

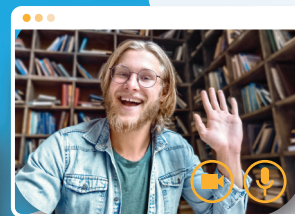
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VOLUME 8 - ISSUE 10

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LOCAL NEWS

Frequently Asked Question: Why Doesn't Niverville Have a Library?

■ It's an old but persistent question that continues to plague new residents to Niverville. Despite many attempts over the years, no one has (yet) been able to make the dream of a library come true.

Details on Pages 3-4

LOCAL NEWS

Hosting Thanksgiving on a Budget

■ It can be an expensive time of year, but *The Citizen* has curated some recipes to help make things a little easier.

Details on Page 5

LOCAL NEWS

IDC Development Given Reluctant Approval

■ Ritchot's council has given its approval to a number of requests from a developer looking to build south of IDC.

Details on Page 18

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Niverville Singers Nominated for MCMA's

■ Two performers from Niverville have been given nominations for this year's Manitoba Country Music Awards.

Details on Page 26



Nighthawks Inaugural Season Kicks Off with a Bang

» READ MORE ON PAGES 13-16

JUSTIN BRAUN

TOWN OF NIVERVILLE ELECTION

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

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

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The advertising deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the 20th of each month. The paper will be distributed the first week of every month.

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Could Someone Please Point Me in the Direction of the Niverville Public Library?

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

If Niverville's social media groups were an information kiosk, the curator would by now have a tuckered-out response to all those who come to town looking for the expected public library.

Because there isn't one. Indeed, those who pay close attention know that the question is raised so frequently that it could already have its own section in someone else's public library.

As recently as September 12, the ubiquitous question was posed again: if much smaller communities like St. Adolphe and Ile-des-Chênes can support public libraries, why not Niverville?

This time, the online question elicited well over 60 responses from locals, the majority in support of a public library or, at minimum, a subsidized rebate offered by the town which residents could then apply to the cost of library cards in neighbouring communities.

MANITOBA'S RURAL LIBRARIES

In 2021, Manitoba had a total of 53 library systems located outside the city of Winnipeg. The majority provide free access to resources for residents only.

Libraries in larger centres, such as Winnipeg and Steinbach, provide non-resident membership options, but it comes with a cost.

For an annual fee of \$95, non-residents can take advantage of all the resources and programming offered at Steinbach's Jake Epp Public Library. According to the library's website, the RM of Hanover offers its residents a \$30 rebate off a library card there. The RM of Ste. Anne offers a \$60 rebate to its residents.

An annual family membership to any of the Winnipeg libraries costs \$161 per year for non-residents. The Winnipeg Public Library website recommends that non-residents

check with their local municipality about rebates being offered.

So far, the Town of Niverville offers no library rebates to its residents.

In the RM of Ritchot, the communities of Ste. Agathe, St. Adolphe, and Ile-des-Chênes (IDC) all run public libraries from their schools under the auspices of the Bibliotheque Ritchot Library. Each is open to the public for two to three days per week after regular school hours.

At this point, the Ritchot Library board does not offer memberships to non-residents. According to the board's director, consideration of this nature is being made due to the sheer number of inquiries received from Niverville residents.

The IDC branch, located in the Ecole Gabrielle-Roy School, offers the widest selection of books, services, and programming of the three libraries.

Here, residents of Ritchot can loan DVDs and CDs. They can also acquire free access to an extensive array of resources through the online E-library and to the library's computers and internet services.

As for books, if they don't have what you're looking for, library staff can special order it for you thanks to the inter-library loan services they offer.

The library's space is also used for a variety of family activities, such as puppet shows and storytime readings for kids.

According to the Bibliotheque Ritchot Library director, more than 100 residents on average take advantage of the library services on a weekly basis in IDC alone.

ARE LIBRARIES HEADED FOR EXTINCTION?

If libraries have seen their hay day, the Manitoba government didn't get the memo. In October 2021, the province allocated almost \$770,000 in additional grants to rural libraries, over and above the annual library operating and start-up grants

they provide to library boards year after year.

"Manitoba libraries are important community hubs and this new investment recognizes their work in encouraging lifelong literacy, providing reading and educational opportunities and supporting the arts," said Sport, Culture and Heritage Minister Cathy Cox in a press release at the time of the announcement. "This new financial support will help ensure residents from all walks of life have access to information, services and the internet, allowing them to broaden their knowledge and expand their horizons through reading, research and community activities."

Deb Lussier of Niverville is one of the many residents who longs for library space in the community.

"Public libraries are about so much more than borrowing books," Lussier says. "They offer a community for families and individuals to learn together and develop a love for reading. They offer parents the ability to engage their children in a wholesome activity that will benefit them for years to come. They offer a space for individuals who may not have access to the internet or even basic education... Libraries [provide a place] to come together in a way that just isn't possible in any other forum."

With the high percentage of young families in town, Lussier believes that a public library would be well-utilized.

While some might argue that there are libraries available in every school and church, Lussier says they don't provide a broad cross-section of resources for all ages, faiths, or interests. As well, these libraries are generally exclusive and provide limited hours of access.

As for using a rebate to visit a neighbouring community's library, Lussier says she'd likely take advantage of that if it was the only option.

(continued on page 4)

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(continued from page 3)

In the end, though, she'd limit her use since gas prices and travel time make frequent trips out of town a financial burden for her family.

In 2018, writer Eric Klinenberg wrote an op-ed for *The New York Times* titled "To Restore Civil Society, Start with the Library." Klinenberg is a sociologist and author who asks this question: with public culture moving online, is the public library obsolete?

"The problem that libraries face today isn't irrelevance," Klinenberg says. "Indeed, in New York and many other cities, library circulation, program attendance and average hours spent visiting are up. The real problem that libraries face is that so many people are using them, and for such a wide variety of purposes, that library systems and their employees are overwhelmed."¹

The belief that libraries no longer serve a valuable purpose in an era of technology, he adds, is partly because there are so few people of influence who fully comprehend the expansive role played by library spaces.

The role a library plays is perhaps more important than ever to the social infrastructure of a community.

"Libraries don't just provide free access to books and other cultural materials," Klinenberg writes. "They also offer things like companionship for older adults, de facto childcare for busy parents, language instruction for immigrants and welcoming public spaces for the poor, the homeless and young people."¹

Libraries are places for culture and company, he continues. A place where all ages, genders, faiths, and interests intersect. Compare this to the social spaces of today's coffee shops where products must be purchased to use the space and patrons aren't always welcome to linger for hours at a time.

WHY NIVERVILLE HAS NO LIBRARY

Many residents of Niverville would tell you that the town's lack of a pub-

lic library is not due to a lack of trying to get one.

Long-time resident Ernie Braun belonged to a committee many years ago whose goal was to research how other communities were creating public library spaces and to look for a way to replicate the model in Niverville.

At the time, with a much smaller population and fewer public spaces available to them, the best option, as Braun recalls, was to try and facilitate the use of the already-existing library in the Niverville Collegiate.

"That didn't pan out all that well because there was no direct access to the library from outside," Braun says. "So the entire school would have to be open to the public every evening that the library was open, and that did not work with Hanover School Division, if I remember correctly."

Lisa Letkeman was part of another committee that formed for the same purpose about 15 years ago, some years after Braun's committee walked away from the initiative.

"We worked alongside a person from the Public Library Services office," Letkeman says. "Town council said they would find space for a library if we could prove there was interest."

The first step, she says, was to present council with a petition which had been signed by a specified number of Niverville residents. The committee collected those signatures easily within just a week or two.

The petition was left with the town's former CAO in the hopes that council would move forward with the next steps of creating a bylaw and discussing a location.

Letkeman recalls some conversation which implied that space was currently available in the Niverville Heritage Centre. But before the library initiative ever got off the ground, the space was given to the daycare instead.

With that, the committee disbanded and moved on to other

things.

"Interestingly, years later I got a phone call from someone from the Public Library office encouraging me to fight for a library again," Letkeman says. "She suggested we ask the Steinbach library to take us under their wings. Their board would manage our library and they would help cover the cost of accounting, etc. I thought her ideas were brilliant but was not in a place where I could take on the responsibility."

Offering rebates for use at other library locations, she adds, completely nullifies the importance of the role of the shared community space that Niverville residents deserve.

In addition, a library has much relevance to the historical aspects of a community.

"An important role a library can play in our community is to be the keeper of records and history for

"An important role a library can play in our community is to be the keeper of records and history for Niverville. Whether it's statistics, official records, or the many books written by residents, we need a place to house the story of our community."

Lisa Letkeman / Niverville Resident

Niverville," Letkeman says. "Whether it's statistics, official records, or the many books written by residents, past and present, we need a place to house the story of our community."

THE MAYOR RESPONDS

Mayor Myron Dyck says that council sees the creation of a standalone public library as similar to that of a public pool. It's a facility that has the potential to create an extra tax burden for residents since, statistically, pools and libraries operate at a higher cost than the revenues they are able to generate.

As for incorporating it into the

building plan when the CRRC was being developed, Dyck says grant limitations influenced council's decisions at that time.

"The whole issue of being a multicultural centre was a key note in [the grant] application and how the centre would be seen to support all cultures of people," Dyck says. "Immigration was another key point in the application. Thus, the museum was put in to show how Niverville is multicultural. The teaching kitchen was put in to show that we would be using it to help immigrants to Canada assimilate to Canadian culture by teaching them Canadian food options and preparation of foods grown in the area. The multi-purpose rooms were put in and the application we presented stated we would be using them to teach English as a second language. Without these amenities, money would not have come."

In terms of other community-owned spaces, Dyck sees few alternatives for a library location. The south end of the old arena is currently in use by the preschool. The Niverville Heritage Centre is at capacity and the space that is currently unoccupied at the town office is being reserved for the expansion of community safety services.

Even so, Mayor Dyck encourages individuals or groups to do a little research into the budgets of other public libraries if they hope to get something started here.

HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION

The Citizen reached out to the Hanover School Division (HSD) for comment on collaborating with the town for public library space in one of the local schools. Hélène Connelly, executive secretary of the HSD, says that they haven't received any inquiries of this nature recently, but they'd be open to dialogue on the topic.

The division's Community Use of Schools policy states: "Hanover School Division believes that it is

important to promote and support the development of partnership agreements between community members, local municipalities and recreation commissions for the use of school and community facilities to enhance the educational, recreational, social and cultural learning experiences of all Hanover students and community members."

HOW TO START A LIBRARY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

The Public Library Services Branch (PLSB) is a government-run organization operating under Manitoba Sport, Culture and Heritage.

"Our goals are designed to foster and strengthen the network of community-based public library services in Manitoba," their website states.²

The PLSB provides complete consultation and support from the start-up phase right through to organization and governance. A community library board must be established from the onset.

Further support is also provided by way of grant funding for rural communities. The first is the Rural Library Establishment grant to assist in getting a community's first public library off the ground.

A prerequisite to receiving this grant is that the municipality must also contribute a sum of \$3.75 per capita.

Annual operating grants and technology upgrade grants are also available. It is expected that a portion of the operating grant will also be cost-shared by the municipality.

Federal grants, too, are available to libraries through the Canada Council of Archives.

REFERENCES

¹ Eric Klinenberg, *The New York Times*, "To Restore Civil Society, Start with the Library." Date of access: September 20, 2022 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/09/08/opinion/sunday/civil-society-library.html>).

² "Public Library Services," Government of Manitoba. Date of access: September 20, 2022 (<https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/pls/>).

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CITIZEN POLL

Do you think that Niverville needs a library of its own?

- ☐ Yes. Niverville is the largest and fastest growing town in Manitoba, and its citizens need to be able to access a library.
- ☐ No. Libraries are potentially expensive to operate, somewhat obsolete, and unnecessary for a growing town.

Have a more nuanced opinion?
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Yes. More needs to be done to control the local cat population.

43%

No. Cats are harmless and are beneficial in terms of culling rats. Let them roam.

57%

YOUR COMMENTS:

Personally, I'm not a cat owner and I think some people overreact.

Cats are cool creatures. Leave them alone.

Some of us would rather have cats than mice.

Dogs barking is a problem

Thanksgiving Recipes for the Budget-Conscious

By Jennifer Lavin

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Thanksgiving is nearly upon us again. But the past few years have been difficult on many of us as we've muddled our way through a pandemic.

This fall, most will hopefully be able to celebrate Thanksgiving with friends and family once again.

That said, COVID-19 affected our collective health and well-being as well as our wallets, and recent inflation has only served to put additional financial pressure on families.

In the spirit of helping people get through an often expensive autumn holiday, *The Citizen* has curated a few celebratory recipes that are both delicious and somewhat easy on the pocketbook.

Happy Thanksgiving and enjoy!

CORN CASSEROLE

My mother-in-law says that this recipe is a hit at every event to which she brings it.

Ingredients:

- 1 can creamed corn (398 ml)
- 1 can whole kernel corn (341 ml)
- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ cup butter or margarine

Directions:

Mix all four ingredients together and transfer to a greased eight-by-eight-inch pan. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 45 minutes, until the centre is completely set.

PUMPKIN DOLLOP CAKE

This recipe has been created and tested specifically for *The Citizen* by Veronique Desormeaux, who operates Cuisinique. The business creates custom earth-centric and pantry-friendly recipes.

"Our home does this by trying to provide and grow our own ingredients, reusing home decor by thrifting, and foraging seasonal florals," says Desormeaux. "This cake is versatile in its ability to host most fruits, from stone fruit to berries. The sour cream ensures a delicate and sumptuous crumb. I particularly love



that the cake batter itself comes together in one bowl."

Start by creating the topping. Combine these ingredients in a medium-sized bowl, with a hand-mixer:

Ingredients:

- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup flour
- ¾ tsp cinnamon
- ⅛ tsp nutmeg (optional)
- ¼ cup softened butter or margarine

Next, prepare the cake. Start by setting aside two cups of pumpkin purée. Then combine the following ingredients in a large tall-sided bowl with a hand-mixer:

Ingredients:

- 3 cups flour, sifted
- 1½ cups white sugar
- 4½ tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- ¼ cup sour cream
- ¼ cup softened butter or margarine
- 1½ cups milk
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Zest of 1 orange (optional)

Directions:

Mix your cake batter in one bowl. Mix your topping ingredients in a separate smaller bowl.

Prepare your baking pan of choice (9-by-13 inches is recommended) with a thin layer of margarine or vegetable oil.

Using a large soup spoon, dollop pumpkin purée throughout the baking dish, ensuring that the dollops are evenly spaced.

Pour the cake batter into the baking dish.

Again, using a large soup spoon, dollop pumpkin purée overtop the cake batter, ensuring that the dollops are evenly spaced.

Using your hands, crumble the topping over the batter.

Bake at 350 degree for 40 to 45 minutes.

Once ready, let the cake cool in the pan. Within 20 minutes, it will be ready to serve on its own or with vanilla ice cream.

LEFTOVER TURKEY STUFFING CASSEROLE

There aren't many options for reducing the cost of the turkey for your Thanksgiving dinner, but here's a delicious way to use up some of the leftovers.

Ingredients:

- 3 cups cooked turkey, roughly chopped
- 1 cup gravy
- 1 cup cranberry sauce
- 2 cups cooked green beans (or other leftover vegetables)
- 4 cups cooked stuffing
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons butter

Directions:

Place the turkey in the bottom of the casserole dish, and sprinkle it with salt and pepper.

Pour gravy over the turkey and spread to cover evenly.

Add cranberry sauce and vegetables evenly over the turkey mixture.

Add stuffing and spread evenly over other ingredients. Dot with butter, and cover with aluminum foil.

Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes covered, then 10 to 15 minutes uncovered in a well-greased pan.

CRANBERRY APPLESAUCE

Supplementing costly cranberries with lower cost apples makes this recipe budget-friendly and makes it more palatable for kids. Since this recipe needs to be pre-

pared beforehand, it won't require any extra work on the big day.

Ingredients:

- 5 medium apples
- 1½ cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground cloves
- pinch of salt
- 2 tbsp water
- ½ tsp orange zest

Directions:

Cut apples into small pieces, then pour them into a heavy-bottomed pot and add the cranberries, maple syrup, cinnamon, cloves, salt, and water. Then add the zest, about half an orange.

Cook sauce for about 10 minutes on medium high heat, then stir.

Turn the heat down to medium low and put the lid on. Let it cook another 20 minutes, taking the lid off every five minutes or so to stir the mixture thoroughly.

Purée the sauce in a blender or with an immersion blender. If you need to, add a little bit more liquid to help you purée the applesauce, then simmer it again to cook off any excess liquid.

SAGE DRESSING

This delicious dressing was created by my mom, Irmie Goertzen, and our family has taste-tested it for every Thanksgiving meal over the course of the last 50 years.

Ingredients:

- 1 loaf of bread
- ½ package of dry onion soup mix
- ½ cup melted butter
- ¼ cup water
- 1 tbsp sage
- 1 tsp parsley

Directions:

In a large bowl, mix bread (pulled apart or cut into small pieces) and onion soup.

Melt butter, add water and spices, then drizzle over bread mixture and stir. Mixture should be moist and stick together a bit but not drenched.

Cook for at least one hour (covered) in the oven at 350 degrees, or the same amount of time in a slow cooker.




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2022 Farm Report: Nothing Predictable About This Year's Crop

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Local farmer Marc Loeppky has few words to describe this year's crop production other than that it's "all over the map."

Loeppky's farm, located immediately southwest of Niverville, consists of 3,200 acres of planted fields. This year's crops include peas, oats, spring wheat, canola, soybeans, and corn.

Springflooding followed by a series of heavy rainfalls got the growing season off to a late start for many southeastern Manitoba farmers this year.

Traditionally, Loeppky says, weather conditions allow for a late April to early May start to seeding.

With the expectation of some inclement weather and a few possible machinery breakdowns along the way, Loeppky adds that, under typical circumstances, seeding would then be completed somewhere around the May long weekend.

"This year we started May 17, were rained out on the 18th, started back up again on the 25th, and went till the 28th before we were rained out again," Loeppky says. "Then we started again on June 6 and finished up June 10."

In an effort to create flow, which saves the farmer valuable time throughout the growing season, Loeppky says that various crop types are typically seeded one at a time.

As well, since crop rotation is a necessary part of managing crop disease, specific fields are pre-designated for certain crop types each year.

Unfortunately, the handicaps experienced by Loeppky in springtime served to change the course of his entire growing season.

"This year, because it was so late, we seeded whichever field was dry enough with the

crop that had been planned and sometimes fertilized for last fall," says Loeppky. "The result of this lingers all season, equating to absolutely no flow to anything and a lot more time spent switching between crops."

Loeppky was met with other challenges along the way, too. Constant wind and rain throughout the summer made crop-spraying difficult. And the number of high heat days the southeast experienced was substantially lower than previous years.

According to one of Loeppky's sources, Manitoba averages approximately 13 days of 30+ degree Celsius temperatures every summer. In 2021, that number almost doubled with 34 days of high heat.

By September of this year, southeast Manitoba had only seen about five days of high heat throughout the entire growing season.

As expected, the transition into harvest season has also been delayed by about two to three weeks.

"Normally we start harvest on the second week of August and this year we started August 31," says Loeppky. "We harvested three days and will wait a week for anything else to be ready."

This wait, he adds, is the result of nine days in spring where rain made seeding impossible. The crop-to-crop flow of harvest is also lost this year. So far, Loeppky's been able to harvest one field of wheat, one field of peas, and one of canola.

As September rolls in, though, Loeppky has been somewhat buoyed by the promise of sunshine and the lack of precipitation in the forecast for the coming days.

For him and other crop farmers, a later start to harvest means working with ever-decreasing periods of daylight every day. This equates to more harvest days required to

get the crop into the bin for the winter.

Of course, fall temperatures eventually bring frost, which is of particular risk for crops such as corn and soybeans. Loeppky says September 13 is a common date held up for first frost of the fall season. He's crossing his fingers that this, too, will delay a little longer this year.

Speaking to the quality of the crops coming in so far, Loeppky says his early crops have done remarkably well given the stress they were under. In the sections of field where water was a constant issue, he anticipates yields below average.

To be a farmer means to roll with the punches. But this year Mother Nature wasn't the only one getting in the way. Like all other Manitobans, farmers too have been going head-to-head with the high price of fuel, fertilizer, equipment, and other costs of doing business, referred to as input costs.

"Unfortunately, we can't dictate the price we get for commodities," Loeppky says, referring to the value of the individual crop he grows. "This year they've been fairly high, which will offset the increased input costs. Tough times are ahead when the prices come down and the inputs don't—which we know will happen."

Loeppky adds that supply, too, has been a huge problem in his industry. There were times earlier this year when the availability of fertilizers and chemicals seemed dicey. Getting quick replacement parts when equipment broke down was equally problematic.

And everything, he says, came with an insanely inflated price tag.

"All these things we need to produce a crop, so not a lot has changed in our practices other than trying to be proactive and carrying more inventory of parts and pre-ordering inputs," Loeppky concludes.

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IN BRIEF

Niverville: Hear from Your Council Candidates at Election Forum

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
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On October 26, voters across Manitoba will get the opportunity to cast votes for their mayors, councillors, and school trustees. With several candidates vying for a limited number of spots on council, Niverville residents will have several people to consider.

That's why the Niverville Chamber of Commerce and *The Citizen* have teamed up to host a candidates forum—and give voters all the information they need to make an informed decision.

The event will take place at 7:00 p.m. in the CRRC fieldhouse on Wednesday, October 5.

Mayor Myron Dyck has already secured another four-year term by acclamation, since nobody chose to run against him, but he will open the question period with a brief address.

There are seven candidates for the remaining four councillor seats, and all will face questions from a pair of moderators representing the Chamber and the Citizen.

The four incumbents are Kevin Stott, Chris Wiebe, Nathan Dueck, and John Funk. The three challengers are Jason Alderson, Meghan Beasant, and Bill Fast.

The formal portion of the evening will run from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Candidates may also be available afterward for an informal meet-and-greet. The evening will be livestreamed for those who can't attend the forum in person.

Stott Hopeful for Another Term on Council

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER
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Incumbent councillor Kevin Stott is back on the campaign trail and hopeful that, on October 26, residents of Niverville will send him back to the council chambers for another term.

Having a few new faces in the running for council this year, he says, makes things more interesting.

"It is always nice to have more than just incumbents running," Stott says. "You do have to have a change in council sooner or later... Anytime anyone [new] runs, your job is up for grabs."

At the same time, Stott anticipates that voters will also see the importance of keeping some continuity on council to help keep the current momentum going. With 12 straight council years under his belt—and 16 years on council in total—he believes he can be that person.

His advice to new candidates is that they should be fully cognizant of the role council members play in a community. First-time councillors should expect it to take years before they fully find their stride, Stott says, recalling his own first term.

Among the many learning curves of council work is the give and take, and sometimes personal sacrifice, that's required when five members of council all come to the table with different ideas. Some councils do that better than others, Stott concludes.

"All the councils I've been on have been good," he says. "I have really enjoyed this council that I've been with for the last eight years now. We work very well together and get along very well."

A hot topic for all of Stott's years on council has been that of wastewater management. The constant need for ever-expanding lagoons and the issue of aging sewer infrastructure are the stuff that consumes so much of council's time and energy.

For this reason, the recent collaboration of four municipalities to create a solution for a shared wastewater treatment plant, Stott



Kevin Stott is running for re-election.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

says, was a proud moment for him and the rest of council. It's a solution that should save residents of Niverville and their neighbours a lot of tax dollars.

Stott fondly recalls his first term on council when another monumental stride was made in sewage solutions. This, too, was a forward-thinking council, well ahead of its time in terms of environmental sustainability.

It began with the need to remediate a saturated lagoon. It continued with the novel idea to use a natural solution, which resulted in a beautiful wetlands area that the whole community can enjoy. That project won a prestigious award for Excellence in Sustainability, garnering the attention of soil scientists and land reclamation experts across Canada.

It also saved Niverville taxpayers \$1.25 million in remediation costs.

Stott says he first came to council in 2002 with a desire to maintain the integrity of the community's small-town feel. He soon realized, though, that to stay small means to become stagnant and eventually die.

"I went on a little trip to Snowflake, Manitoba that year," he says. "The people there told me what Snowflake used to be like and how it was an [economic hub]... When I was there, they had just finished selling the arena. There were no grocery stores and they'd just bulldozed six houses because they couldn't sell them. That's

what stagnation [does]."

Since then, he's made it his mission to set a course for community growth. This, he says, has been of benefit to every single resident and business owner. Growth is what drives up the price of real estate, turning everyone into a winner.

It's this same growth, he adds, that allowed council to bring in amenities such as the CRRC and the new high school. And the ground was barely settled before the CRRC became home to the new Niverville Nighthawks. Providence University College also plays its home volleyball and basketball games at the facility.

"Niverville's always been known to have some good quality sports teams, but we weren't always able to host some of the big tournaments because our facilities weren't big enough," Stott says. "Now we hope we can."

Another achievement of Stott's last four years is the booming growth of the industrial park. This growth, he says, has been and will continue to be of utmost importance in terms of job creation and the town's self-sustainability.

"I don't think a bedroom community is what anybody wants here. If you look around, we probably have close to 1,500 jobs in town now... and when you're around that [number], you're actually importing workers to town," he says. "When you sit there and watch in the morning, there's as much traffic coming into town as there is going out."

Looking to the next four years, Stott says council will continue to have its hands full as it works out solutions to a lot of unanswered questions related to growth.

For instance, the added cost of policing a growing community is something council will need to solve.

And if the focus is to continue making Niverville a regional health centre, council will be driven to attract more medical professionals and services. Seniors housing, daycares, and schools are also among the many things that will need serious consideration.

"A lot of thought will need to go into where [these things will go] before there's no room left for them," Stott says.

But Stott says that he comes from a long line of community champions and problem-solvers. He is a third-generation resident of the area. His children and grandchildren make five generations on this soil.

Long-time residents can attest to the fact that there's rarely a committee or organization that one Stott or another hasn't had their hand in.

"I grew up here, I love my community, and I want to see it continue to do better," Stott says.

This is why council work has been a passion and not a duty for him.

When asked about the need for more diversity on council, he muses over a standing joke that has the current council members pegged as "male, pale, and stale." But, he says, there doesn't need to be gender, skin colour, or age diversity when it comes to representing your community well.

As a father, grandfather, son, brother, and husband, he's confident he's got the tools to understand most needs. For those that he doesn't, he's willing to listen and learn.

Stott says he's received much encouragement to throw his hat back in the ring. At the end of the day, though, it doesn't matter who runs for council if voters don't show up at the polls.

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Claydon Gunning for Re-election in Ste. Agathe

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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Ritchot councillor Curtis Claydon is back on the campaign trail and hopes that Ste. Agathe residents will send him back for another four-year term.

Claydon began his political career in 2018 when he won the Ward 3 seat by acclamation. This time around, he is facing some competition for the seat.

He admits to a little naivete when he first joined council almost four years ago. This time around, he says that he's more prepared for the reality of the demands of council involvement.

As well, he won't be saddled with the steep learning curve of his first few months in office.

"For my first term, I was somewhat naive as to the demands of the role and the political involvement," says Claydon. "There is a significant amount of personal time spent interacting with residents, researching decisions, coordinating efforts, and navigating policy. If you have a career, you can expect to work 12-hour workdays, on occasion, when combining council activities."

Still, he says it's good to feel the support of his family and of community stakeholders such as the Ste. Agathe Community Development Inc. (CDI) in his decision to run again.

"I work closely with the groups that improve our community, so it is important to me that projects succeed with municipal support," Claydon says. "It's a privilege to represent the bilingual community of Ste. Agathe, and also Glenlea, the rural addresses, businesses, and agricultural producers that call Ritchot home."

And indeed this past term has been a busy one for Claydon. Above regular council duties, he has been active on more than six auxiliary committees, including the Ste. Agathe CDI, the Ritchot Community Development Corp., the Ritchot Recreation



Curtis Claydon is running to keep his seat on Ritchot's council.

Advisory Committee, and the Association of Rural Municipalities.

Claydon credits the synergy of the current council members for the considerable development that's occurred in the RM in recent years. Council's focus, he says, has been to encourage sustainable growth by fostering relationships with RM residents and local developers. For this reason, new building permits continue to reach record highs across the municipality.

Ste. Agathe, too, he says, is likely to be heading into yet another growth phase.

His term in office has produced some important highlights, not the least of which was the rollout of high-speed fibre internet to his hometown of Ste. Agathe. Getting this initial infrastructure, he adds, means high-speed expansion can continue throughout the rest of the RM.

"It's tough to think back a couple of years and remember how we struggled through the pandemic, making Zoom calls that constantly cut out or froze on us," he says. "We are working for the remaining residents that still experience this, but for many, we can now boast the most affordable and high-quality internet in Manitoba."

He's also proud to have been a part of bringing in the new sidewalk and crossing lights at PR 305, which makes for a significantly safer school crossing zone for students living on the north side of town.

The new wastewater treatment facility was a major win

for Claydon as well, who sees a great many new opportunities now for the Riel Industrial Park.

"If you combine the increased water capacity that we are currently working on, you are going to see food processors with a competitive advantage for expansion and the start of a race to purchase the remaining lots."

Reducing Ste. Agathe's crime rate by 62 percent in 2021 was something Claydon attributes at least in part to the mobile patrol company that council hired as well as the inception of the Citizen on Patrol Program in Ste. Agathe.

But while the big projects are important, the little impacts council had on residents' lives are the ones that really resonated with Claydon.

"The ability to connect with residents and provide support is incredibly rewarding. Leading the charge to have the very first Pride flag flown in the municipality or working with a family to create a bylaw to allow for beekeeping in a residential zone are examples of this."

If re-elected, Claydon already has a list of new or ongoing projects he's ready to dig into.

This fall, he says, the Ste. Agathe dock and boat launch should near their completion. As well, the new Baudry Trails project continues to evolve.

"I am encouraged by the focus on healthy living and have supported the development of our waterfront along the Red River," Claydon says.

"My vision is to link both projects with pathways that meet on either side of the proposed PR 305 bridge reconstruction."

Major upgrades are also in the works for Cheyenne Park.

He's disappointed that staying on top of municipal roads and infrastructure was made exceptionally tough this year by the spring thaw, high waters, and the need to wait on the province for financial assistance.

In spite of that, he says Ste. Agathe will soon see some construction begin along Pembina Trail with an extension of the sidewalk from Lemoine to Courcelles Street. At the same time, some ditches will be filled and drainage will be upgraded to match the north side development.

"The work is budgeted at around \$175,000. I am confident that many additional small projects will be cleaned up once our Public Works department sets up in the community to start construction."

Claydon says he will continue to advocate for the development of a full or partial dike along the riverbank. A design process for this is already in the discussion stage.

And finally, he hopes to pursue options for the community's older residents so that they are able to live independently but in a supported environment in their hometown.

As for Claydon's campaign strategy, he says it will involve a lot of community dialogue and interaction. He also welcomes residents to reach out to him by phone, email, or social media.

"Mark your calendars for October 26 and get out there and vote," Claydon says to his constituents. "New residents should contact the RM to get on the voters list and avoid delay at the polling stations."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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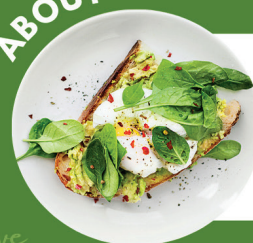
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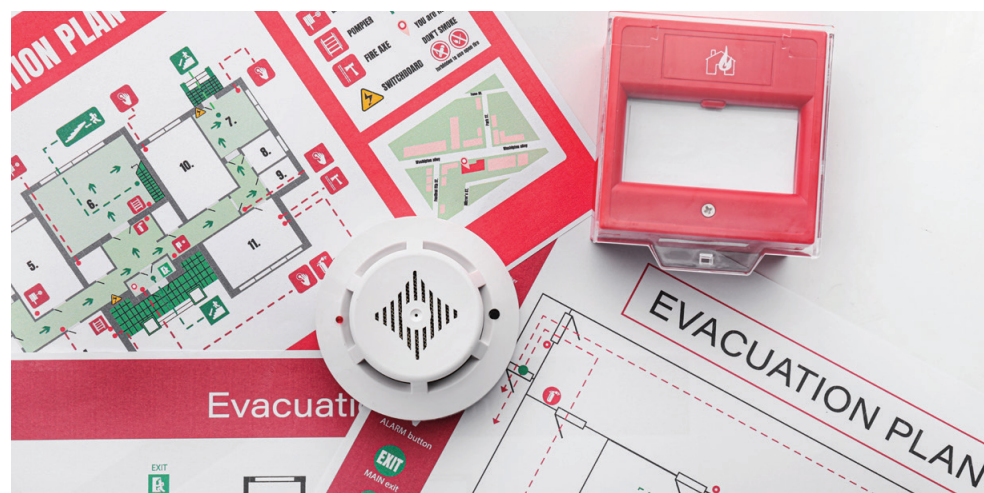


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DEPOSITPHOTOS

Fire Prevention Week Campaign Focuses on Escape Plans

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the annual Fire Prevention Week campaign. The theme for this year's campaign, which runs from October 9 to 15, is "Fire won't wait. Plan your escape."

The Niverville Fire and Emergency Services team want to remind residents about the crucial importance of drawing up a family escape plan and practicing it regularly with the entire family.

"A home escape plan should show two ways out of sleeping areas," says fire chief Keith Bueckert. "This provides options on what to do if smoke or heat blocks your egress."

As well, he adds, families should decide in advance on a specific meet-up point on the property, well away from the dangers of fire and smoke. It's at this point where the 911 call should be made.

Bueckert says that having

this kind of emergency plan in place is more important than ever before.

"Today, fires burn hotter and faster than 30 years ago due to construction materials changing," explains Bueckert. "From the time a smoke alarm sounds, you may only have two minutes to exit your house. And never return into a burning building."

Equally important is regular testing of smoke alarms to make sure they are working. Bueckert says that smoke alarms should be located just outside of all sleeping areas, but many homeowners are opting to place them inside bedrooms, too.

He recommends familiarizing kids with the sound of the household smoke alarm so they'll recognize it in an emergency.

As well, he suggests fire drills should occasionally take place when the kids are already sleeping. According to studies, children react

differently to smoke alarms at night than they will during waking hours.

Several events are being planned in preparation for Fire Prevention Week. Fire and emergency services crew will soon be paying a special visit to students at the Niverville Elementary School and sending home materials for families to peruse.

Children will have an opportunity to enter contests and win prizes. Details can be found in the fire prevention materials.

On October 11, residents are invited to the Niverville Fire Hall for an open house from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. Attendees are asked to bring along one non-perishable item for donation to the Niverville Helping Hands foodbank.

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Meet the Voice of the Nighthawks

By Ty Dilello

✉ tdilello@nivervillecitizen.com

Kevin Pauls has recently been brought on to become the Niverville Nighthawks' official broadcaster for radio and Hockey TV for the 2022-23 season.

Kevin Pauls, the official broadcaster for Nighthawks radio and Hockey TV for the inaugural season, was born in Winnipeg in 1977 and then raised in Morden, where he continues to live with his wife and three kids.

"I grew up playing every sport, including hockey, just not organized," says Pauls. "My dad built me

rinks, and I skated and practiced there."

Pauls has also coached at all levels of minor hockey as well as some high school and Manitoba development programs.

Prior to joining the Nighthawks, he served with the MJHL's Winkler Flyers as their broadcaster.

"I've always been an avid hockey fan," he says. "I grew up watching a lot of hockey and have been a New Jersey Devils fan since the late 1980s. Southern Manitoba had plenty of good hockey to watch at the rink, so I was always at Morden Redskins, Pembina Valley Hawks, or Winkler Flyers

games whenever possible."

Besides watching his kids play the game, Pauls's favourite moment in hockey arrived when he saw the New Jersey Devils win the Stanley Cup in 2000.

"Jason Arnott scored in double overtime as some friends and I watched on a tiny 13-inch TV at a cabin," says Pauls of the seminal moment. "We went bananas! My friends and I have a tradition of watching hockey outside on the deck, weather permitting, and I'd have to say that's my favourite thing about hockey now."

Looking ahead to the upcoming season, Pauls is beyond

thrilled to become the team's voice for their first-ever campaign.

"Joining the Niverville Nighthawks is a great opportunity, not just from the broadcasting perspective but to witness a hockey team being built from the ground up is pretty cool," he says with enthusiasm. "The people here are really great, and working with Kelvin Cech is a pleasure. I get to do what I love most with my daughter at my side. It doesn't get any better than that. I'm beyond excited to be a part of this organization and to see what it does for the community. Let's go!"

What is the MJHL?

By Ty Dilello

✉ tdilello@nivervillecitizen.com

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League is the oldest Junior league in Canada, established in 1917-18 as the Winnipeg and District Junior Hockey League. In 1933, it was renamed to the current title.

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League is one of the most storied leagues in Canada. In its inaugural season, the Selkirk Fishermen defeated the Fort Rouge Wanderers to win the league's first championship.

The Turnbull Memorial Trophy, also known popularly as the Turnbull Cup, has been the MJHL championship trophy for more than a hundred years, and it's highly coveted.

The trophy was donated in 1920 in honour of Captain Walter James "Ollie" Turnbull, veteran of World War I. Turnbull was killed in active duty in 1916 and awarded the Military Cross for Bravery.

The Selkirk Fishermen defeated the Winnipeg Young Men's Lutheran Club in 1920 to earn the first championship. In 2019, the Portage Terriers became the one hundredth team awarded the Turnbull Cup.

In the 1940s and 1950s, most MJHL teams were sponsored by NHL teams and sported names such as the Winnipeg Black Hawks, St. Boniface Canadiens, and Winnipeg Rangers.

Over the years, more than two hundred MJHL players have gone on to the NHL, and 11 of those MJHL graduates have been inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame, including Andy Bathgate, Turk Broda, Art Coulter, Bobby Clarke, Charlie Gardiner, Bryan Hextall, Tom Johnson, Harry Oliver, Babe Pratt, Terry Sawchuk, and Jack Stewart.

In that time, the MJHL has produced 14 national championship teams, winning 11 Memorial Cups and three Centennial/RBC Cups.

Today, the MJHL is a 13-team Junior A ice hockey league and one of nine member leagues of the Canadian Junior Hockey League (CJHL).

Of the 13 teams, eight qualify for each year's playoffs. The playoff champion is awarded the Turnbull Cup and a berth to the Centennial Cup (formerly known as the Royal Bank Cup).

The MJHL has developed into a tough, competitively balanced league, with any team able to win on any given day. This has created some tremendous playoff series to the delight of the MJHL's loyal fanbase.

The MJHL continues a very rich tradition of developing players for advancement to the higher levels of hockey. When a player decides to play for an MJHL team, he will be joining an impressive group of young men who have played in the league and gone on to greatness in the NHL and in other careers.

The Niverville Nighthawks expansion franchise is proud to join the MJHL as its thirteenth team to begin play in the 2022-23 season.

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Nighthawks Inaugural Kicks Off

**By Ty Dilello and
Brenda Sawatzky**

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✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Hundreds of hockey fans flooded into Niverville's CRRC on Saturday, September 17 to be part of history in the making. They were there for the inaugural home game of the newly formed Niverville Nighthawks and the official kickoff celebration of the community's initiation into the Manitoba Junior Hockey League.

Excited fans filled the bleachers and standing areas to capacity, spilling over into the viewing gallery and fieldhouse next door where a large

screen played the game in real time.

The event got off to an electric start as each Nighthawk team member entered the darkened rink through a haze of smoke and flashing lights. One by one, their names and positions were called out by boisterous Nighthawks announcer Kevin Dunn, quickly getting excited fans acquainted with their new team.

A stream of dignitaries followed the players onto the ice, including Nighthawks president Clarence Braun, Premier Heather Stefanson, MLA Ron Schuler, MP Ted Falk, Niverville mayor Myron Dyck, and Kevin Saurette, commissioner of the

MJHL.

"I want to thank these 25 young men who have chosen to be here, who travelled from various parts of the United States and Canada to come to a community that most had never heard of to be part of the first-ever Niverville Nighthawks team," Braun said in his opening address. "A special thank you also to the parents, many who are here for tonight's first game. We will endeavour to provide your sons with a meaningful lifelong experience. And it is our hope that, in good ways, they will never forget their experience in Niverville."

Braun extended more words of

gratitude to the long list of organizations and people who've contributed to this dream-turned-reality. These come from all levels of government, providing significant funds towards the cost of the almost \$20 million facility, to the MJHL governors, scout staff, coaching team, billet parents, volunteers, and fans.

Premier Stefanson had the honour of dropping the inaugural puck. Niverville local Trevor Lux then brought the fans to their feet for the singing of the national anthem.

"There's a lot of excitement in the building tonight and I'm looking forward to the game," Braun

told *The Citizen* as the first period jumped into action. "Whenever you're doing something like this for the first time, giving people opportunity to get behind a team they don't know, it's always a challenge. It's going to take a little while to build that sense of camaraderie with the fans, but I think that's going to happen soon."

Perhaps it happened sooner that Braun expected.

Unfortunately, although the first regular season game in Niverville Nighthawks franchise history is officially in the books, it went down as a hard-fought loss—not that any fans in the building seemed



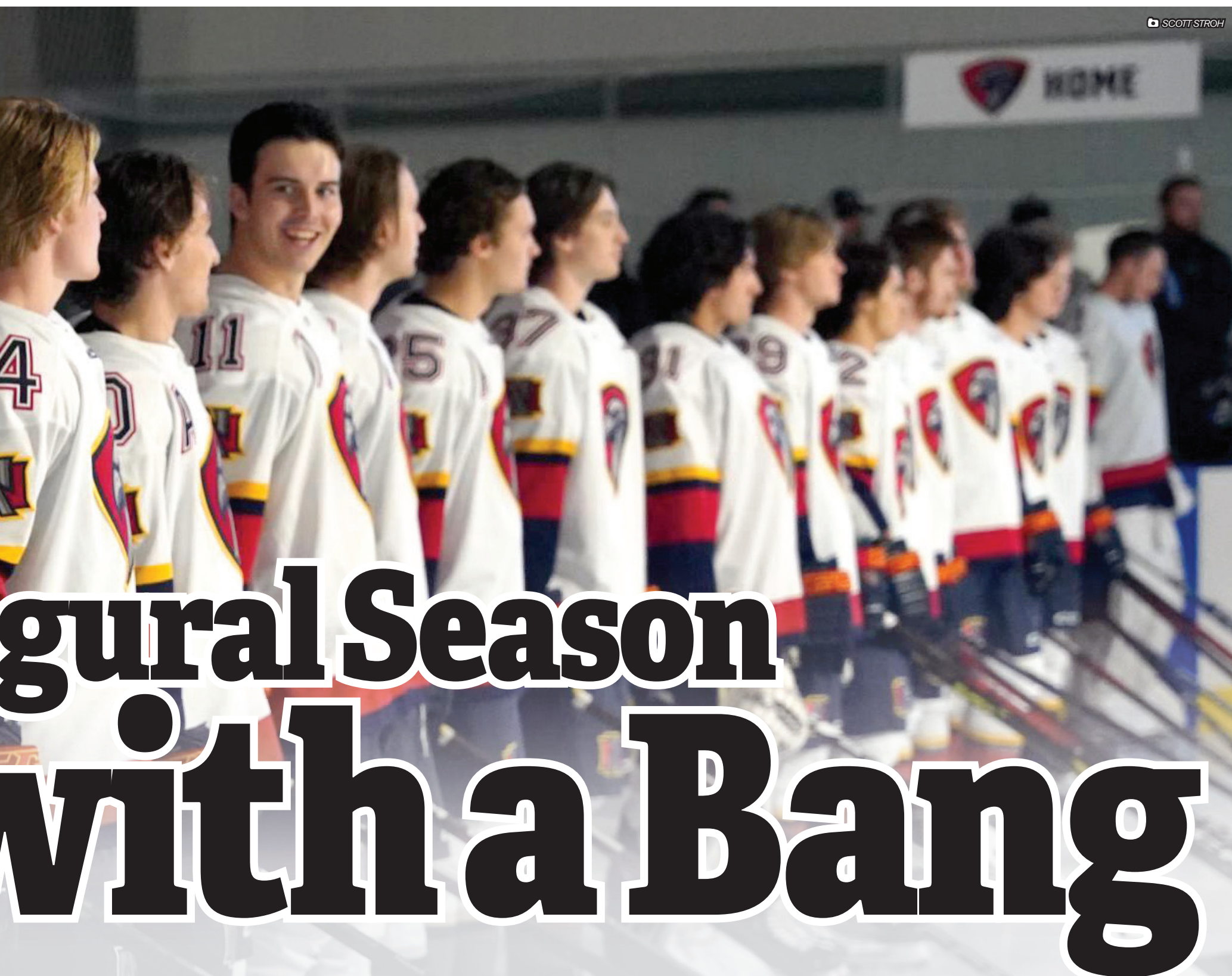
UPCOMING HOME GAMES

OCT. 7 @ 7:30 P.M.
VS. WINNIPEG FREEZE

OCT. 14 @ 7:30 P.M.
VS. VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

OCT. 23 @ 3:00 P.M.
VS. OCN BLIZZARD

OCT. 29 @ 7:30 P.M.
VS. PORTAGE TERRIERS
GAME DAY SPONSOR
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disappointed by the experience.

In the end, the Niverville Nighthawks put up a valiant effort but fell to the Steinbach Pistons 4-1 in the second game of a back-to-back series to kick off the 2022-23 season. The Pistons had taken the season opener as well, played the night before in Steinbach.

Steinbach jumped out to an early lead, before Carson Reed scored for the Nighthawks on the powerplay to level the game at 1-1.

"Scoring in general is always a fun thing to do, but to do it in front of your fans, especially on a night like tonight, is extremely special," said Reed.

The Pistons controlled play the rest of the way, scoring once in the second period and twice in the final frame to take the game 4-1.

The score could have been more lopsided had it not been for the strong play of Nighthawks' netminder Chris Fines, who stood tall in goal, making 42 saves on the night.

Despite dropping the game, the Nighthawks were in good spirits afterwards and were very appreciative to the town of Niverville for throwing their whole-hearted, and full-throated, support behind the team.

"The home opener was great,"

said Reed. "I mean, it means so much to us as players that we have the support we have. We can't thank the volunteers enough for the time they are giving us and the community. And for the fans... they were great, they were loud, and they cheered us on the whole way through."

"The vibe was awesome. We certainly felt the support of our fans," added Nighthawks head coach Kelvin Cech. "I've liked our resiliency. We knew these would be two tough games, and it was a good measuring stick for us."

The Nighthawks then had a few days of practice before hitting the

road to play Winkler the following Wednesday.

"You know we are still trying to figure everything out," said Reed. "We are starting to do a lot of good things, but a couple of things that we have to do is move the puck quicker and find ways to get pucks on net."

Cech relayed the same message and noted that the wins will come, as he feels the Nighthawks are a very strong team that are just finding their game at the moment to start the season.

"We need to stick to our process, get to work on Monday, and do the little things that will help us get better," said Cech. "And then hopefully,

the score will take care of itself."

But even though the Nighthawks didn't triumph over the Pistons in their first home game, the fans were extremely emphatic in their chants and calls from the stands throughout the three periods of aggressive play.

The party atmosphere carried over into the CRRC's fieldhouse at the completion of the game where fans enjoyed a fundraising social featuring the live music of popular 80s tribute band Big Top Radio. On tap, patrons could savour the flavour of the Nighthawks signature beer, created by Winnipeg craft beer makers Torque Brewing.



The Nighthawks Season So Far

By Ty Dilello

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Since their debut this past the month, the Nighthawks have brought a lot of excitement and fast-paced hockey to fans in Niverville. Here's how the season has gone so far.

SEPTEMBER 16 (STEINBACH PISTONS, AWAY)

The first regular season game in Nighthawks franchise history was a hard-fought game in enemy territory, but in the end the Steinbach Pistons were too strong and held on for a 6-4 win over Niverville.

Stonewall native Chris Fines got the start in goal for Niverville and put up an admirable showing, making 32 saves on the night.

Jumping on perhaps some nerves on the Nighthawks side of things, Steinbach came out to a 2-0 lead after the first period. They doubled their lead to 4-0 early in the second period, before Niverville finally got on the board.

Brendan Bottem scored the first goal for the Nighthawks when he tucked in a second period goal to cut the deficit to 4-1.

"The nerves were pretty high to start with, considering a lot of our team has never played a Junior A game yet," said Bottem. "But it was definitely a really cool experience to get the first one in franchise history, and I got to keep the puck."

Niverville's Carter Spirig scored with 15 seconds remaining in the second period to make it 4-2 and give the club some much-needed momentum heading into the final frame.

The Pistons quickly showed why they are one of the MJHL's finest teams early in the third period as they scored another pair of goals to extend the lead to 6-2.

The Nighthawks answered late in the third with goals by Brendan Kerr and Gavin Gunderson, but it was too late to mount the hoped-for comeback, and the Pistons held on for the 6-4 win.

Carter Spirig earned the third star of the game honours for his late second period goal.

"Steinbach is a good program which we have a lot of respect for," said Nighthawks head coach Kelvin Cech. "There are no easy nights in this league. There were a lot of ups and downs in the game, and ultimately we need to go back to work and be better."

SEPTEMBER 21 (WINKLER FLYERS, AWAY)

Following the home opener on September 17 (covered in detail on the

previous pages), the Nighthawks travelled to Winkler and earned their first win of the season, and first as a franchise. They defeated the Winkler Flyers on the road by a dominant 5-1 score.

"I'd be lying if I said it wasn't a special night," said Cech. "The guys did everything right and earned two points. And to do it in a rink where 90 percent of our staff used to work is very sweet, and we're going to enjoy this."

The Nighthawks started the game off strong with a flurry of first period goals from Josh Paulhus, Gavin Gunderson, and Ty Kennett.

Brett Tataryn scored in the second period on the power play to extend the lead to 4-0. The Flyers would get one back, but the Nighthawks continued putting the pressure on and got a third period goal from Dayden Collier to end the game 5-1 in Niverville's favour.

"Tonight was the first night where we really learned to play for each other," said Cech. "We defended very well and communicated with each other in our zone. When things got chippy, we stayed smart and stayed out of the penalty box as much as we could and just worried about ourselves."

Chris Fines was excellent in the Nighthawks' goal. The Stonewall product stopped 27 of 28 shots on the night and made it look easy.

"Fines was fantastic," Cech added. "He made some huge stops and made the routine ones as well. He's so calm back there, and the guys really like playing in front of him. It seems like he's finding his groove here, and he's fit in well with the rest of our team."

Nighthawks captain Brett Tataryn, who had one goal and one assist on the night, was also pleased with his team's performance and ecstatic to get the first win of the season.

"The first win is huge, obviously. Not just for us but for the town of Niverville. The monkey is off our back now, and we're hungry for more," said Tataryn. "Our preparation was a huge part of playing excellent tonight, but overall every single one of the guys played all-out tonight. It felt good to contribute and get my first goal of the season, but the only points that matter to me are the two points after a win."

SEPTEMBER 23 (WINKLER FLYERS, HOME)

The Nighthawks gave it a spirited fight on Friday night when the Flyers came to Niverville for the much-anticipated rematch. Despite a roaring house of fans, it was not meant to be. The hometown heroes fell to Wink-

ler Flyers by a narrow 3-2 score.

Chris Fines made his fourth consecutive start in goal for the Nighthawks and put up another solid showing, stopping 24 of 27 shots faced.

The Flyers opened the scoring in the first period, but the Nighthawks levelled the game midway through the second frame on the power play when Brendan Kerr tipped a point shot past the Flyers netminder Malachi Klassen.

Winkler then scored late in the second period and added another marker early in the third to push the lead to 3-1.

With the goalie pulled late in the game, Brendan Kerr tallied his second goal of the night on the power play.

"It's always nice potting a goal in front of the crowd and hearing the electricity bump, but it's really about just pumping the boys up," said Brendan Kerr. "Trying to get a spark when we're down, and you get the greasy ones, and the team finds that life inside them, especially when we have the home crowd behind us."

Sadly, with only 20 seconds left in the game remaining when Kerr scored, the Nighthawks simply ran out of time.

"It was a highly contested game with pressure all over on the ice," said Cech. "I thought we played good but had some self-inflicted mistakes that cost us a couple of goals. But I actually thought we were really strong the first half of the game. Then they really came on strong in the second half. It was back and forth, but at the end of the night we weren't good enough and gotta go back to work."

The game was also quite the chippy affair, with lots of penalties on both sides. However, it was the Nighthawks that converted twice on the power play while the Flyers could not muster anything with the man advantage.

"Our guys, I thought, did a good job of staying disciplined," said Cech. "Our power play is kind of coming on now with a couple of goals tonight. The Flyers really tried hard to get us after losing in their rink the other night, and you got to expect that in this league."

SEPTEMBER 25 (WINNIPEG FREEZE, AWAY)

The Nighthawks dropped their second straight one-goal game night when they fell to the Winnipeg Freeze by a 3-2 score the following Sunday.

Niverville outshot Winnipeg 36-21 over the course of the game, but the Freeze managed to capitalize on their chances.

"The Freeze were just relentless from the start of the game and took away our room to make passes and move the puck, and we struggled with that a little bit," said Cech. "And we caught up with them later, but it was too little too late."

The game began with a scoreless first period. However, in the second frame Winnipeg's offence woke up, and they scored three goals in quick succession to lead 3-0.

Heading into the third period, Niverville capitalized on an extended power play when Josh Paulhus put the Nighthawks on the board after 30 seconds of play.

Paulhus added his second power play goal of the night with four minutes remaining, but the comeback failed to materialize.

For the second game in a row, the Nighthawks simply ran out of time and lost 3-2.

"The five-minute power play at the start of the third period was huge for us to get a little momentum, and I think we found our game in that period," said Paulus. "So hopefully we can play like that going forward."

"It's happened to us a few times now, where we've showed that resiliency, trying to come back in the games. And these guys never quit," added Cech. "But it's a group of players that have never played with each other before with different lines. Our coaching staff is still trying to gather evidence and see exactly what we have. Every team in this league is so hungry, so we're trying to find answers, but we know we have work to do."

Unfortunately, the Nighthawks lost their most important player, starting goaltender Chris Fines, early in the second period due to injury. Newly signed goaltender Scott Thompson came in and did a fine job closing out the game, but to lose Fines is a significant loss for the Nighthawks.

"It's too early to say how long Fines will be out," said Cech. "There is some swelling that needs to go down, and then he'll be re-evaluated on Monday. He's in good hands with Justin Giesbrecht, our head physiotherapist, who will hopefully help make it a short-term injury."

In the interim, the Nighthawks will be rolling with Scott Thompson in goal, with either 16-year-old Raiden LeGall or 17-year-old Dylan Leclair backing him up.

The newly signed Thompson is from Dauphin and spent the 2021-22 season playing with the Columbia Valley Rockies of the KIJHL, where he put up an impressive 14-3-0 record with a 2.45 goals-against average and .921 save percentage.

STANDINGS

WEST DIVISION

TEAM	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS
1 VIRDEN CAPITALS	4	4	0	0	0	8
2 OCN BLIZZARD	6	3	2	1	0	7
3 WAYWAYSEECAPPO WOLVERINES	4	1	0	2	1	5
4 DAUPHIN KINGS	5	2	2	1	0	5
5 SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDEERS	5	2	2	1	0	5
6 NEEPAWA TITANS	5	1	2	2	0	4

EAST DIVISION

TEAM	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS
1 STEINBACH PISTONS	5	5	0	0	0	10
2 WINKLER FLYERS	5	4	1	0	0	8
3 PORTAGE TERRIERS	4	3	1	0	0	6
4 WINNIPEG BLUES	4	3	1	0	0	6
5 WINNIPEG FREEZE	4	1	3	0	0	2
6 SELKIRK STEELERS	4	0	2	1	1	2
7 NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	5	1	4	0	0	2

MJHL POINTS LEADERS

GOALIE	TEAM	GP	G	A	PTS
1 R. Zimmermann	OCN	6	6	4	10
2 T. HENSRUD	STN	5	5	4	9
3 A. Paul	OCN	6	4	5	9
4 D. FRY	STN	5	4	4	8
5 T. Paisley	STN	5	3	5	8
6 A. Boucher	WAY	4	3	4	7
7 L. Brennan	SEL	4	3	4	7
8 J. Legaarden	WKN	5	2	5	7
9 M. Svenson	WKN	5	5	1	6
10 N. Chastko	VIR	3	4	2	6
11 C. Baptiste	WAY	4	4	2	6
12 G. Zasitko	WPB	4	2	4	6
13 A. Peters	POR	4	3	2	5
14 R. Monias	OCN	6	3	2	5
15 D. Chorney	VIR	4	2	3	5
16 B. Beauchemin	WKN	5	2	3	5
17 J. Bielik	VIR	4	1	4	5
18 Z. Nicolas	WKN	5	1	4	5
19 B. Tataryn	NIV	5	1	4	5
20 H. Lacquette	POR	4	0	5	5

MJHL GOALIE LEADERS

GOALIE	TEAM	GP	GA	SV%	GAA
1 A. Comeau	WKN	2	1	0.972	0.80
2 K. Grant	SVS	4	8	0.935	2.01
3 O. LaRocque	VIR	2	5	0.915	2.50
4 J. McLeod	WPB	2	3	0.930	2.55
5 C. PLOWMAN	STN	5	13	0.899	2.56
6 M. O'Sullivan	WPF	3	7	0.936	2.73
7 E. Reid	VIR	3	6	0.906	2.79
8 C. Hamm	OCN	5	14	0.915	2.83
9 T. Wotton	WAY	2	6	0.882	2.92
10 L. Mainguy-Crepault	SVS	1	3	0.919	2.93
11 J. Kirton	SEL	1	3	0.786	3.00
12 C. Sheffield	DAU	3	8	0.896	3.18
13 M. Klassen	WKN	4	12	0.888	3.21
14 C. Fines	NIV	5	14	0.905	3.28
15 J. Catellier	POR	3	9	0.894	3.44
16 K. Woolsey	DAU	4	9	0.878	3.47
17 B. Monteith	POR	2	5	0.853	3.48
18 B. Moroz	WPB	3	10	0.888	3.54
19 M. Lobreau	NEE	4	14	0.882	3.69
20 H. Tarves	SEL	3	12	0.894	3.80

Local Schools Return to Pre-COVID Routines

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Following two erratic years of on-again, off-again school closures and restrictive protocols, the hallways and classrooms of our local schools have returned this fall to a feeling of pre-COVID normality.

This summer, the province released their back-to-school guidelines, taking a more relaxed tone.

"It is expected that COVID-19 will continue to be an ongoing presence in Manitoba communities as everyone returns to school this fall," reads a statement from the provincial guidelines. "Thankfully, widespread vaccination, testing and treatment options, and continued vigilance and planning mean the threat of COVID-19 is considerably reduced compared to when schools closed in 2020."

A SCHOOL DIVISION EMBRACES CHANGE

Like most divisions, the Hanover School Division (HSD) was quick this summer to outline some more laidback measures for its facilities.

As of September 2022, wearing a mask became optional for staff and students. Restrictions on distancing and limiting class sizes were eliminated and administrative staff are no longer required to do contact tracing.

Because flu season is coming and COVID is still active in the province, teachers are expected to continue to encourage good hygiene among the students and provide hand sanitizer in classrooms.

"We still have a supply of masks and rapid antigen tests in our schools," says Shelley Amos, superintendent and CEO of HSD. "We can distribute those to staff and to families who would like them."

Sports, extracurricular activities, and large school gatherings are back in full swing.

For the most part, Amos says, school administrators will rely on parents to be the best judge of whether their child's symptoms should keep them at home.

"If you're really sick and



DEPOSITPHOTOS

lethargic, then you really shouldn't be in the school—or in the workplace, for that matter," Amos says.

The gauge to determine when parents should be contacted to pick up their child from school, she adds, will be much like it was prior to the pandemic.

"We will still monitor absences," Amos says. "If we feel there's some high absenteeism happening in a particular school, we may send notifications home to families just to make them aware. We have been asked as a division to notify Public Health if we see really high case [counts]."

Amos says that so far the majority of school staff in the division have opted to go mask-free and she's heard no feedback from anyone who is not in favour of relaxing the rules.

PARENTS WEIGH IN

The Citizen reached out to local parents to learn how they are responding to these changes to pandemic policies. Virtually all of them reported a sense of relief, and even jubilation, at the idea of going back to a maskless environment for their kids.

"Children need germs in order to build a healthy immune system," says one mom, Taylor. "Let them hug their friends, eat dirt, pick their noses, and breathe fresh air."

The past two years, Taylor adds, has demonstrated that the COVID survival rate among children is especially high—so she, for one, has no concerns.

Another mom, Pamela, said her family chose to home-school for the most part over the last two years. It wasn't so much about the restrictions, she says, as it was about protecting an extended family member with a degenerative lung disease.

"We have a vaccine and a high vaccination rate," says Pamela. "At this point, the risk-to-benefit [ratio] favours a return to normal."

Another local mom, who chooses to remain anonymous, also chose to home-school during the pandemic. For her, it did have everything to do with the imposed restrictions.

"We are so happy they get to return to normal," she says. "We felt the restrictions and masks weren't an environment we wanted them to be in. If they weren't able to go to school and just be kids, it wasn't something we wanted to participate in."

Bouncing back and forth between in-school learning and remote learning, this parent adds, only strengthened her decision to home-school.

Dianne Daynes is a grandmother with two school-age grandchildren on the autism spectrum.

"[They were] exempt from wearing masks and were bullied continuously, even by the teachers and bus drivers," says Daynes. "It's a sad world when kids can't be kids."

Father Kris Friesen says he's elated over the return to normal at his son's elementary school.

According to Friesen, his son went from being a generally happy, energetic child before COVID to a tired and reserved child during the years of pandemic restrictions.

Mom Gina says that her family is vaccinated, so she's not too concerned about a return to normal. Still, the family practices vigilant preventative measures at home and hopes that the teachers will also implement hand-washing routines in school and encourage families to keep their sick kids at home.

Another mom, Jennifer, says she was on the fence about the rapid return to an unrestricted school environment. Still, her son is vaccinated, she says, and so are his friends, which puts her more at ease.

"I trust [my son] to make good decisions," Jennifer says. "But not everybody does make good decisions and teachers are too busy to monitor things like hand-washing."

Jennifer adds that her son had a cold the weekend after school began. He tested negative for COVID, but she kept him home on Monday anyway, just to be safe.

"On Tuesday, when he went to school, [basically completely] recovered, his friends insisted he wear a mask, so that made me feel hopeful about this generation," she muses.

She's less convinced that most adults will continue to be as vigilant.

"People were inconvenienced by the pandemic and now they're tired of the inconvenience," says Jennifer. "So everybody seems to have decided to sort of forget it exists."

Mom Stacy says that it's nice to see everyone's smiling faces again, but she would willingly go back to using a mask if it meant keeping herself and everyone else safe. There are a couple of children in her daughter's classroom, she says, who continue to use a mask.

"My daughter was nervous because it was her first year of junior high school," says Stacy, "but after the first two days all her anxiety is gone and she's very excited."

RCMP: Rising Crime in Ritchot Nothing to Worry About

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Staff Sergeant Guy Landreville of the St. Pierre RCMP made a presentation before Ritchot's council on September 7. The report covered stats derived from the second quarter of 2022.

According to Landreville, calls to the RCMP office were up significantly between April and June in two specific areas of police monitoring. The first noteworthy area is that of alarms which are integrated into the police system.

"Our alarm calls are up," said Landreville. "Basically of note is that we've had a lot of false alarms, and every time we do get a false alarm call it brings our stats up."

The sergeant added that ten of the false alarm calls came from one residential address in the RM. But even if a call is suspected to be a false alarm, protocol requires a new file to be opened, he said.

Reported crimes against persons was another area that saw an increase. A good number of these calls came from the communities of Ste. Agathe and Île-des-Chênes.

A total of ten reports were received by the RCMP for Ste. Agathe. Eight of these were counts of assault related to one file.

A total of 17 files for crimes against persons were opened for Île-des-Chênes. Six of the reports were related to two of these files.

"Apart from that, the numbers actually look okay," Landreville told council. "There's nothing that jumps out at me that's out of the ordinary or worrisome."



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IN BRIEF

Digital Signs Deter Speeders in St. Adolphe

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Ritchot Councillor Ron Mamchuk is elated at the installation of a new speed display sign on St. Adolphe's Main Street. The hope, he says, is that it will encourage commuters to slow down as they drive through town.

The sign is located at the southern end of Main Street and monitors traffic as it enters the community. Commuters see their rate of speed as well as warnings to slow when their speed exceeds 50 kilometres per hour.

"It might not resolve the speeding issue completely, but it's a start," Mamchuk says. "The RCMP are aware that we are going to put this sign up... Of course, it would be nice to have the RCMP presence here to look after the speeders, but the RCMP have their own staffing issues right now."

Mamchuk refers to recently announced concerns over a staffing crisis of RCMP officers across the nation. The situation is anticipated to get worse before it gets better. It is not expected that the number of new recruits over the next two years will be sufficient to fill even retirement vacancies.

The new speed display sign, Mamchuk says, is a long time coming. Two signs had been purchased by the RM quite some time ago but their use was delayed while waiting for approval from the province.

Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure has advised council that the sign should be moved every three months or so to keep drivers from becoming too accustomed to it. Four separate locations in and around Main Street have been preapproved by the province.

New IDC Development Gets Reluctant Approval

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Residents of Île-des-Chênes filled the RM of Ritchot's council chambers on September 21 to sit in on discussions and a council vote regarding the creation of a new development at the south end of their community.

The hearing's focus centred around the 71-acre first phase of residential development planned for a 161-acre parcel of land.

Delegates from Terracon, the developer, were in attendance as well as two representatives from Landmark Planning and Design Inc. (LP&DI).

Over the course of two hours, council addressed a number of proposals being made by LP&DI on behalf of the developers.

The first was a request for subdivision which would allow the developer to begin work on the installation of new roads.

A secondary application would allow for the rezoning of specific portions of the land from Agricultural Limited and Residential General-8 zoning to Residential-5 as well as Parks and Recreation zoning. This would allow for the creation of 234 residential lots, as well as greenspace.

Application number three required council's approval for the developer to create two-family and multifamily housing units.

A variation request was also made to reduce the front yard, back yard, or side yard setbacks on single-family and multifamily lots.

Finally, in order to accommodate the plan as proposed, the road closure of Dufault Drive would be required at the point where it intersects with Rosybloom Lane. According to planners, this change would encourage traffic to use Old PTH 59 instead.

On behalf of LP&DI, Donovan Toews provided a visual presentation and detailed explanation of the finalized plans.

"Council wants to accommodate all kinds of people at different stages of life," Toews told those gathered. "We do believe the proposed development is much needed and it is a positive addition to the RM and the town. There were

no concerns identified during the provincial circulation of the application. That is noteworthy."

Council then heard from five Île-des-Chênes residents wanting to voice their concerns or disapproval of either the entire project or portions of it. As well, eight letters were read into the record.

Rosybloom Lane homeowner Steven Petznik spoke to his frustration about how the process has been handled by LP&DI so far.

"When we told [Landmark] our street is already over-congested, we were told to get out and walk," Petznik told council.

He appealed to the mayor and councillors to reconsider the location where Dufault Drive would be closed.

"If you're worried about controlling traffic and the speeds going down there, a simple three-way stop would do the same amount of good as blocking roads and turning it into a maze for people," Petznik said.

Councillor Janine Boulanger asked Toews for clarity on the purpose of cutting off Dufault Drive.

"This is the number one way to reduce speed and to reduce cut-through traffic," Toews responded. "If you make it difficult to go from A to B, then people don't want to go there... Our number one objective is to do our best and not create additional traffic flow for people. We are really confident about that road pattern."

Shaylene Hawthorne, a property owner just outside of Île-des-Chênes, shared her concerns over the Dufault closure from the perspective of a paramedic.

"I always hope that, in terms of [planning] traffic flow, that you consider emergency vehicle access," Hawthorne told council. "If it were your emergency, you'd want the fastest route there."

As to Petznik's concerns over not being heard by LP&DI in the early planning stages of the development, Toews pointed out that while they couldn't accommodate on the location of the street closure, his team had been very intentional in planning larger lot single-family units along the continuation of Rosybloom, as opposed to dropping multifamily dwellings in there.

Another area of major concern for residents and some councillors was that of the density of the two-family and multifamily zones, created by reducing lot sizes from 8,000 to 5,000 square feet.

Higher-density housing, they indicated, also means greater vehicular traffic and street parking issues, which poses concerns for the safety of children.

At the same time, many also asked about the necessity of reducing the size of some side lots.

"We want to plan a good community along with the RM," Toews replied. "In the current reality of both the market and economics, and in terms of what people can afford, these are the types of densities and the range of products that you need in your neighbourhoods. So we're really confident about the RG5 [zoning]."

On this subject, Councillor Ron Mamchuk also weighed in, referring to the fact that smaller properties hold greater appeal to many senior citizens as they downsize.

Speaking to side yard reductions, Toews argued that side yards offer little practical function other than to become added storage space or spots for camping units in the off-season. This, he says, adds no aesthetic appeal.

Through the course of the evening, other questions surfaced, including those related to construction vehicle access, sidewalk connections to the existing infrastructure, playground development, fences, and seniors housing options.

One resident living on Arnould Road vehemently opposed the development in its entirety.

"This is the last thing I want for our community," their letter stated. "I have a great location at the end of town and all this development [of] cookie-cutter houses and condos and multi-living homes bring the city folk and ruins a small-town feel."

Towards the end of the meeting, council held court with a discussion of their own, openly expressing concerns they still carried or those that had been alleviated through dialogue with Terracon and LP&DI representatives.

When put to the vote for the subdivision and rezoning requests,

CAO Mitch Duval recommended that council follow through with the third and final reading.

"We did receive objections," Duval said. "However, in my opinion, not enough objectors to warrant a pause on third reading and the need to go to the municipal board."

According to Duval, the provincial Planning Act requires that the municipal board become involved in settling the matter when at least 25 residents or 50 percent of the affected landowners object.

In this case, out of the 83 homeowners directly affected, only 13 presented official objections.

Regarding the variation request put forward by LP&DI, Councillor Boulanger recommended that an amendment be made to change the side yard reductions from five feet to eight feet instead.

The majority of council voted against this amendment.

Councillor Shane Pelletier reopened the conversation on the closure of Dufault Drive by Rosybloom. But while he empathized with the residents living in the area, he felt confident that the professionals at LP&DI know what they were doing.

"I have a hard time seeing everybody driving [down Rosybloom] because people are lazy," Pelletier said. "Ninety percent of this traffic's going to go to Old 59."

Council voted in favour of accepting all applications put before them by LP&DI. Mayor Chris Ewen was the only council member to vote against the closure of Dufault Drive.

Councillor Pelletier concluded this part of the public hearing with some closing remarks.

"This is an [important] development," Pelletier told the listeners. "We've been talking about this since I was in high school, which is a very long time ago. This is a direction that we can go with the town. We're landlocked by our neighbours to the east and two sets of highways to the west."

As for keeping Île-des-Chênes's small-town feel, he says that this is achieved by individual residents who go out of their way to perform neighbourly gestures more than it is by the size or type of dwellings a community offers.



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We had Chuck Davidson, President of Manitoba Chamber of Commerce come visit on Monday Sept 19.

We scheduled a tour of Niverville, showed Chuck the existing and up and coming businesses and gave some history of our business community.

We toured Fusion Industries and learned about their unique operation and who they manufacture for. We also learned Leon's start up story at only 22 years old, and it's testament to true Entrepreneurialism. How he was taught from his mother to primarily "spend what you have" as part of his successful longevity carrying through the years.

We stopped in and toured Wiens Furniture to view their beautiful store and new Sleep System Gallery and Kitchen Showroom. Showcasing just how many options Wiens provides and their longstanding investment in the community. A customer from Winnipeg proudly said while there, that she has been shopping at Wiens for over 25 years as the customer experience can't be beat.

We toured SCMI Group and got an understanding of their entire operation, their impeccable safety record and the importance of employee and team culture.

We had a great lunch at Hespeler's Restaurant to mingle with Chuck and get some insight on what we can do to keep improving our Chamber and to emphasize our mission of continuing to be the voice of business in Niverville.

We toured the beautiful Niverville Recreation Centre - something Chuck said rural communities like ours are lucky to have compared to larger urban centres where you don't often see the same priority. Our rec center is home to countless independent contractors offering classes and programs and built on the foundation of many of our members' gracious sponsorships.

We finished the day meeting with the Town of Niverville, talked about new developments and projects, the new placement of RCMP and some of the benefits and challenges we have. The town provides an office and meeting space for the Chamber- (at no cost) and comes to us often to work together. It's an important relationship that we want to keep for years to come.



Town of Niverville Election
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October 5 | 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm | Niverville CRRC Fieldhouse

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First Street South Families Concerned for Pedestrian Safety

By Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

Residents on First Street South in Niverville are deeply concerned about the safety of pedestrians in their neighbourhood.

The street has a partial sidewalk between Third and Fourth that doesn't fully extend the length of the street.

The sidewalk got disconnected from Third Avenue South when the town previously needed to address a drainage issue, creating what residents say is a hazard for people using the portion of sidewalk that remains.

Families from the block say that they have asked the town a number of times to complete the sidewalk, citing safety concerns for the children in the area, especially when traffic volumes increase during busy periods, like during the Niverville Olde Tyme Country Fair.

"WE WANT THE SIDEWALK BACK"

Joe and Sherry Unrau have lived on First Street South for nine years. They have four school-aged children and remember when the sidewalk was functional and how many people used it at the time.

When a culvert needed repair, access to Third Avenue was removed and never replaced.

"They say the only reason they abandoned it is the culvert needed to be removed," says Joe. "So they removed the part of the sidewalk so you can no longer cross over. They



Families who live along First Street South are concerned about their street's impassable sidewalk. SARA BETH DACOMBE

told us it was too expensive to redo it."

What is left of the disconnected sidewalk is cracked or crumbling, partially grass-covered, with tree branches overhanging it in places making it difficult to walk.

When Mayor Myron Dyck first canvassed the area in 2014, residents showed him the issue at the time, but after the election Joe and Sherry say there was no action from the town.

"We want the sidewalk back," says Sherry. "We need somewhere safe for our kids to walk."

TRAFFIC VOLUME

Besides residential homes, the street also accommodates a feed store, an assisted living facility, two churches, condos at the west end of the street, and soon-to-be-completed condos in the same block as the Unraus.

"There's 11 or 12 kids who live right here," says Sherry, whose 12-year-old daughter recently had been out walking the dogs when she nearly got hit by a speeding vehicle.

"There's elderly, there's kids galore. And everyone is heading to school, both schools. She said if she hadn't moved, [the car] would have hit her or the dogs."

"I know it's only one street, but during the fair they make this Main Street," adds Joe. "There are hundreds of people using this street especially. With no sidewalks, they're on the street and the cars are on the street. It's a miracle there hasn't been an accident. It's chaos."

Many other residents along the street agree.

Michael and Stephanie Penner moved to First Street South in 2015, at which time they recall that there were 15 kids living on their block alone. Stephanie has written to the town asking them to address safety concerns after the fair one year and says she has witnessed several near-misses when it comes to kids walking home from school.

"It's a busy street," agrees Michael. "It's unsafe for children and elderly to walk down the street, especially in winter when you're forced to walk on the road."

Stephanie also says she has noticed people trying to use the sidewalk in winter, but it isn't ploughed and the town has said they won't clear snow on the sidewalk because it's been deemed abandoned.

Jennie Putaro has lived on the street for six years and she has noticed that the foot traffic seems constant.

"At first when I moved in, it didn't seem like such a big deal to me," says Putaro. "But all of 2021 I was on mat leave and you're always seeing someone walking by. And now I have a two-year-old who wants to run around and it kind of sucks pushing a stroller and walking a dog and you're trying to evade traffic. It becomes a concern."

Curtis Lee, who has lived across from Sherry and Joe since 2015, says that it has been like this on the street since he was in high school and was regularly walking to school.

Since becoming a commuter, Lee says he has had many close calls when trying to back out of his driveway.

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with more of a clear view of the street to help keep kids safe," says Lee. "There are so many. Especially when before and after school, all the way till six o'clock. And yes, especially on fair weekend."

TOWN RESPONSE

Mayor Dyck has acknowledged the longstanding issue and that residents did bring it up with him when he first ran for mayor.

"I did try," he says. "But upon review with our public works department, it is not possible."

He explains that the town is widening and replacing sidewalks along Main Street and has a strategy to prioritize avenues as opposed to streets, as well as arterial routes.

"A few years ago council set a priority on sidewalks, with priority given to sidewalks that run to and from Main Street to get people to and from businesses and to and from the elementary school—so north and south—[and] sidewalks that are on arterial roads. So roads like Hampton, St. Andrews, Fifth Avenue, along PR 311."

The mayor points out that most streets in Niverville running east to west don't have sidewalks. There are also many streets in Fifth Avenue and The Highlands that don't have sidewalks.

"At worst these residents are a half-block away from the nearest sidewalk... which is a lot closer than a lot of residents have in other parts of town, including the newer developments," says the mayor. "Now, having said that, there is a sidewalk budget we spend to build and repair sidewalks each year and we are always open to hearing from people. Unfortunately, it does not always work where

we or residents would like to see a sidewalk due to water drainage and such issues."

He says that southern Manitoba's rain events have created significant drainage problems and need to be taken into consideration when looking at altering sidewalks.

"While I get the concern for the residents on First Street South, part of the issue there is that to widen the sidewalks would remove ditch capacity," Mayor Dyck says. "With the high rain events we get sometimes, more it seems every year, Public Works did look at putting sidewalks on this street, but it is not possible due to needing the ditch space for water runoff. Removing some of that capacity will only cause that water to run onto the road or up people's yards with a greater potential for basements to get flooded. So I understand it would be great to have a sidewalk on that street, but it is a water flow matter that trumps a sidewalk."

NOT UNREASONABLE

The history of the sidewalk issues, compounded by the increasing traffic, makes the residents in the area confident their request isn't unreasonable. They feel that public safety should be the most important factor in this case.

"Sidewalks are one of the most important parts of universally accessible street-scapes," says Michael Penner. "In addition to mobility devices and strollers, it is also important for people with visual impairments, agility issues, and small children... It's simply unacceptable. It needs to be on their radar."

The residents do understand that adequate drainage is a must, and one suggestion

they would like the town to consider is underground culverts so the sidewalk can go over top and once again reach Third Avenue.

"Yes, drainage is a valid reason, but that doesn't seem like the only reason that would stop [sidewalk installation]," says Putaro. "You would have to do a little bit more engineering and look into that way of doing it, but... it's a sidewalk. We're talking enough to hold people, strollers, or animals. Then water gets to go underneath safely and we go on top. We deserve to be safe, too."

Lee would like to ask Mayor Dyck to come and personally observe the foot traffic.

"If Myron were to come sit on this street for even ten minutes, he would see how busy it is and how reckless people drive down here. I'm sure he would rethink his avenue versus street plans."

Another idea the residents propose is to remove the patchy sidewalk altogether, if it can't be fixed.

Pedestrians have been observed walking down the sidewalk only to turn back, jump, or walk through ditches to reach the road where the sidewalk becomes impassable.

"I feel like I would [prefer it be removed] because people try to walk down it and there's dips, cracks, things covered in grass," says Putaro. "You're giving people a false sense of security because it looks like there is a sidewalk to walk down and they get partway down, or they even reach the road at the other end, but have to turn around. If that's the case, the town is now just leaving cement where it doesn't need to be. If we can't have a sidewalk, come and clean it up."

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IN BRIEF

Ritchot Council Talks High-Speed Internet Expansion

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

At a meeting on September 7, Ritchot council talked about the expansion of high-speed internet services. After the installation of internet infrastructure in Ste. Agathe, they are considering requests to bring similar services into the remainder of the RM.

The requests, made by Valley Fiber, are in reference to the construction of two new public utility buildings, similar to the one the company constructed in Ste. Agathe. The 12-foot by 14-foot buildings would be located in St. Adolphe and Grande Pointe.

Council unanimously approved Valley Fiber's request for the subdivision of a parcel of land belonging to the RM at the corner of Bernat Road and Oak Grove Road. The section of land, measuring 117 feet by 134 feet, was sold to Valley Fiber for a cost of \$1.

"There is a triangular piece there that we're going to be closing as a road and converting it to, basically, regular land," Duval said. "From that piece, Valley Fiber will want a subdivided piece out of that."

In St. Adolphe, council will follow a similar process to allow for a utility building.

A variation requested by Valley Fiber was declined by council following remarks by local residents.

The residents shared concerns about the public utility building being located in the sightline of their property if the front yard setback reduction was approved.

Tim Peters of Valley Fiber indicated a willingness to accommodate them.



Dylan Wiens at the new sleep centre at Wiens Furniture.

JENNIFER LAVIN

Wiens Furniture Unveils New Sleep Centre

By Jennifer Lavin

jlvain@nivervillecitizen.com

Wiens Furniture and Appliances has been a fixture in Niverville for decades, but they make it their business to constantly improve and keep up with their customers. On Friday, September 16, they held a grand opening for their store's new sleep gallery.

Dylan Wiens, the fourth generation of his family to sell furniture or appliances in Niverville, shares that Wiens Furniture, in partnership with Brand Source, is excited for this new phase of the business.

"We decided to dive in with this and give ourselves the opportunity to up the game a little bit," Wiens says.

The store in general is not looking for a warehouse feel.

"For folks who take the time to buy locally or take the drive to come see us," he says, "we want to make sure that there's a wow factor to our store."

Wiens wants his customers to know that beds are not

one-size-fits-all and his team is there to take the time to help each customer find the best bed for them. People spend about one-third of their lives in bed, so that bed needs to be comfortable.

He explains that there is a five-step process employed by Wiens Furniture and Appliances to help customers find their dream mattress—and the salesperson will guide people through it step by step.

In step one, they'll help a customer choose a pillow that's comfortable and similar to what they have on their current bed. That said, it's not a requirement to purchase a pillow.

For step two, customers are taken to the "comfort test zone" where they can interact with a firm, a medium, and a plush mattress.

Wiens says that customers will be asked a few questions about their sleeping habits, including whether they have any potential issues like sore hips or sleep apnea. They will also be asked in

what position they sleep—back, stomach, or side.

"Sometimes people will say that they sleep in two or all three positions, but sometimes that's part of the problem, too," says Wiens. "You're tossing and turning because you're not comfortable."

Once a customer has chosen the comfort level of their mattress, it's time for step three: technology. Staff will help a customer decide whether pocket coil, memory foam, or a hybrid of both is right for them.

In step four, customers get to try out motion bases, which can raise one's head or feet or both. Some motion bases also provide a massage feature, under-bed lighting, and/or the ability to control the bed with a phone. Wiens calls these the crème-de-la-crème of beds.

But, he points out, motion bases can also be affordable. The lowest cost model at the store starts at \$699.

Step five involves choosing accessories. Does the customer

need a mattress protector, a weighted blanket, or sheets?

"I think Niverville deserves this, doesn't it?" Wiens says. "People deserve to be able to go through a process like this in order to get that good night's sleep."

The store's sleep gallery celebration runs through most of September. Wiens says that on top of the sale prices on mattresses, the store is covering the taxes during this period as well. He says there is also a chance to win a purchase of up to \$2,000, a free gift with purchases over \$1,000, and a buy-one-get-one-free offer on their in-house brand pillows.

Investing in store improvements is good for everyone, Wiens shares. He points out that the store gives back to the town whenever they get a chance. Whether it's helping with the Niverville Olde Tyme Country Fair, the CRRC, or other projects, he says they're happy to step up.

"We do not take Niverville for granted," Wiens says.



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Super Citizens: Beth Downey and Alexa Sawatzky, Park Pioneers

In this new series, *The Citizen* will profile locals who strive to make our little corner of Manitoba a better place. Each month, we feature a person, family, or business that helps brighten the world in some way. If you have someone in mind for a future month, please nominate them by email: jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com.

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

Beth Downey and her sister-in-law Alexa Sawatzky are this month's Super Citizens. The pair have spearheaded a massive undertaking—the revitalization of Opa's Park in Niverville.

Opa's Park is in a perfect area for a leisure spot. It lies just to the north of Roselawn Bay and can be accessed through walking trails from Roselawn, from Edelweiss Crescent, and from the Niverville Commons.

Over the years, though, the park had become neglected and wasn't being used to its full potential.

In the spring of 2021, Downey was walking through Opa's Park and had the brainwave that she could be the one to revitalize the greenspace. She recruited Sawatzky and the pair began their work—knocking on doors, meeting with town representatives, researching, planning, recruiting volunteers, and finally digging into the dirt... these two women did it all.

Downey is the point person for the revitalization, so it



Alexa Sawatzky and Beth Downey.

by HARRISON BRIAND

was she who was nominated as Super Citizen, but she immediately pointed out that she and Sawatzky are partners in this venture and that she couldn't accept unless Sawatzky got equal recognition for her equally hard work.

Janeen Lange was one of the people to nominate Downey because she has been impressed with the incredible amount of work that has been done.

"As someone who grew up on Roselawn and loved that park growing up, it has made me feel so happy, nostalgic, and proud to see Beth's work in fighting to ensure the park gets enjoyed for many more generations to come," says Lange.

Danae Doerksen also nominated Downey and Sawatzky for their hard work.

"Beth Downey, with Alexa, has spent countless hours planning, organizing, planting, and watering Opa's Park. She has worked extremely hard revitalizing a park that felt forgotten, trying to turn it into a place people will travel to see. She is super positive and makes it a pleasure to volunteer to help. Although this project will take a couple of years to complete, she is in it for the long haul."

Niverville is where Downey grew up. More importantly, she says it's the town she has married into.

"This is where my children will grow up, where their grandparents are, and where they will have their first lessons in what citizenship and community really mean," says Downey. "From the beginning, I want them

wrist-deep in relationship with the ground, the people, the non-human neighbours that constitute home."

Sawatzky grew up in Niverville, too, and has many memories of biking down to Opa's Park to play with friends.

"The park was like a little hideaway," Sawatzky says. "A well-kept secret playground within Niverville."

Sawatzky has been a passionate gardener ever since she volunteered on a small farm in Portugal eight years ago. Since then she's worked in greenhouses and market gardens and completed a permaculture design course and a diploma in horticulture, so she was a natural fit to team up with Downey.

"When Beth called me up one fall evening in 2021 and asked if I'd be interested in designing a few gardens for Opa's Park, I quickly got to work dreaming up a large native prairie garden and a circle garden where visitors could explore the colours, scents, and tastes of perennial plants," Sawatzky says. "Thanks to Beth and her incredible organization and determination, the park project is in full swing and its future looks bright! And thanks to many amazing volunteers, we now have two large gardens installed. And I'm so excited to see them in bloom!"

Downey sums it up: "Opa's Park has given so much to my family over the years, and I just happened to have the tools needed to do something about making it better."



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Notice of Election

Notice is hereby given that a vote of the Town of Niverville will be taken to elect four (4) Councillors from the following duly nominated candidates:

For the Offices of Councillor:
Nathan Dueck John Funk Meghan Beasant Chris Wiebe
Bill Fast Kevin Stott Jason Alderson

Voting Place

Voting place will be open for voting on October 26, 2022 between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm at the Golden Friendship Centre, 118 2nd Avenue South, Niverville.

Identification may be required before being allowed to vote. A person may be required to produce one piece of government issued photo identification (for example—driver's license or passport) or at least two other documents that provide proof of identity.

An eligible voter whose name is not on the voters list is entitled to be added to the list at the time of voting, as long as they attend the voting place where they are qualified to vote, during the hours it is open for voting, they take an oath that they are an eligible voter, and they establish their identity.

Advance Voting

For the purpose of accommodating persons who are qualified to vote, but who have reason to believe that they may be absent or otherwise unable to attend their proper voting place on election day, an advance voting opportunity will be located at the Golden Friendship Centre, 118 2nd Avenue South, Niverville on Wednesday, October 12, 2022 between 8:00 am and 8:00 pm.

Mobile Voting

For the purpose of accommodating persons who are qualified to vote, but reside in a personal care facility or assisted living facility, a mobile voting station will be set up at the following facilities on October 17, 2022:

1. Niverville Heritage Life Personal Care Home (100A Heritage Trail)
10:30 am to 12:30 pm
2. Niverville Credit Union Manor (100-111 2nd Avenue South)
2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Application to vote by sealed envelope

A voter who is unable to go in person to the voting place or vote in advance, may apply in person or in writing to the Senior Election Official at the Niverville Administration Office, 329 Bronstone Drive, Box 267, Niverville Manitoba, R0A 1E0, by fax at (204) 388-6110 or by email to audrey.neufeld@whereyoubelong.ca.

If applying in person, a voter may apply between September 28, 2022 and October 23, 2022. A voter applying in person may pick up a sealed envelope ballot package at the time of application.

If applying by mail, fax or email, a voter may apply between July 28, 2022 and October 23, 2022. A voter applying by mail, fax or email will receive a sealed envelope ballot package by regular post, or by making alternative arrangements with the Senior Election Official.

Audrey Neufeld, Senior Election Official (SEO)
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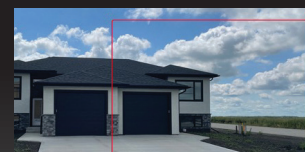
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Commentary

ADHD: Living with It, and Parenting It Better

By Daniel Dacomb

Social media is the land of unsolicited advice. Post about your new dog and you'll have three friends provide three brands of dog food that are each supposed to be the best. Share news about your search for a vehicle and everyone has an opinion about which model is for you. Post photos of your beach vacation and you'll get dieting tips... which probably weren't supposed to be as insulting as they felt.

And if you happen to share about struggles with staying organized, with being chronically late, or with being forgetful—well, then everyone has a suggestion. Get a day planner. Make a to-do list. Get disciplined.

For some people, those tips will do the trick. Adding a day planner or a to-do list, and seeking to become more disciplined, are good suggestions.

But for individuals with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), no amount of planning will fix the problem, because the problem exists with the structures in the brain that control our executive functions, not with our discipline.

As an adult with ADHD, as someone with years of education in child and adolescent development, and as someone who spent more than 15 years working with adolescents (many of whom had diagnoses of ADHD or other neurodevelopmental disorders), I hope to be able to shed some light on this condition for individuals who live with it, and for those who love them.

ADHD is what is known as a neurodevelopmental disorder, a group of disorders that affect the development of the brain, causing issues with thinking and behaviour. Other neurodevelopmental disorders include neurogenic disorders

such as dyslexia, many speech disorders, and the autism spectrum.

Because it impacts how our brains develop, ADHD is typically diagnosed in childhood. Estimates indicate that approximately nine percent of children and four percent of adults may qualify.

ADHD also comes in different subtypes, and these are generally diagnosed based on the predominant observable symptoms.

First, there's the primarily hyperactive-impulsive presentation: individuals who present mainly with symptoms such as always rushing, excessive talking, difficulty sitting still, or interrupting others.

This is the most commonly recognized cluster of symptoms and the ones typically associated with ADHD in popular culture.

Second, the primarily inattentive presentation: individuals who present more frequently with symptoms like staying focused, remembering names or recently learned information, becoming easily bored, having trouble paying attention, getting easily distracted, and having difficulty staying organized. Primarily inattentive cases can often fly under the radar and only be diagnosed later in adulthood.

Third, a combined presentation: for some, enough symptoms exist in both categories to gain a combined diagnosis.

Interestingly, the majority of symptoms needed to secure a diagnosis are symptoms that impact the people around the individual with ADHD.

More recent research, though, points to the existence of other symptoms that may not be as easily visible from the outside—but may be even more distressing for the individual themselves.

Some of these symptoms include

the following.

1. Hyperfixation. This is the sudden and seemingly inexplicable ability to not only focus, but to focus on something to the exclusion of everything else. People with ADHD who get stuck in hyperfixation may focus on a new hobby, task, or personal interest even when doing so impacts their ability to take care of their other priorities. This occurs because a brain with ADHD has an impaired ability to regulate dopamine, one of our reward chemicals, and so inappropriately directs one's attention to what it perceives as the best source of dopamine.

2. Rumination. Individuals with ADHD are more susceptible to intrusive thoughts and to thoughts that seem to go in circles. They have a tendency to focus on past mistakes, future dangers, and other negative thoughts. This means they can easily become stuck in feelings of grief, anger, or fear.

3. Rejection sensitivity dysphoria. Several studies have shown that individuals with ADHD experience much stronger than normal emotional reactions to perceived rejection, criticism, or personal failure. These feelings can create debilitating anxiety, depression, and relationship issues. Nearly a third of individuals with ADHD identify this symptom as the most difficult part of living with their condition.

The precise causes of ADHD are not fully known, though there are many contributing factors. Brain injury, specifically being born oxygen-deprived, is one suspected cause, as is premature delivery.

Genetics are known to play a role, though exactly which genes are associated with its transmission are still being explored.

What is known is that the parts of our brains that deal with executive

function (attention, perception, focus, and problem solving) as well as our reward pathways are impaired by the condition.

Unfortunately, despite its neurological origins, many people with ADHD are written off as rude, awkward, or lazy, which only adds stigma and shame to the list of burdens they carry.

And for parents of children with ADHD who may be struggling with how to support their child, they may experience judgment from other parents and society at large.

Parenting a child with ADHD can be challenging, to say the least. While most of the literature and research has focused on proper parenting strategies, education strategies, and counselling/medication techniques, relatively little focus has been given to how parents of children with ADHD are affected.

A recent psychological study in Australia found that parents of children with ADHD experience significantly higher levels of stress than other parents and significantly lower levels of perceived support from others. They also tend to experience more frustration and mental fatigue as they act as their child's "external brain," sometimes causing them to inappropriately target their child with frustration and anger.

Despite the challenges you may be experiencing, there are many others who have gone before and given us good information about the road ahead.

Here are some tips for navigating this issue in as healthy a way as possible.

Number one, remember that ADHD is a problem of the brain. It is a neurodevelopmental disorder. It is not a personal failing, weakness of character, or chronic poor decision-making.

Next, if you have suspicions that you or someone in your care may have ADHD, seek an assessment. Your family doctor can be the first point of contact for this process. Online or internet-based self-assessments are generally not advised unless they are sent to you via a health information system by a qualified medical professional.

If you are diagnosed, seek treatment. The condition of ADHD is not the individual's fault, but if they do nothing to mitigate its symptoms—either through medication, therapy, or a combination of supports—then they place the burden on everyone around them. For family members, consider learning about mindfulness meditation techniques, which are proven to reduce our reactivity to challenging situations and relationships.

Look for ways to educate yourself. Many evidence-based resources are available for individuals with ADHD, for parents, and for family members. Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) is just one of many available websites that have a wealth of resources, and they can point you in the direction of better practices for you and your family.

Finally, seek community with people who have the same experiences. The research clearly shows that isolation only makes parents of children with ADHD feel more stressed and puts more strain on the relationship. Surrounding yourself with people who know what you and your family are going through can be a powerful source of support.

Remember, no one chooses to have ADHD. But we can choose better ways to manage our symptoms, and we can choose better ways to support our loved ones—and that is something worth paying attention to.

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NOTICE OF ELECTION

Notice is hereby given that a vote of the Electors of the **Rural Municipality of Ritchot** will be taken to elect **Members of Council** from the following duly nominated:

Ward 2: Jason Bodnarchuk, Ron Mamchuk

Ward 3: Curtis Claydon, Joel Lemoine

The following Members of Council are declared elected by acclamation:

Mayor: Chris Ewen (declared elected by acclamation)

Ward 1: Shane Pelletier (declared elected by acclamation)

Ward 4: Janine Boulanger (declared elected by acclamation)

VOTING PLACE

Voting place will be open for voting on Wednesday, October 26, 2022 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. at:

Ward 2 – Pioneer Hall – 345 St. Adolphe Road, St. Adolphe

Ward 3 – Ste Agathe Culture & Community Centre – 183 Main St, Ste Agathe

Identification may be required before being allowed to vote. A person may be required to produce one piece of government issued photo identification (for example – driver's license or passport) or at least two other documents that provide proof of identity.

ADVANCE VOTING

For the purpose of accommodating persons who are qualified to vote, but who have reason to believe that they will be absent or otherwise unable to attend their proper voting place on election day; an advance voting opportunity will be available at:

the Council Chambers – 352 Main Street, St. Adolphe, MB on Thursday, October 13, 2022 between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

APPLICATION TO VOTE BY SEALED ENVELOPE

A voter who is unable to go in person to the voting place or vote in advance, may apply to vote by sealed envelope. This request can be made in person, in writing, or by fax to the Senior Election Official at:

352 Main Street, St. Adolphe, MB R5A 1B9, 204-883-2674 (fax)

A voter may apply between September 28, 2022 to October 14, 2022 to vote by sealed envelope.

* A voter applying in person may pick up a sealed envelope ballot package at the time of application.

** A voter applying by mail or fax will receive a sealed envelope ballot package by regular post, or by making alternative arrangements with the Senior Election Official.

N.B.: Written or faxed application to vote by sealed envelope must be accompanied by a legible photocopy of a piece of government-issued photo identification or at least two other documents satisfactory to the election official. A voter applying in person should also have identification available.

Lyse Giesbrecht, 204-883-2293
Senior Election Official
R.M. of Ritchot
elections@ritchot.com



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AVIS D'ÉLECTION

Avis est donné par la présente qu'un vote des électeurs de **la Municipalité rurale de Ritchot** devront élire au poste de **Membres du Conseil** une ou plusieurs des personnes suivantes dont la candidature a été dûment enregistrée :

Quartier 2: Jason Bodnarchuk, Ron Mamchuk

Quartier 3: Curtis Claydon, Joel Lemoine

Les autres Membres du Conseil son élus sans concurrent:

Maire: Chris Ewen (élus sans concurrent)

Quartier 1: Shane Pelletier (élus sans concurrent)

Quartier 4: Janine Boulanger (élus sans concurrent)

CENTRE DE SCRUTIN

Le centre de scrutin sera ouvert mercredi le 26 octobre 2022 entre 8 h et 20 h à :

Quartier 2 – Centre Pioneer – 345 rue St. Adolphe, St. Adolphe

Quartier 3 – Centre Ste Agathe – 183 Chemin Pembina Trail, Ste Agathe

Vous devrez peut-être fournir une preuve d'identité avant d'être autorisé à voter. Pour ce faire, vous devrez présenter une pièce d'identité officielle délivrée par une administration avec photo (par exemple un permis de conduire ou un passeport) ou au moins deux autres documents qui prouvent votre identité.

SCRUTIN PAR ANTICIPATION

Afin de permettre aux électeurs qui ont des raisons de croire qu'ils seront absents le jour du scrutin ou qu'ils ne seront pas en mesure de se rendre à leur centre de scrutin ordinaire le jour de l'élection afin d'exercer leur droit de vote, un bureau de scrutin par anticipation sera ouvert entre 8 h et 20 h.

Lieu du bureau de scrutin: la Chambre du Conseil – 352 rue Main, St. Adolphe, MB le jeudi 13 octobre 2022.

DEMANDE DE VOTE PAR ENVELOPPE SCÉLÉE

Toute personne qui ne peut se rendre en personne au centre de scrutin ordinaire ou par anticipation peut faire une demande de vote par enveloppe scellée. Cette demande peut être faite en personne*, envoyée par la poste ou par télécopieur** auprès de la fonctionnaire électorale principale à : 352 rue Main, St-Adolphe, MB R5A 1B9, 204-883-2674 (télécopieur).

Les demandes peuvent se faire entre le 28 septembre 2022 et le 14 octobre 2022.

* Les électeurs qui font leur demande en personne recevront leur trousse de vote par enveloppe scellée au moment où ils présenteront leur demande.

** Les électeurs qui font leur demande par la poste ou par télécopieur recevront leur trousse de vote par enveloppe scellée par courrier ordinaire, à moins d'avoir pris d'autres mesures en accord avec la fonctionnaire électorale principale.

Notez bien : Toute demande par écrit doit être accompagnée d'une photocopie lisible d'une pièce d'identité (un document officiel délivré par une administration fédérale, provinciale ou municipale avec votre nom, votre adresse et votre photo). Toute personne qui fait une demande en personne doit s'assurer de pouvoir fournir une pièce d'identité aussi.

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Arts & Entertainment

Local Musicians Nominated for Manitoba Country Music Awards

By Sara Beth Dacombe

sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

Two Niverville musicians have been nominated for the Manitoba Country Music Awards (MCMAs), set to take place on November 6 in Winnipeg.

JR CHARRON

JR Charron released his EP *Impression* in October 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic to rave reviews. His first single "Song for You" landed in the top ten of the Canadian Indie Country Charts, followed by his second single, "Broke," which charted in the top 50.

The return to live performances gave Charron the opportunity to present his work in concert settings, interact with audiences, and really grow as an artist, resulting in the most recent MCMA recognition.

His award nominations include Emerging Artist, Roots Artist of the Year, Male Artist of the Year, and Fan's Choice.

"Coming out of the pandemic has been incredible," says Charron. "This has of course had its challenges, as booking shows for fairs, festivals, etc. have had their bills full with contracts that were signed pre- and mid-pandemic, so it made for a fairly scattered summer as far as shows were concerned. Regardless, we pushed on."

Charron has been busy performing in Western Manitoba, at the Niverville Fair, and recording new songs to be released soon.

"From touring out Brandon way to playing the Niverville Fair, we had an excellent and fulfilling summer," says Charron. "We have a major song release coming at the end of October. We've also managed to pick up some radio play across the province, which I consider a big win!"



Among the major challenges of pursuing a recording career during a pandemic, Charron and his wife added another adventure to their lives by welcoming a new baby.

"Over the pandemic, it was incredibly hard to get studio time, between positive tests, a move, and a new baby," he says. "That's been a welcome challenge. He's just over a year now, and things are going great. My wife is the real champ, though. She has to put up with me and the baby."

Charron also represented Manitoba at the Canadian Country Music Awards in Calgary this summer and played a set at the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Country Music Association Showcase.

The Calgary trip was crowd-funded by Charron's fans, friends, and family—and in response, the musician is planning a livestream performance to raise funds for Siloam Mission.

Charron says that the community of Niverville has made him feel incredibly welcome since he moved here from Binscarth in 2018.

"We love it here, and I don't see us leaving anytime soon," says Charron. "There will be big celebrations if I win an MCMA! I'm not sure how we'd celebrate as of yet, and I'm not holding my breath. I'm up against incredible talent who are all equally deserving."

CATIE ST. GERMAIN

Catie St. Germain is the granddaughter of Metis singer and Canadian Country Music Hall of Famer Ray St. Germain. She and her husband moved to Niverville in 2017 to raise their three boys.

With her experience travelling and singing across Canada with her family, St. Germain has a vast musical skillset to draw from and has amassed a repertoire of rock, top 40, and country songs spanning more than six decades of music.

She started performing on her own professionally at age 18.

"I've been blessed to grow up around many professional musicians for family, and my uncle had me join his band as soon as I came of age," says St. Germain. "Since then I've been offered many opportunities across Canada, was in a Johnny Cash and June Carter tribute band, and now most recently touring North America with the rock tribute band 'Snake Oil.'"

Recently St. Germain performed at the Niverville Fair, a performance she had been looking forward to for years.

"I honestly feel an immense amount of pride to be a part of this community, and to play my new hometown was a dream come true!" says St. Germain. "Everyone welcomed me with open arms before they knew I could sing, so getting

to 'give back' in a way has been amazing."

In addition to her appearance at the fair, St. Germain recently sang the national anthem for a Niverville Nighthawks home game.

St. Germain is thrilled to be part of a community where there are so many other professional musicians and where music plays such a big role in people's lives.

"Manitoba has the best musicians across Canada, hands down, and knowing that so many of them close to our small town are making big waves is just the cherry on top," she says.

In addition to her solo career, St. Germain also performs alongside musician Real Comeault in their duo called Whiskey Saints and as a lead vocalist for the Big City All-Star Band with bandleader Carlin Lemon. This puts her amongst Winnipeg's most sought-after vocal performers and she can frequently be found doing shows at various Smitty's locations, TransCanada Brewing Company, the casinos of Winnipeg, and many wedding cocktail hours.

St. Germain feels honoured to be nominated for Cover Artist of the Year with the MCMAs, as she just celebrated 15 years in the music scene.

"It just seems like a full circle moment," she says. "However, I do have originals in the works and plan on being back bigger than ever, hopefully with some new nominations under my belt."

The Manitoba Country Music Association is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion, development, and enhancement of all aspects of country music in Manitoba. The MCMAs will be held at The Metropolitan Entertainment Centre by Canad Inns in Winnipeg.

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