks, and not sitting down at restaurants.

But when we are told what we can do to bring an end to it, some of us balk.

The masks are uncomfortable, it's true. The social distancing is hard. I miss hugging! But there is proof that these measures help.

And now we have vaccines, an absolutely astonishing feat of rapid scientific testing combined with massive government funding. The world was shut down by a pandemic and our experts got us vaccines!

Some of us won't take it.

"Well, there are too many side effects."

There are potential side effects, yes. As there are with Advil, and that prescription blood pressure medication you take. All medications have potential side effects but rarely are they serious.

To be fair, my arm was a little sore after the vaccine and I thought making dinner might be difficult, so that was a great excuse to treat my family to a takeout meal.

Many of us heard the scary news about blood clots from the AstraZeneca vaccine. Approximately four instances of blood clots will occur out of approximately every one million vaccinations.

Those are really good odds. Your chance of getting the virus right now in Manitoba—and

developing COVID-induced blood clots—is vastly higher.

"I don't care if I get the virus. I'm young and healthy. It's no worse than the flu."

That's true, too, for some. For some, it's basically a bad cold. However, whether it's minor for you or you're asymptomatic, you can still pass it to others and they might not be so lucky.

A friend of my husband's developed COVID a few weeks ago. He got very sick and spent weeks in the hospital. He ended up in the ICU—and then he was put into a medically induced coma.

Slowly he began to get better, to the point where the doctors thought he was safe.

But then, out of nowhere, he had a heart attack and died. He left behind a wife he had known since elementary school and three kids, the youngest of whom is only ten.

He died alone in the hospital because his family couldn't risk their health.

"I believe the vaccine is not thoroughly tested enough."

It was. It was created quickly, but much of the reason these kinds of medical breakthroughs normally take long is due to slow-moving paperwork and funding and international collaborations.

New medications waiting to be approved have to wait in line behind all the other medications waiting to be approved. The COVID-19 vaccine was simply bumped ahead of everything else.

Because the world was suffering so acutely, government agencies provided nearly unlimited funding and promoted the testing process for this drug right to the front of the line so we could get the world back to normal more quickly.

So the vaccine wasn't approved because corners were cut; it was approved

because the world worked together to make it happen to meet an urgent need.

"The vaccine is a conspiracy. It will inject me with something that can be used to track me."

No. It won't. Where did that error come from? Essentially, the outside of some syringes will have a microchip that the medical professional administering it can scan if they want to record when and where the vaccine was given.

But no, the microchip does not enter your body.

"The vaccine will bring about the biblical end of days."

If this is your belief, I urge you to reread 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2, which goes like this: "Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night" (NIV).

The Bible does not provide its adherents a timeline or a map to the apocalypse. What it gives believers is a warning: it could happen at any time.

You getting the COVID-19 vaccine is not going to change God's plan.

If you have concerns about the vaccine, by all means educate yourself!

Contact your doctor or pharmacist.

Ask that nurse who lives down the street.

Read about it on large-scale medical or government websites.

Then get the shot.

Please. If not for yourself, then for your kids or grandkids.

Do it for the immunocompromised or elderly who are at such great risk from this virus.

Do it for your community.

Do it for all of us so that life can go back to what it was and we can enjoy this beautiful Manitoba summer.

Please, get vaccinated.

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Everything Must Go:

Understanding the Psychology Behind Panic Buying

By Daniel Dacombe

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many of the responses we saw from the public were understandable.

There was fear, of course, a normal reaction.

There was uncertainty, also reasonable.

We were all going through something new and alarming together—which requires us to learn as we go along.

One reaction, though, seemed so bizarre—and so specific—that it baffled retailers around the world. People were purchasing vast quantities of toilet paper, more than they could use in months.

The media was flooded with images of people with carts piled high with bathroom tissue. Line-ups at Costco were filled with ordinary citizens preparing to buy industrial quantities of the stuff.

What had happened?

We fell victim to the fear of a toilet paper shortage, and it caused people to engage in a behaviour known as “panic buying.”

Ironically, panic buying in and itself often causes a shortage, as those of us who ran out of toilet paper in those early days discovered.

While most of the panic buying occurred last year, we recently saw something similar with the “gas shortage” in the United States. I put that term in quotation marks, because it wasn’t actually a shortage. And yet people still felt prompted to race to the

gas station and fill containers... some of them definitely not approved fuel tanks.

Seeing yet another round of panic buying has prompted a couple of questions.

What causes this behaviour? And more importantly, is there anything we can do to prevent it?

Dr. Steven Taylor, clinical psychologist and author of *The Psychology of Pandemics*, has written and spoken at length on the subject of pandemics.

(It’s interesting to note that the book was published in October 2019, proof positive, it would seem, that some psychologists may in fact be able to predict the future.)

With decades of experience in the field of health anxiety, Dr. Taylor is uniquely qualified to comment on the likely behaviours one might see during a widescale public health crisis like COVID-19. Both in his book and in interviews since, Taylor identified panic buying as an expected public reaction and compared it to similar mob-mentality behaviours in which people act as a group in ways they never would as individuals.

Other psychologists have investigated the behaviours that may result from going through extraordinary circumstances.

The field of survival psychology has existed for decades, and psychologists in this field have researched what occurs to us during wars, pandemics, or natural disasters. What we’ve discovered is that these

extraordinary circumstances provoke predictable reactions centred around a central theme: the loss of the illusion of control.

In other words, pandemics bring into stark relief the realization that we are not in control. As with wars, economic instability, and natural disasters, many dangers in our world are completely beyond our ability to affect them.

Most of the time we can ignore this fact and proceed with the comfortable fiction that we are in control.

However, when situations occur that bring to our attention the fact that we don’t have control, and never did, we can experience powerful anxiety.

Much of the social scientific literature on this subject has identified certain predictable reactions—such as panic buying—as a method of self-soothing, reducing anxiety and uncertainty.

Simply put, panic buying is a way of “regaining control” over our lives when we feel we’ve lost it.

Some degree of panic buying may be inevitable, and may not even be bad. Self-soothing behaviours are a normal and natural part of our lives, and to some extent we’ve all engaged in them during the repeated lockdowns... as evidenced by the extra pounds we’ve accumulated and the hordes of Amazon boxes now clogging our recycling bins.

Granted, there are considerably fewer risks to your home when storing extra rolls of toilet paper than there are

with storing slowly dissolving grocery bags full of gasoline. But there are also much healthier ways to cope.

Healthy coping skills have been discussed at length by many people during the pandemic, including right here in this space.

Reaching out to each other for support, seeking out mental health professionals when necessary, and pursuing healthy alternatives to unhealthy coping (such as exercise or learning a new hobby) have all been shown to have benefits.

There’s also reason to have hope.

In his research, Dr. Taylor shows that resiliency and growth aren’t only possible long-term results of living through a pandemic, but that they were even likely.

In the end, there’s only one thing any of us can really do to exert control and make an impact on the course of the pandemic—and that is, of course, getting vaccinated and encouraging our friends and family to do the same as soon as possible.

Finally, should you find yourself in a situation in which you observe someone engaging in panic buying, consider the best reaction to be kindness and understanding. We are all coping as best we can with the loss of our comfortable illusions. Kindness, unlike hoarding, costs us absolutely nothing.

Plus, at least you’ll know who to call should you ever run out of toilet paper.



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Niverville Chamber of Commerce 2020 Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 2020 Annual General Meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 22, 2021 at 7:00 PM via ZOOM.

There will be 3 prizes of 2 months advertising on the Chamber page in the Niverville Citizen, and a gift donated by done hair, skin & nails to be awarded the four of the registered members in attendance.

Details of the meeting, including registration information, can be found on our website at www.niverville.com

Covid relief fund available to our members

In light of the current COVID restrictions, the Niverville Chamber of Commerce has set up a \$2,500 COVID relief fund to assist our members. All members in good standing are eligible to apply. The monies will be divided equally between requests received.

Details on how to apply can be found on our website at www.niverville.com

Niverville Hosts Online Event Connecting Entrepreneurs, Local Experts And Investors

On June 21, 2021 from 5:00-7:00PM, the Town of Niverville and Niverville Chamber of Commerce are hosting an online selection event to award up to \$5,000.00 in fellowships through the Western Canada Founder Institute's Virtual Fall 2021 program.

The live, two-hour, interactive event will allow as many participants as possible to present and receive feedback. After the event, up to five participants will be selected to receive the Founder Institute fellowships valued at \$1,000.00 each.

All business entrepreneurs are invited to apply to pitch during the live event. This means anyone who wants feedback from leading entrepreneurs, anyone who has an early-stage startup and wants expert feedback, anyone who has an idea for a startup or a tech company, anyone who needs practice and expert advice on pitching.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Event Page: <https://fi.co/e/254306>

Fellowship Page: <https://fi.co/join/Niverville>

Pitch Submission Form: <https://forms.gle/kpRWdFRvgLD2GXs28>

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- Each person who submits an objection will be advised in writing of the outcome to the licence application.

Sports & Recreation

Boaters, Get Ready to Launch in Ste. Agathe

Brand-new boat launch set to open in early June.

By Dave Baxter

The group working to see a boat launch and dock come to Ste. Agathe say that the first phase of the project is nearing completion, and they expect to see boats cruising the waters in the area very soon.

"People are chomping at the bit for this to finally open," says Joel Gagnon, director of the Ste. Agathe Community Development Inc. "I am getting constant messages from boaters asking, 'When can we use the boat launch?' There is a lot of anticipation and a lot of excitement."

Back in October, the directors of the CDI stood on the banks of the Red River just off Pembina Trail in Ste. Agathe to announce the project.

Phase one, a fully functional boat launch with a price tag of approximately \$600,000, is now just days away from completion. Gagnon says they hope it will be ready in the early days of June.

"I suspect that within the next week or two we will see this up and running," Gagnon says. "Hopefully, it will be very soon that we can put



Ste. Agathe Community Development Inc. directors Joel Gagnon (front) and Shaun Crew (back) at the site of the Ste. Agathe dock and boat launch project.

DAVE BAXTER

out some social media posts letting people know that the boat launch is open for use."

Gagnon adds that the CDI had hoped to put on a grand opening event when the boat launch was ready to go, but those plans have been put on hold because of current COVID-19 health restrictions in Manitoba.

Once the boat launch is open,

Gagnon believes it will get a lot of use, as there are currently no boat launches in the area. Many boaters currently have to travel a far distance to get their boats on the water.

"There is really no formal access to the Red River between the U.S. border and Winnipeg, so this is something that is going to be a jewel for not only Ste. Agathe but for the RM of Ritchot, and the surrounding

areas as well," he says.

Along with the recreational benefits the project will provide, there will also be economic benefits to the community.

"We expect a whole lot of economic spinoffs with increased tourism and more business for gas stations, and restaurants, and other businesses in the area."

Once the boat launch is ready to

go, those who have worked to get it up and running will start work on the second phase of the project. That second phase will see an 80-foot-long floating dock large enough to accommodate between four and six boats at one time. It will be built right next to the boat launch.

Gagnon says the dock will not be meant for boaters to dock their vessels overnight, but rather for those who want to dock, spend some time in the community and at local businesses, and then get back into the water.

Gagnon adds the project is a long time coming, as it was first envisioned about ten years ago, and he hopes the efforts of all those who have worked long hours to make it a reality are now recognized.

Along with his own contributions, Gagnon points out that a lot of work has been done by fellow CDI directors Shaun Crew, Alain Baudry, Dan Routhier, Dan Duval, Kyle Wattam, and Matt Klaverkamp.

"The amount of hours put into this have been countless," Gagnon says.

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Basketball Camp Hopes to Put Kids on the Court

Niverville Rec plans to host a number of camps this summer in the brand-new CRRC.

By Dave Baxter

A sports camp coming to Niverville this summer hopes to get local youth off their couches, out of their homes, and onto the hardwood to learn a few things about the game of basketball.

The pandemic has changed a lot for young people in the rural southeast as many have been forced to spend more time indoors and away from their usual friends and activities.

Cassandra Falk, camps and recreation programmer for the Town of Niverville, has been actively looking to create ways for youth to stay active while staying safe this summer.

"Things like sports camps are a perfect chance for kids to finally feel some normalcy after they have endured a very challenging school year," Falk says. "They will give them a fun but safe opportunity to meet new friends and be active."

In August, Niverville Rec will host the Junior NBA Youth Basketball Camp, a national youth basketball program designed by Basketball Canada for young people between the ages of five and 12.

The camp will be hosted at the brand-new CRRC, which is slated to open in early July.

"This program is set up to develop fundamental skills, sportsmanship, and a love for the game of basketball," Falk says. "The camp is set for August



The brand new Niverville Community Resource Centre (CRRC) which is slated to open in early July will host the Jr. NBA Youth Basketball Camp August 9–13.

TOWN OF NIVERVILLE

9–13 and the kids can expect to play hours of basketball each day, while also participating in other camp activities."

Falk said they aren't looking for any specific skill level as the camp will be tailored to people of all skill levels and to give those who sign up a chance to learn the fundamentals of the game.

"The opportunities for playing basketball outside of school in our community are very limited, so this will be a great chance for the basketball-loving kids to develop

their skills, or maybe someone is not sure if they like the game but want to try something new, then this camp is great for them too," Falk says. "No experience in basketball is needed. This is a perfect chance for them to learn the basics. The great thing is we can adapt the program to any skill level."

Falk added they have two adult volunteers who are registered to act as coaches and will be perfect mentors for the youth who take part.

"We are actually very fortunate as two local individuals have stepped

forward to help with coaching," Falk says. "They both have a tremendous amount of experience coaching kids in basketball, so we trust they will be able to run with this program and provide a safe and fun learning environment."

As the COVID-19 pandemic sees activities adjusted and modified to keep people safe, Falk says they will be sure to keep the camp safe for youth and adults, no matter how the pandemic situation sits later in the summer.

"We do not know what COVID-19

will look like in August," Falk says. "But we will have all the proper sanitizing, distancing, and mask-wearing measures in place, as well as limiting registration numbers based on the province's public health orders."

The basketball camp is just one of many camps and activities Niverville Rec has planned for when kids are out of school.

"We have 18 week-long camps planned for this summer starting in July and running through August," Falk says.

And many of those camps this summer will also provide opportunities for residents to check out the brand new CRRC.

"With the new facility opening, we wanted to expand our camp program and offer a larger variety of camps to Niverville youth," Falk says. "Some of the other new themes we have planned are culinary camp, volleyball camp, Olympics camp, and nature explorers camp."

Registration is now open for Niverville Rec's summer camps, including the Junior NBA Youth Basketball Camp.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

More information on the camps and how to register can be found by visiting www.whe-reyoubelong.ca and clicking the children's camps tab.

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Embracing an Outdoor Lifestyle

By Jennifer Lavin

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There are so many adventures to be had in southern Manitoba, but it isn't always easy to know where to go or what the possibilities even are. For the last two years, a local company has been making those decisions a little easier.

Starting back in 2019, SAYZOONS has been offering outdoor tourism activities and equipment rentals.

"SAYZOONS wants to be your guide and get you going on your next adventure," says Season Kirkwood, one of the partners behind the business. "Paddle, bike, camp, or register for any of our pop activities along the Crow Wing Trail."

To the uninitiated, the company's name may cause you to raise an eyebrow in curiosity. Kirkwood explains the meaning behind the unique name.

"My name is Season, and I run a year-round seasonal company, so I thought it would be fun to use Michif language, as I am Métis. So, SAYZOONS. We capitalized it so it's like a wild cheer!"

SAYZOONS is based out of St. Pierre-Jolys and operated out of 434 rue Sabourin in the old log cabin building visible along the main strip.

Because Kirkwood has always had a passion for the outdoors, she wanted to make her favourite

recreational activities available for everyone. She feels that not everybody has learned to live an outdoor lifestyle, and they often don't know what fun options are available to us right here in our own backyard.

She considers herself an outdoor lifestyle coach and says that their most popular offerings to date have been all-inclusive events for households where they set up the games and activities and let families enjoy themselves.

Although the pandemic has been a challenge for most businesses, Kirkwood says that it's actually helped them to expand their business model.

"SAYZOONS started as a business to show people how [to] spend time outdoors, and now people are doing it," she says. "So we feel the pandemic has created a new client base for us."

SAYZOONS has many options for your outdoor activities this summer. They offer rentals of kayaks, canoes, leisure bikes, and fat bikes for you to book and use on your own.

They also offer specials, such as their June promo, "Paddle & Pizza Sundays." Any Sunday afternoon in June, you can book an hour-long paddle on Lake St. Malo, and afterward a locally made pizza will be delivered right to your picnic site.

Kayaks, paddles, and life jackets are all included.

As well, all current public health orders are carefully observed.

There's also an option involving going on a bike ride through the beautiful scenery of St. Malo—and it ends the same way, with a fresh pizza delivered to your campsite.

They also offer Rat River tubing adventures, as well as experiential day camps this summer for children ages six to eight and nine to 12. The camps will run on certain Tuesdays and will feature hands-on fun and educational activities.

Looking ahead to July, Kirkwood says they'll be offering opportunities for families to join them in a park and play games that promote distancing and COVID-19 sanitation protocols. There are many different activities available in the company's "rec wagons," including board games, child-friendly archery equipment, bowling equipment, stilts, and obstacle courses.

"We want participants to find their connection in the world and to each other in every season," adds Kirkwood.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

■ Further details on these activities can be found at www.sayzoons.ca. It should be noted that pre-registration is required and that changes may be made to the schedule due to evolving COVID-19 regulations.

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