

# The Citizen

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### LOCAL NEWS

#### Province to Issue Tax Relief Cheques

■ The province has announced its plans to issue cheques to combat inflation. Not everyone is happy about the measure.

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### LOCAL NEWS

#### Turn Signals Improve Commute

■ A new left turn signal recently installed by the province at the busy intersection of Highways 59 and 311 is making life a little bit easier for motorists. The signal creates a safer opportunity for cars to turn left onto Highway 59 when driving east from Niverville.

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### SPORTS & REC

#### The Flight Crew Soars

■ A team of young people with disabilities is being recognized for their work with the Nighthawks. The appreciation goes both ways.

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### ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

#### Niverville Recording Artist Releases Single

■ A new single has just been released from local recording artist JR Charon. He says this is his most personal song to date.

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# Niverville High School's Teaching Model Under the Microscope

» READ MORE ON PAGES 3-7

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## How Xplore Fibre Internet Changed the Game for this Manitoba Business



The winter is tough for everyone, but bad weather doesn't stop Swift Underground, one of Xplore's local dealers and fibre construction contractors, from connecting residents and businesses to Xplore's 100% pure fibre Internet in rural Manitoba.

The Country Perogy Shop, a rural Manitoban company committed to offering high-quality products and exceptional customer service, was the first customer in Kleeefeld, Manitoba to be connected to Xplore's new fibre network by Swift Underground.

"The install was absolutely painless and we weren't without internet for more than a minute," said Don Penner.

Don and his wife Dorothy have owned the Country Perogy Shop for eight years.

Dorothy explained that with their previous DSL Internet provider the payment terminal often wouldn't work and customers would have to leave their contact information so they could send an e-transfer, come back later with a cheque or return when the machine started working again.

"We were never stiffed by anyone, but a business should never have to operate this

way." Since being connected to Xplore fibre, this issue is a thing of the past.

"The speeds are awesome and our Point of Sale machine has worked ever since!"

Now with a fast and reliable Internet connection, Dorothy can work on the website and make changes right from her office at the store. Previously, Dorothy would have to go back to her home, five miles away, where she has Xplore fixed wireless Internet, to upload and download large files from suppliers or to make modifications to the website.

"Now I can get to work right here at the store, if something comes up, I can address it right away. I don't have to wait until I get home."

Though the Country Perogy Shop has only been located "in-town" in Kleeefeld for two years, it feels like it's been there forever. And, in a way, it has been a part of the fabric of the community for decades already.

The Country Perogy Shop has been in the Penner family for the past 35 years.

They had humble beginnings, being run out of the Penner's own kitchen, and struggled to stay open after one of their primary

customers, "The 8 Stove" (or "Eating Room" in German) closed down in the 90's. But, through persistence and "pounding the pavement," the reputation and customer base of The Country Perogy Shop continued to grow to what it is today.

Dorothy laughed when asked how they came to the decision to purchase the business.

"We had joked about me buying the business for years, since we were family, and I was already the shop manager."

After purchasing the business, they decided to relocate to Kleeefeld. Dorothy explained that their new location had sentimental value to her. It was once a restaurant that was owned by a family friend. This turned out to be a great decision as their retail sales have since increased by 10-20% and they feel much more present in the community.

For Don and Dorothy, when it comes to their business, quality and customer service are paramount. They experimented with a perogy making machine once to move away from hand-pinned perogies.

"It worked great! The one thing we didn't check before getting the machine was actually cooking the perogy and tasting it," Dorothy said.

They realized that the machine changed the taste and texture of their perogies.

"We couldn't stand behind the product, so we stopped using the machine," she added.

Don said he expects the same level of quality and service from other companies.

"It doesn't matter how big you are, if my business hinges on the product you provide and I need support, I better feel like I'm the most important person for you right now. So far Swift (Xplore) has been great with that."

Xplore's Fibre internet is now available in Kleeefeld, Grunthal, Mitchell South, La Broquerie, New Bothwell, Dufresne, Linden, Greenland and Otterburne; and soon, construction will be underway in Landmark and Blumenort.

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The Citizen

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Niverville High School.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

# Niverville High School's Teaching Model Under the Microscope

**By Brenda Sawatzky**  
LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER  
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*Much of the following information about life inside Niverville High School was provided by parents of students and one former student. The Hanover School Division declined The Citizen's request for an interview with Principal Kimberley Funk and Funk did not respond to a direct request for an interview. The superintendent of HSD, Shelley Amos, also declined a request for an interview. However, upon further prompting, vice-superintendent Colin Campbell did agree to answer some questions. Michael Zwagstra also declined an interview, although his writings on the subject of PBL have been quoted.*

The fall of 2019 marked a significant moment for more than 300 Niverville students as they entered, for the first time, the expansive and sophisticated new learning space of the Niverville High School (NHS).

Assigned to oversee these students' academic success was the school's new principal, Kimberley Funk. Funk had more than 25 years of teaching experience in the Hanover School Division (HSD) and served as vice-principal of Landmark Collegiate before coming to NHS.

As the first NHS school year got underway for students in ninth and tenth grades, so did a teaching model that was still relatively new in its delivery. It was so unique that a parent orientation has been held every year since in order to sell the idea of it to parents of incoming students.

For the first two years of student life at NHS, conventional methods of learning have all but vanished. They've been replaced by a combination of interdisciplinary and project-based learning (PBL).

PBL is frequently described as real-world learning for twenty-first-century students. As the name suggests, it focuses heavily on learning the curriculum through

the completion of hands-on projects, both individually and in groups.

The general goal of the PBL model is to replace more traditional methods of teaching such as lecturing, note-taking, fact memorization, and testing.

The philosophy behind it is to provide students with more freedom and decision-making power in their education, presumably making learning more relevant to students than traditional methods have historically done.

Interdisciplinary learning involves combining two or more academic subjects, or disciplines, into one instructional class. In Grades Nine and Ten at NHS, English Language Arts (ELA), Science, and Social Studies are combined into a single course.

An interdisciplinary philosophy suggests that the world isn't divided into neat categories, and neither should a student's education.

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## A WHOLE NEW WAY OF DOING SCHOOL

But it's not just curriculum delivery that's new to the early years at NHS. Here, students don't move to a different classroom for each subject. Much of the day's schoolwork takes place in the homeroom setting.

There are no bells to signify the end of a session.

Textbooks and notebooks have by and large flown the coop and students are encouraged to search for most of their information online.

At NHS, students are on a first-name basis with their teacher, principal, and admin staff. Gone are the days of Mr., Mrs., and Ms.

Students are given plenty of autonomy in choosing the medium for their projects, based on their individual passions and interests. Drawings, essays, songwriting, or online gaming development are all viable options for producing a project.

Memorization-based tests and exams are more or less gone from this teaching approach. Instead students are individually assessed by the teacher following the completion of a project.

Projects are graded using a scale of *limited*, *basic*, *good*, *very good*, and *excellent* to demonstrate the student's understanding of a topic. Percentage-based grading is reserved for report cards since that is still the only grading method recognized by the province.

Interestingly, students revert to more traditional ways of learning as they enter Grades Eleven and Twelve at NHS. PBL is no longer the focal point of learning in senior high and interdisciplinary courses become optional.

## FORMER STUDENT TELLS HER STORY

Zoé was a Grade Nine student at NHS during the 2021–2022 school year. Throughout her prior years of education in Niverville, she thrived in the classroom with traditional learning methods.

Zoé recalls the introduction she and her classmates received regarding the new mode of learning just prior to attending NHS for the first time.

"I remember being excited for the PBL program," she says. "I especially remember the 'no test' part."

It didn't take long, though, for the shine to wear off for this student.

Zoé has a passion for ELA. She lives to write and aspires to a degree in journalism someday. Frustration set in, then, as her Grade Nine year progressed while the ELA component of the interdisciplinary trio became lost within science and social studies themes.

According to Zoé, her grammar, spelling, and essay-writing skills were not challenged in any meaningful way. In the course of the school year, she says there was only one book assignment given and it was based on a social studies theme.

"It would be one thing if we were doing a project and we made grammar or spelling mistakes that we'd get docked points on, but we didn't," says Zoé. "My grammar has really gone downhill."

Another sore spot quickly developed for Zoé regarding her group project experiences. About 50 percent of the projects she was required to do, she says, were in randomly chosen groups of three or four other students.

For someone like Zoé, there's no question that hard work and effort is required to get the desired mark. The problem, she says, is the injustice of being paired with students who put in minimal effort and yet score high marks based on group effort.

Also a problem in Zoé's mind is that most of the students were using Google searches as their primary means of gleaning facts, paying little attention to the credibility of their online sources.

From her perspective, plagiarism was also a common issue and, as far as Zoé is aware, students were not discouraged from doing it.

"Me and my classmates realized that no matter how little effort we put in, we still got passing grades," says Zoé. "So everyone just slowly stopped caring."

Another frustration for Zoé was her lack of ability to meaningfully track her overall performance. For a student who'd previously worked hard at achieving the highest possible test scores, a score of "good" on her project was a less than satisfactory way for her to measure her own progress. And little input was ever provided regarding areas where she could use improvement.

**"PBL is supported by research and is effective in teaching students to be critical thinkers while developing essential skills like collaboration, problem-solving, and creativity."**

**Colin Campbell** | HSD Assistant Superintendent

"Throughout the year I was steadily going downhill," Zoé recalls.

By the spring of 2022, she says that apathy towards school had set in so thoroughly that she struggled just to get out of bed in the morning.

At this point, her report cards were starting to reflect it.

By year's end, Zoé was unable to open her report card for fear of what she might find. Had a random test been given in any of the subjects she took that year, she was sure she'd have failed it since, in her mind, the curriculum had only been covered in such broad terms.

In May 2022, Zoé made the choice to apply for admission to the Steinbach Regional Secondary School (SRSS) for Grade Ten. To do so, she needed to choose an occupational trade to study. While none of the

trades being offered held much appeal to her, it was a small price to pay to get back to traditional learning.

Zoé is back to seeing her grades measured in percentages. She says that most of her marks so far are coming in around 95 percent compared to the "good" or "very good" benchmarks she received at NHS.

She's found some exciting electives that interest her, such as sociology and ethics, and she's sharpening her writing and editing skills in ELA class day by day.

"At NHS, we did maybe one project every two to four weeks whereas, at SRSS, there's new assignments every day and I like that," Zoé says. "In interdisciplinary, we only got one

mark for those three things because they were all combined. Now I can tell that all my marks for those three subjects are very different and I can see which one I'm struggling in."

She freely admits, though, that adjusting to weekly quizzes in some of her classes at SRSS has been a challenging adjustment since she fell behind on developing the skill of cramming for tests during her Grade Nine year.

## PARENTS WEIGH IN

When *The Citizen* put out a call for feedback, either positive or negative, regarding the new teaching modality at NHS, a few parents reached out.

Some requested anonymity for the sake of their child who is or was a student at NHS.

Other parents indicated a desire to share their opinion but, as educators in HSD themselves, they were restricted by the Manitoba Teachers' Society's policy in doing so.

The first parent to provide feedback, Parent One, had a student attending Grade Nine during the school's first year. Like Zoé, one year was all it took for their 15-year-old

to look elsewhere for an education. They, too, switched to SRSS where, according to Parent One, they are now flourishing.

Parent One says that she believes the ideology behind PBL is a good one. It makes sense, she says, that in order to encourage independent learning, more students need buy-in through hands-on engagement.

Still, she says, some children also require the structure of traditional learning to be successful and when one modality of teaching is applied to all students ubiquitously, some are bound to fall through the cracks.

"When kids go to high school, there's a little bit of a different philosophy," Parent One says. "The expectation is that the student is now 'responsible' and that the teacher just teaches... And even though kids have to learn to do their assignments and follow the rubrics and understand deadlines, [all of] the onus is being placed on the student. A lot of these kids are not ready for that, and they still need these teachers to hold their hand, metaphorically."

For Parent Two, the PBL program seems to be a good fit for her child in most subjects, with the exception of math.

According to this mom, PBL is carried out in her child's math class by having the students solve math problems in small groups on the classroom whiteboard. Groups take turns doing this in front of all the other students. The students are paired into groups randomly so some in the group may excel at math while others struggle.

"Each student learns at a different pace and doing math together on whiteboards in groups is terribly intimidating for students that might be a bit slower to figure out the problem," says Parent Two, who adds that her child is shy and doesn't perform well under this kind of pressure.

"Why do they need to collaborate together on math?" she asks. "Students that are shy or maybe like to figure questions out on their own are scared to be at math class because they don't feel they have anything to

## NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the matter of the Estate of GEORGE COYLE,  
late of Niverville, Manitoba, Deceased.

All claims against the above estate, supported by Statutory Declaration must be sent to the attention of: Courtney Scott,  
Acting Estate Officer, at 155 Carlton St Suite 500,  
Winnipeg MB, R3C 5R9 on or before the 8<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2023

Dated at Winnipeg, Manitoba, this 4<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2023

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contribute. I wonder if it raises any questions when you see the number of students that leave NHS to go to SRSS. Maybe this PBL learning style is not working."

Lisa Banman is a Niverville resident and a professor at the University of Manitoba. Her son attended Grade Nine at NHS and opted to leave after the first year.

"I gave him the choice and he decided to go to SRSS," Banman says. "I teach at the university and I'm familiar with how most universities' courses are run. Students have to be able to take in information and they have to take notes. I didn't think that this project-based learning was really preparing him to study in a university setting."

Banman says that she attended the parent orientation at NHS just before her son entered Grade Nine there. She remembers feeling a level of alarm when the principal introduced the PBL learning style to parents.

"She said if your child did well academically, that you should prepare for their mark to drop," says Banman. "And if they did poorly [before], their mark would likely go up. It just doesn't make rational sense to say that a strong student will suffer in this approach to learning."

Banman adds that one parent at orientation night queried the principal on how PBL would prepare their children for a university setting where traditional lecture-style teaching and tests are still the norm.

According to Banman, this parent received a surprising response: NHS's goal is not to prepare students for university but rather to prepare them for life.

Even so, Banman is quick

to admit that PBL has merit as a teaching style. But she feels that introducing it to high school students before it's been embraced at the postsecondary level may be premature.

"We're trying different approaches to get university students more [engaged]," Banman adds. "And I think that's what the PBL style is sort of aiming to do. But I feel like it might be more suited to part of a semester or subject instead of [the whole of their education]."

Speaking from the experience of her son's Grade Nine year at NHS, Banman also worries about how fully the curriculum is being covered when students are just working on isolated projects dealing with very specific topics.

"I feel like this is a really big shift from listening to the teacher, who is the expert on the subject, to almost making the students try to become the experts themselves," she says. "I don't know if they are at a level where they can do that."

Another parent, Amanda Kipe, currently has a child enrolled in Grade Nine at NHS. She admits that the shift in learning styles has been a challenge for her son, but he has a positive attitude about it.

As a parent, she's choosing to support PBL as a valuable path to building practical and transferable job skills for him in the future.

"Learning styles are so different for each of us," Kipe says. "This style has a bit for everyone and does not cater to the traditional academic style of memorizing and testing. That style does not work when we need to report to a boss or manager. If we want to make changes in our workplace, we have to come up with an idea, know how

to research it and present it... We very rarely give our supervisors a paper on why we think the way we do, nor are we given a test on paper."

#### NHS AND HSD'S APPROACH TO PBL

For this article, *The Citizen* was not granted an interview with NHS's principal, Kimberley Funk.

When you can't go to the principal for answers to PBL-related questions, you must instead go to the NHS website, which offers up a video that provides a thoughtful overview of PBL as it's being explored by NHS staff and students.

"Education was built on a system of long ago and now we're preparing kids for jobs that don't even exist," Funk says in the video. "The world is so different right now. We are inundated with information. We can look things up so quickly, so now we need to know how to navigate all of that information."

Funk acknowledges that the PBL program, as practiced at NHS, is a response to HSD's vision for deeper learning opportunities for its students.

When asking Colin Campbell, assistant superintendent of HSD, whether the PBL program was created as a pilot project at NHS—a kind of experiment, as it were—he indicates that, in one form or another, PBL is practiced at all schools in the division.

No evidence was provided, though, to suggest that any other HSD school is using PBL as the primary method of teaching across an entire grade or grades of students.

"We do not hold the view that PBL is highly controversial," Campbell says. "On the contrary, PBL is supported by research and is effective

in teaching students to be critical thinkers while developing essential skills like collaboration, problem-solving, and creativity. PBL is a strong pedagogical approach to teaching deeper learning which has been in our HSD strategic plan since 2015."

Contrary to what some NHS students report, Campbell suggests that direct teaching, note-taking, quizzes, and tests are still very relevant to PBL classes in the HSD.

"Our teachers do their best to differentiate instruction and pedagogical practice to meet the needs of individual learners whenever possible," he says.

As to the concern that some students are leaving Niverville in order to get back to traditional learning, Campbell says that the division respects a parent or caregiver's right to do what they think is best for their child.

At this stage, he adds, there doesn't appear to be a concerning number of students leaving NHS due to the PBL program.

But, he says, the schools and division welcome feedback from parents, whose concerns are taken very seriously.

"We all work together to make our schools safe, positive, and respectful places for each child to learn," Campbell says. "There are times, however, when we may have different ideas about the way things could be done, and concerns could arise. Hanover School Division supports a collaborative approach to resolving concerns or complaints."

He adds that programming and teaching practices are continually assessed throughout the division and parent feedback plays a role in that evaluative process.

(continued on page 6)

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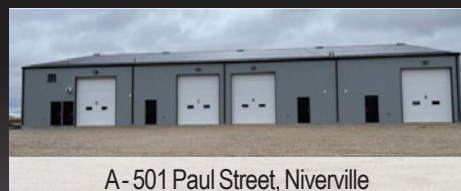
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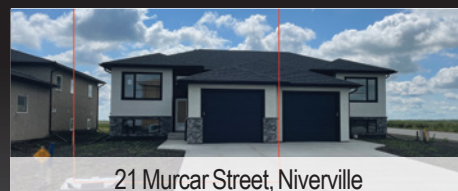
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## LOCAL EDUCATOR SEES RISK TO PBL

Michael Zwaagstra is a high school teacher at the Green Valley School in the HSD.

Zwaagstra has authored two books on education. *What's Wrong with Our Schools and How We Can Fix Them* was published in 2010. In 2019, he released another, titled *A Sage on the Stage: Common Sense Reflections on Teaching and Learning*.

In a 2017 article written for *The Calgary Herald*, Zwaagstra criticizes the Albertan education department for pushing an agenda which would move the entire provincial education system away from the “industrial model” of learning to becoming more student-centric.

“Never underestimate the staying power of a bad idea,” Zwaagstra says in that same article. “Nowhere is this truer than in the field of education policy.”<sup>1</sup>

He says that a promotional video on the department’s website describes teachers as learning facilitators and textbooks as artificial constructs. The video, he says, suggests that classrooms need to reflect more of the real world.

At one point, according to Zwaagstra, the Alberta government even announced its intent to eliminate its long-held model of provincial standardized exams and replace them with assessments that focus on the process of learning as opposed to content knowledge.

“Education gurus come up with new ideas, temporarily retreat from them when they prove to be a flop, and then rename them and try again with a new crop of unsuspecting teachers and principals,” says Zwaagstra. “Perhaps the worst of these new ideas is the notion that specific content knowledge doesn’t matter a whole lot... The gurus argue that students should not waste time memorizing a bunch of useless facts. Hence, the move away from teacher-directed instruction to various manifestations of inquiry- or project-based learning.”

Zwaagstra adds that PBL is actually the repackaging of a very old idea. A version of it originated with William Henry Kilpatrick, a well-known American education professor who wrote an article in 1918 entitled “The Project Method.”

Much of Zwaagstra’s concern

with PBL, and other twenty-first-century learning models, is that the emphasis on content knowledge is being ditched and replaced with an emphasis on the process—the creation of a project.

In a paper he wrote for the Frontier Centre for Public Policy in 2017, Zwaagstra describes content knowledge as the understanding of specific facts and concepts.

Content knowledge in history, for example, would include dates, names, and major events that have shaped our world. In math, content knowledge includes such things as the memorization of multiplication tables, and in ELA it might include the study of classical authors such as Shakespeare but would most certainly also include the mastery of the rules of spelling and grammar.

Many educators subscribing to the twenty-first-century models, he says, are using a different set of competencies by which success in learning is measured. These include critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity.

“While these are obviously important skills for students to learn, they are not content specific,” says Zwaagstra. “In other words, these skills can be used in any subject area regardless of academic content and at any grade level. To 21st Century Learning advocates, these generalized skills are more important than the specific content being studied.”<sup>2</sup>

In reality, though, critical thinking can’t happen in isolation of content knowledge, he says.

In order to think critically about any single historical event, for example, it requires a broader-based knowledge of the key people and events that led up to that moment—something, Zwaagstra says, that won’t happen from a quick Google search, especially when considering that the internet is rife with inaccurate facts and biased opinion.

In fact, he adds, “Googling a subject about which you know nothing is often an exercise in piling ignorance upon ignorance.”

“Learning content is much more than just memorizing a bunch of isolated facts, but it still includes memorizing these facts,” Zwaagstra

concludes. “Progressive educators are right to complain when some traditional teachers reduce students to passive vessels and subject them to hours of boring instruction. But progressive educators are wrong to say that students can learn to be critical and creative without knowing these facts. Knowledge is a powerful thing and good teachers know how to make their subjects come alive.”

An online academic resource called Atutor agrees with Zwaagstra that PBL, with all its merits, could have a potential downside.

In a 2022 article called “Pros and Cons of Project-Based Learning,” James Larson extols some of the pros of PBL in the classroom, including the development of cooperation, teamwork, and leadership skills among students. As well, it promotes creativity and can make learning more fun.

*“I’m probably a product of the system that didn’t really get the model of traditional schooling and I would have done better in a practical, authentic, meaningful-to-my-life way of education”*

**Kurt Hangle** | Former NCI Teacher

On the flip side, though, it requires real creative effort on the teacher’s part to ensure that students working in groups stay on task and that the lazy ones don’t take advantage of the resourceful ones.

Secondly, Larson says that missing content is probably one of the most significant issues he sees with PBL.

“In a traditional classroom, teachers complete a curriculum map, teaching skills in a specific order, and the material’s presentation occurs, no matter what,” Larson says. “With [PBL], it may be challenging to get all the teaching into the schedule as students develop their projects. At the end of a course, the assessment can be quite time-consuming, primarily if a teacher doesn’t get to teach all the content and material. Students who complete a course using PBL often fail fact-based assessments because they have spent so much time completing the project that they don’t

engage in enough essential course content and information.”<sup>3</sup>

## WHERE PBL SHOWS MEASURABLE SUCCESS

At different levels and in different ways, some Winnipeg-based schools are successfully making a focused PBL model work for the students in their care.

*The Citizen* looked at three specific cases, all of which either operate as opt-in programs or accept students on the basis of their application to the program.

Nelson McIntyre Collegiate offers the Propel program, an opt-in program for students who want to pursue individualized areas of interest under the guidance of a PBL facilitator.

The program runs for one semester and can earn a student three to four credits.

Based on a video presentation on the school’s website, students who complete just five months in the Propel program throughout their entire high school experience report having a greater appreciation for school and learning overall.

Sisler High School established the Create program, specifically designed for students whose interests lie in the area of entertainment arts. Here, students can study film, animation, game design, graphic design, photography, and digital media.

The program also focuses on providing mentorship and internships with industry leaders in Manitoba and around the world.

The Seven Oaks School Division (SOSD) can likely be viewed as one of the pioneers of PBL models of learning in Manitoba.

In 2009, the division opened its first Met school, a learning centre separate from the division’s other, more traditional learning institutions.

Today, due to its popularity, SOSD has opened two more Met schools across the division. In fact, in order to attend a Met school, students must apply.

But according to Principal Nancy Janelle, almost every student who’s applied has so far been accepted to the program.

While the Met schools have a distinctive focus on PBL, they’ve incorporated it into another model called Big Picture Learning (BPL) which was a mode of learning made famous by author Dennis Littky in his book *The Big Picture*, published in 2004.

The first BPL school opened in Rhode Island in 1995 and today there are more than 80 of them across the United States and an additional 100 schools around the world.

In the SOSD’s Met schools, BPL means adding an internship component to a student’s high school education.

Between Grades Nine and Twelve, students will gain between five and ten different internship experiences which offer them opportunities for in-depth career exploration and firsthand experience with job interviews.

They’ll learn resume-building and networking with potential employers in their field of interest and some will even find part- or full-time employment while still in high school.

Janelle says that the Met schools attract a good cross-section of students who have a variety of end goals in mind. Some are job-oriented and might get hired by their internships right out of high school.

Other Met students have been awarded large scholarships and received acceptance to competitive colleges and universities post-grad.

The Met schools have former students who are pursuing law and medicine and other former students who are now acting as mentors to new students in their workplaces.

Even so, these schools haven’t let go of all aspects of traditional learning within their walls.

“At the Met school, we still need to adhere to all provincial regulations: curriculum requirements, percentage-based grading, report cards, and provincial exams,” says Janelle. “And sometimes skills and content are taught in a more traditional lecture model as needed. We do also provide opportunities for our students to learn how to study for and take tests, as this is a necessary skill as they enter into postsecondary institutions.”

Kurt Hangle worked as an Industrial Arts teacher at Niverville Collegiate Institute (NCI) for many years. He recalls reading Littke’s book as part of his professional development training along with



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other HSD educators just over ten years ago.

“That’s actually what sold me on Big Picture Learning. When I read that book, it was like the second coming for me,” Hangle laughs. “I was excited.”

Hangle admits that, if there’d been a Met school when he was a student in grade school, he’d have signed up.

“I’m probably a product of the system that didn’t really get the model of traditional schooling and I would have done better in a practical, authentic, meaningful-to-my-life way of education,” Hangle says.

A few years ago, Hangle joined the ranks of teachers who are willing to do the hard work of changing everything they’ve ever done in their prior educational careers. He became a teacher at one of the SOSD’s Met schools.

He says that PBL in his classroom isn’t unlike the research projects that most high school students are accustomed to doing.

Traditionally, though, the project is completed, handed in for a grade, and then forgotten.

Students in Hangle’s class are expected to exhibit their project once it’s complete. It could be presented to fellow classmates or the entire school body.

But three times per year, students are given opportunities to take their project into

public forums, which he says can provide all sorts of real-world advantages.

As part of this process, students invite family and community members to attend and provide feedback.

Other times, they take them to public places such as shopping malls and talk to anyone willing to hear about their project and it’s end results.

“[This] public exhibition component, I think, brings authentic value to the student,” Hangle says. “They’re actually displaying it in a real-world setting to get public feedback and critique.”

Another philosophy of BPL is to allow students autonomy in exploring projects that they feel especially passionate about and that have a real-world impact.

Projects can take months on end to complete as students perform fieldwork, conduct experiments, interview real-life experts in the field, and pore over research papers on the subject.

“For one of my students, the big question that she’s trying to solve is... the long-term impact of zebra mussels in Lake Winnipeg,” Hangle says. “She has an interest in marine biology, so this is something that really matters to [her] and [it’s] driving her inquiry project.”

Hangle says that he will be expecting to see upwards of 10 to 12 different resources cited in each of his students’

projects.

At times, when students find field experts to interview, an internship may also come out of that.

Hangle isn’t willing to assume that PBL or BPL is for every student. All he knows for certain is that it is proving to be a successful model of learning for many of his students.

“We have [thousands] of students at Seven Oaks and [a few] hundred of them are Met students,” Hangle says. “So there’s still the traditional model of school run here.”

For parents, educators, or students who are questioning the efficacy of the PBL model, Hangle recommends a YouTube documentary called “Most Likely to Succeed.”

CONCLUSIONS

At the end of the day, even those like Zwaagstra who don’t fully condone the way some educators are rolling out PBL have to admit that it can be a useful tool for highly motivated students who are able to direct their own learning.

In another article Zwaagstra wrote, this time for his weekly column in Steinbach’s *The Carillon* called “Think Again,” he cites the example of SOSD Met schools, highlighting that significant success has been achieved there through their chosen delivery method.

“One of the key reasons behind the success of the Met

schools is the fact that these schools are voluntary,” Zwaagstra writes in his column. “Students and their parents must buy in to the educational philosophy of these schools. Otherwise, they cannot attend.”

As for the success of PBL at NHS, it’s probably too soon to tell for certain what is really going on.

The first students exposed to NHS’s PBL method in 2019 will be graduating this coming June. After that, the proof will be in the pudding, as the saying goes.

Any way you slice it, though, it’s a whole new educational model for both students and NHS teachers alike.

In NHS’s case, everyone’s a learner.

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CITIZEN POLL

Do you feel that a new learning modality such as PBL can be effectively used to teach all children, regardless of their learning style?

- ☐ Yes. Teachers should be able to effectively make models like PBL work for a broad cross-section of learners.
- ☐ No. Until there is enough evidence to suggest that PBL can work for everyone, the program should be optional.

Have a more nuanced opinion? Leave us a comment online.

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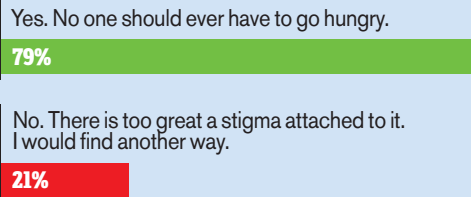


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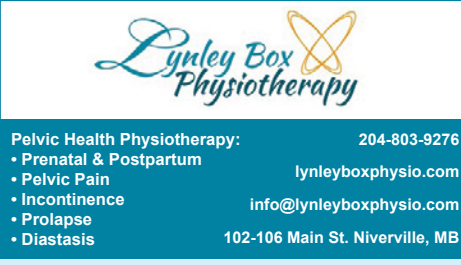
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# Big Niverville Projects Underway in 2023

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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It's a new year with a new council, but many ongoing projects are underway in the town of Niverville, including some big ones that have been anticipated for many years.

## WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT

High on that list of projects is the \$110 million wastewater treatment plant proposed for construction on a section of land just north of Niverville.

Once complete, the plant will service 13 communities in four neighbouring municipalities: Niverville, Ritchot, Tache, and Hanover.

Niverville CAO Eric King says that an engineer has been contracted for the first part of the design.

"They are drawing up the plans for all of the underground infrastructure, [including] all of the pipes from the 13 communities to here," King says.

A Request for Qualifications (RFQ) will be going out shortly, giving engineering companies and building contractors three months to submit their proposals.

King says these proposals typically arrive as binders with 1,500 pages of data to pour through, including qualifications on all of the company's team members, previous build experience, and a timeline in which they expect to complete the project.

Once the RFQ candidates are narrowed down, each will be required to submit a Request for Proposal (RFP), outlining the costs to complete the build.

"The actual contract for construction will probably be awarded this time next year," says King.

Even so, he adds that it could be 2025 before the construction team



The new water treatment plant in Niverville is nearing completion.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

gets started, with an additional two years after that until the plant is fully operational.

In its entirety, the project will include a high-tech treatment plant, lift stations, pump stations, and approximately 90 kilometres of effluent pipeline. It is anticipated that the project will create more than 3,400 new jobs in the coming decade.

## NIVERVILLE RCMP DETACHMENT

Manitoba's newest RCMP detachment will soon be located in Niverville, although the term "soon" is relative. This is, after all, a major project saddled with mounds of red tape.

Mayor Myron Dyck wants to reassure Niverville residents that a stronger police presence is on its way.

"We've heard you, we're working towards it, but things take time," says Dyck.

At present, council is awaiting design plans from Calnitsky Associates Architects Inc. before contractors can be hired.

The detachment will be located in the rear section of the municipal building and is anticipated to provide full-time office space for

up to five constables, administration staff, and other public service personnel.

Due to a high level of sensitivity, contractors hired for an RCMP detachment build must have special security clearance qualifications, which narrows the options.

For this reason, King will act as project manager to save on additional costs. He is currently the only town staffer with security clearance privileges.

"It can add hundreds of thousands of dollars to a project," says Mayor Dyck of hiring professional project managers with RCMP clearance permissions.

Local contractors will also be hired based on their security clearance status. Council is hopeful for the completion of the detachment in late 2023.

## WATER TREATMENT PLANT

Niverville's new \$5 million water treatment plant, which began construction in the spring of 2022, is expected to be online and fully functional in the coming weeks. King says that a few final tests are being run at this point.

The new plant is expected to be able to service up to 15,000

residents with treated water.

But even with greater capacity, Dyck wants residents to be aware that there will still be some restrictions on water use going forward.

For example, he feels that, to be a good steward of resources, it would be responsible to continue using alternate lawn-watering days in the summer.

King adds that the province has made it mandatory for a municipality to have specific water conservation plans in place in order to be issued a new license.

## THE BUDGETS THAT PAY FOR THE PROJECTS

King says that final assessment numbers need to come in from the province before he can release council's full 2023 budget plan.

It can be said, though, that the new budget will be up from last year due to changes in minimum wage rates as well as inflationary costs on everything else.

"Just to do what we did last year would require a seven percent increase," says Dyck. "Council is working hard toward coming in under seven percent. But that means that, technically, we'd have less to offer this year than we did last year."

## IN BRIEF

### Ag Industry Gets Provincial Support

By Brenda Sawatzky

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New financial supports for the ag sector have been announced by the province.

"Farmers are the backbone of our province," said Premier Heather Stefanson. "They work tirelessly every day, often in very difficult conditions, to feed the world."

Agribusiness has faced some difficult challenges in recent years, Stefanson pointed out, including the pandemic, which led to high ag input costs and debilitating supply chain disruptions.

Adding insult to injury, these challenges were worsened as farmers faced a 2021 drought followed by excessive moisture in 2022.

In response to these weather extremes, the Manitoba Agriculture Services Corporation will increase the dollar value of Excess Moisture Insurance coverage for 2023 to \$75 for basic coverage.

Higher coverage options will also be available of \$100 and \$125 per acre.

As well, the province has created a short-term rent reduction plan for forage leases on agricultural Crown lands. Beginning in 2023, farmers will also see a 50 percent rent reduction which will slowly drop down to 15 percent by 2025.

To assist ag producers in adapting to changing climate conditions, the province has developed an online platform called the Environmental Farm Plan which integrates national and international sustainable sourcing standards. As well, it renewing its commitment to the 4R Nutrient Stewardship, a science-based nutrient management framework.

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## IN BRIEF

## Niverville Residents Receive Jubilee Medals

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Three Niverville residents were bestowed the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee award in January.

Officiating the ceremony in Steinbach, MP Ted Falk presented awards to 46 residents of Provencher. The Niverville honourees included Annette Fast, Elaine Krahn, and Darryl Rempel.

The nominees were those who make significant contributions to their province, with a focus on community-mindedness, service, and reconciliation.

They were presented with a commemorative lapel pin created by the Canadian Heraldic Authority, as well as a commemorative medal.

"It's an honour for me to be in the room with so many extraordinary people," Falk told attendees of the presentation ceremony. "Many of you are in public service. Many of you are community builders. Each one of you is an example of what ordinary citizens can do when they serve others."

Darryl Rempel was recognized for his years of community involvement in church, in schools, or at events like the local fair. Elaine Krahn played a key role in resurrecting the Niverville fair in the mid-1990s. Annette Fast is best known as one of the chief organizers of the local Gardeners Club and as the Niverville chapter of Communities in Bloom.

In December, four other Niverville residents were presented with the prestigious award by MLA Ron Schuler: Mayor Myron Dyck, Gordon Daman, Shirley Hoult, and Libby Hanna.



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# Niverville Purchases New Cordless Rescue Tools

By Sara Beth Dacombe

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Niverville Fire and Emergency Services is excited to announce the purchase of a set of Holmatro rescue tools. The department held a community unveiling on social media on January 10 to thank everyone for their help in fundraising to make the purchase possible.

The new set replaces older tools which had been in use for many years.

Since the January 10 event was only able to be held online, a full community demonstration is planned for the future when the weather is more cooperative.

Throughout the fall, businesses and community members were involved in fundraising for the equipment through various



EMR Jordan Magri holding the new cutters tool, EMR Marc Bergen holding the new spreaders tool, and recruit firefighter Darrell Couzens holding the new ram tool.

NIVERVILLE FIRE AND EMS

initiatives, including the department's annual perogy dinner.

In November, an anonymous donor had pledged to match

donations up to a total of \$25,000. The additional support boosted the fundraising effort, allowing the department to meet their goal just

before Christmas.

The new set of powerful cutters and spreaders is cordless, enabling personnel to move beyond vehicle extrications.

The new equipment came at a cost of approximately \$55,000.

"These new tools are battery-operated and allow members to use these tools in not only vehicle rescue situations, but also allows them to be used in other rescue situations," says Niverville fire chief Keith Bueckert.

"These tools require no setup time and allow members to quickly focus on the task at hand, which was not the case with our old hydraulic equipment. From all of us at the Niverville Fire and Emergency Services, thank you for your contributions and support!"

## Location and Provider Decided for New Ritchot Daycare

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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The first public meeting of the new year for Ritchot's council resulted in some good news for working parents.

Council voted to accept a resolution that names Garderie Ile des Chenes Daycare (GIDCD) as the soon-to-be providers for the community's newest daycare facility.

Once built, the new facility will be the second daycare managed by GIDCD in Île-des-Chênes. The licenced non-profit organization currently manages a 158-spot daycare inside the TC Energy Centre.

"We were fortunate to get at least one provider," CAO Mitch Duval told council. "Mayor Chris, Councillor [Shane] Pelletier, and myself did an evaluation on the proposal and are recommending that the Garderie Ile des Chenes is

the perfect fit for the community." Mayor Chris Ewen agreed.

"Even before reviewing, I've known this daycare for quite some time," Ewen said. "They've been a pillar in Île-des-Chênes."

The new daycare facility is one of nine being built across the Winnipeg Metro Region. The pilot project was spearheaded by John Q Built and funded via grants from both the federal and provincial governments.

Scheduled for completion some time later this year, the new 6,000-square-foot facility will provide 74 additional daycare spots for infants and preschool children.

As part of the agreement between council and John Q Built, a serviced two-acre lot needed to be provided somewhere in the RM.

After months of investigation, council selected a parcel of land located at the southwest corner of

Île-des-Chênes, immediately west of Rosybloomb Lane.

Accessed from the Old PTH 59, the location will serve council's goal of preventing cut-through traffic by directing commuters towards a major traffic route.

Rachelle Muller is the director of GIDCD. She says it didn't require a lot of deliberation before sending a Request for Proposal to the RM to be considered for management of the new site.

"The decision was made by the board and myself and we felt it was an easy decision to make because we do have a large wait list at the centre," Muller says. "So being able to service more of the community would be very beneficial for Île-des-Chênes."

With the news of their acceptance so fresh, the only certainty for Muller and the board right now is that the new daycare will be run as a bilingual facility, just like the

existing daycare at TC Energy.

Even an opening date is impossible to predict until something concrete is set in motion in terms of the build. In the coming weeks, Muller anticipates working on grant applications for start-up daycares, which will help furnish the new facility when the time comes.

If not enough grant money is available, fundraisers may also be a consideration as they get closer to opening the facility.

As for finding staff to run the new daycare, Muller isn't too concerned.

"We actually have a lot of long-term staff at the centre," says Muller. "This is our eleventh year and quite a few of us have been here for the 11 years. Many of our staff are wanting to receive training, so this is a great opportunity to allow them to get their [childcare accreditation]."

How it started



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How it's going



# Manitoba's First Infant Surrender Station Located in Landmark

By Brenda Sawatzky

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A unique new feature is being installed at the Landmark Fire Hall which is the first of its kind in Manitoba and the second in all of Canada.

In just a few short weeks, Hope's Cradle will be ready to operate as a safe surrender station for newborn infants, providing complete anonymity for the mother, father, family member, or other party leaving the child behind.

Using a small exterior door for access, the infant can be placed in an available bassinet in a temperature- and ventilation-controlled box. Once the door has been opened, the caregiver has two minutes to place the child in the cradle,

close the door, and vacate the site before a silent alarm informs members of the RM of Taché Fire Department about the drop.

A built-in camera allows emergency personnel to monitor the baby until emergency crews arrive. From here, the child will be delivered to a local hospital and eventually placed in the hands of Child and Family Services.

The initiative for this local surrender station began with Susan Penner, executive director of Life Culture, a Steinbach-based organization whose objective is to promote life at all stages of human existence.

Penner reached out to Gems for Gems, an organization based out of Calgary with a mandate to empower women



Hope's Cradle installers Zack Ronaldson and Allan Ward alongside Susan Penner, executive director of Life Culture. ■ BRENDA SAWATZKY

to empower themselves.

"I had heard about [Hope's Cradle] when it first started," Penner says. "What really prompted me was when an abandoned baby was found in Winnipeg last spring in a garbage dumpster. I thought, 'We

really need something like this in Manitoba,' because for every baby that is found, there's also others that this has happened to that have not been found."

In November 2022, Life Culture put out a fundraising challenge to their many supporters

with the ambitious prospect of raising the \$20,000 needed to bring the first Hope's Cradle to Manitoba.

Just one month later, and with the assistance of a number of generous Landmark-based donors, the entire financial goal was met.

Penner says that she received almost immediate buy-in from the RM of Taché and their fire department.

"Landmark is a great central location," Penner says. "It is 30 minutes from Winnipeg and Steinbach, with many communities in between. Although located in Landmark, this is really a regional project."

The primary goal of the initiative is to help prevent the unsafe abandonment of infant children. But the founders of Hope's Cradle believe in the

need to support the mother as well, who is oftentimes the person surrendering the child out of complete desperation and hopelessness.

Within the bassinet where the infant is placed is an envelope for the mother to take. Inside she'll find a document informing her of her rights along with details on what will happen to her child from that moment.

As well, there is a postage-paid envelope that the mother is encouraged to use to send in pertinent medical information that might affect the baby's future and, if she chooses, a personal letter to eventually be read to the child.

The envelope can be mailed through Canada Post and contains no return address, providing the mother with complete anonymity.

"There's also resources in the envelope, too, so the mom can get help for various things," Penner adds. "We try and make it as easy on her as possible."

Penner says that she's recently become aware of other organizations around the province that are raising money for more Hope's Cradle stations.

Eventually, Penner hopes that it will become a standard addition to every fire hall across the country.

Fire halls, she says, are good locations because they are widely recognized as safe institutions that can be found in almost any community.

"It's also a little more anonymous than a hospital or a church," Penner adds. "If you have a hall that's staffed 24/7, there will always be someone there when the baby is surrendered. If it's not staffed [around the clock], then an alarm goes off and hopefully within minutes somebody's there."

The installation of the Hope's Cradle in Landmark is being completed by two professionals from Calgary who have experience with the complex and sophisticated nature of its setup.

After that, it will go through a testing phase until it's proven fully operational. Penner anticipates that it will be ready for use by early March.

## Province's Carbon Tax Relief Fund Under Fire by Climate Advocates

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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The provincial government recently released details on their most recent intervention intended to help everyday Manitobans cope in these tough economic times.

This new initiative, called the Carbon Tax Relief Fund (CTRF), builds on the affordability package introduced by the province in 2022.

"Our government is committed to helping Manitobans make ends meet as they continue to face rising prices due to inflation and the largely hidden, federally imposed carbon tax," says Premier Heather Stefanson. "We truly hope this new Carbon Tax Relief Fund will help ease the strain many families are facing this winter."

Through this fund, \$200 million has been pledged to assist seniors, singles, and couples who were living in Manitoba on December 31, 2021 and whose family net income that year was under \$175,000.

Under these guidelines, approximately half of

Manitobans will benefit from the financial relief package.

Single persons can expect a one-time rebate of \$225 while the lower income earner within a couple will receive \$375.

Local environmental advocates, though, are calling out the province, stating that the CTRF fails both the people and the planet.

While they have no dispute that Manitoban households are, in fact, facing real financial challenges right now, rising fuel costs are a result of the greater global economy, they say, not the federally imposed carbon tax.

Curt Hull is a climate action advocate working with Climate Change Connection, a charitable organization aimed at educating Manitobans while facilitating workable solutions to the crisis on a local level.

He's also the lead author of *Manitoba's Road to Resilience: A Community Climate Action Pathway to a Fossil Fuel Free Future*.

"According to expert United Nations scientists, the world and Manitoba need to be working diligently

to completely eliminate our reliance on fossil fuels within the next few years," says Hull.

In the end, it is argued that reducing Manitoba's dependence on fossil fuels will save residents more money than playing politics over the carbon tax.

Advocates assert that the province's attention should be focused on creating a federal government partnership which could help fund quality, affordable, clean public transit in all Manitoba cities and towns, and also improve interprovincial transportation.

As well, they say it's time to put an end to governmental subsidizing of fossil fuel industries and to introduce windfall taxation on corporations who are profiteering from inflation.

"Subsidizing fossil fuel use is the wrong approach," Hull says. "Manitobans are already receiving adequate rebates from the carbon tax."

Hull refers to the Climate Action Incentive, introduced by the federal government, which sends quarterly carbon tax compensation cheques to low- and middle-income

Canadian households at a rate which is about double what the province is proposing with the CTRF.

"The agendas of the oil and gas companies have a lot more to do with your cost of living at the moment than the carbon price does," says Emma Power, organizer of the Manitoba Energy Justice Coalition in a post written for Manitoba's Climate Action Team. "The federal fuel charge is revenue neutral. They aren't just keeping your money. Fuel charges collected in Manitoba stay in Manitoba and are redistributed to residents... The idea is that wealthy people and high-polluting organizations contribute more to the 'pot' of fuel charge money because they drive more, use more gas to heat large homes and buildings, etc."<sup>1</sup>

CCPA Senior Economist David Macdonald wrote an article this month for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) titled "Where Are Your Inflation Dollars Going?"

"Inflationary price increases aren't ending up in workers' pockets," Macdonald

writes. "They are ending up in corporate profits—particularly in oil, gas and mining."

He adds that while a small fraction of the inflation dollars flowing to these industries is resulting in higher worker compensation, by far the majority ended up on the profit side of the analytics.<sup>2</sup>

"As a clean energy hydro-electricity producing province, Manitoba should support our energy sovereignty and address the root cause of corporate oil and gas prices by enabling Manitobans to stop using fossil fuels in the first place," says CCPA director Molly McCracken. "Polling consistently demonstrates that most Canadians support a carbon tax that funds green initiatives."

### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup> "Climate Action Incentive," Climate Action Manitoba. July 14, 2022 (<https://climateactionmb.ca/climate-action-incentive-opportunity-coming-to-you-this-friday-july-15th>).

<sup>2</sup> David Macdonald, "Where Are Your Inflation Dollars Going?" The Monitor. January 17, 2023 (<https://monitor-mag.ca/reports/where-are-your-inflation-dollars-going>).



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**FEB. 18 @ 7:30 P.M.**  
VS. SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDERS

# Trade Deadline Moves Bolster Nighthawks Lineup

By Ty Dilello

tdilello@nivervillecitizen.com

The Niverville Nighthawks have completed their first trade deadline in franchise history and had a relatively busy day of deals as they worked to bolster their lineup to help clinch a playoff berth.

The MJHL's trade deadline passed on January 10. Rosters are now frozen until the end of the season.

"There's a lot of conversations that lead up to the trades," says Nighthawks assistant general manager Mike McAulay. "Kelvin and I spent a fair amount of time talking to other teams and understanding directions they were going at the deadline, and then we tried to figure out which players would be made available. We watched film on some players and had guys that we targeted that we thought would fit."

First up, the Nighthawks found themselves looking for a goaltender.

Dane Couture from the Minot Minotauros of the NAHL was a name that was on their radar. And sure enough, the Nighthawks were able to secure him for the rest of the season.

The Little Falls, Minnesota native has seen 12 starts this season with Minot and carried a 3.41 goals against average and a 0.881 save percentage. He has a 1-1-0 record with the Nighthawks since joining the team.

"Dane was a player that our United States scout Scott Oliver had coached in the Upper Midwest Elite League, so he was a player we knew of previously," says McAulay. "For that player, there was a trickle down as a goalie came back from college to the USHL, which squeezed a USHL goalie to the NAHL, and then ultimately Dane's job was squeezed out. So we were happy he became available, and the timing worked



WILLA DOWSE

out well. He's a solid, competitive, and experienced goalie who will do a good job for us."

The Nighthawks then traded defenceman Lucas Bourdon to the Grande Prairie Storm of the AJHL for a player development fee. Bourdon played in 15 games with Niverville this year and registered one assist in those games.

With Bourdon traded out, the Nighthawks acquired defenceman Kayden Skulmoski from the SJHL's Melville Millionaires.

"We felt the next acquisition we made on getting Skulmoski was a better fit in our lineup than Lucas, so we were happy to find him an opportunity out west," McAulay says.

Skulmoski, from Moosomin, Saskatchewan, had 10 points in 31 games with Melville this season.

"Scully has awesome wheels and will be a strong complement to our D-corps," says head coach Kelvin Cech. "So far, he's fit in real well with our group off the ice as

well. It feels like he's been here all season."

"We were thrilled to make that trade," adds McAulay. "We watched and scouted Kayden a lot. He's 20 years old, so he has lots of experience playing Junior A. We were really looking to add a 20-year-old defender with some experience. He just skates so well and has dynamic qualities in his game, so it was another good fit for us."

Finally, the Nighthawks acquired forward Ethan Whillans from the SJHL's Weyburn Red Wings for a player development fee and future considerations.

Whillans is originally from St. Albert, Alberta, and in 28 games with Weyburn this season Whillans scored seven goals and 12 assists for 19 points.

"We've been watching Ethan closely for a while now, just in case he became available," says Cech. "We're happy with what we have at all three positions, but he's going to be a great fit for our group. He skates

well, he's got size, and a rocket for a shot."

"It was great to see Ethan get on the board in one of his first games with us," adds McAulay. "With him, we were just looking for some 20-year-old experience and some scoring depth. His name popped up in talks, and we were lucky enough to get the trade put together."

Now that the trade deadline has passed, McAulay has shifted his focus to mapping out the roster and lineup for next year and seeing where the club needs to add depth and augment its lineup in the offseason.

"I'll be spending a fair amount of my time watching U18 hockey locally to potentially acquire some talent there," says McAulay. "And then also, we're going to start getting ready for the draft, as it's never too early for that. We're fortunate to have some great scouts on the team, which helps us massively for the draft as we prepare as solid a draft list as we can."

## STANDINGS

\*\* AS OF JANUARY 1\*\*

### WEST DIVISION

TEAM	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS
1 WAYWAYSEECAPPO WOLVERINES	40	23	12	3	2	51
2 DAUPHIN KINGS	41	24	14	2	1	51
3 SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDERS	42	23	14	4	1	51
4 OCN BLIZZARD	43	22	16	2	3	49
5 VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS	41	23	17	1	0	47
6 NEEPAWA TITANS	44	17	18	8	1	43

### EAST DIVISION

TEAM	GP	W	L	OTL	SOL	PTS
1 STEINBACH PISTONS	41	31	10	0	0	62
2 PORTAGE TERRIERS	41	30	9	1	1	62
3 WINKLER FLYERS	42	26	10	5	1	58
4 NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	41	20	17	1	3	44
5 WINNIPEG BLUES	44	15	22	6	1	37
6 SELKIRK STEELERS	41	14	23	3	1	32
7 WINNIPEG FREEZE	41	3	36	2	0	8

### MJHL POINTS LEADERS

PLAYER	TEAM	GP	G	A	PTS
1 Lucas Brennan	SEL	36	33	26	59
2 Travis Hensrud	STN	38	28	27	55
3 Carson Baptiste	WAY	35	28	22	50
4 Tyson Smith	SEL	40	10	40	50
5 Davis Fry	STN	36	16	32	48
6 Josh Paulhus	NIV	40	24	23	47
7 Ashton Paul	OCN	43	21	26	47
8 Jakob Jones	SVS	42	21	25	46
9 Luke Janus	WPB	44	20	26	46
10 Ian Amsbaugh	STN	41	15	31	46

### MJHL GOALIE LEADERS

GOALIE	TEAM	GP	GA	SV%	GAA
1 Aidan Comeau	WNL	18	31	0.935	1.86
2 Dominik Wasik	STN	23	49	0.926	2.13
3 Cole Plowman	STN	18	40	0.916	2.21
4 Malachi Klassen	WNL	28	66	0.917	2.53
5 Cole Sheffield	DAU	22	53	0.919	2.61
6 Jayden Catellier	POR	21	56	0.906	2.70
7 Mason Lobreau	NEE	25	66	0.915	2.71
8 Chase Hamm	OCN	30	80	0.912	2.71
9 Ethan Farrow	OCN	15	37	0.910	2.76
10 Tresor Wotton	WAY	27	76	0.906	2.79

The Citizen extends an apology to Scott Stroh for omitting a credit for his photograph on page 11 in the January 2023 print edition.



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# Fighting through the Dog Days of Winter

By Ty Dilello

tdilello@nivervillecitizen.com

The last month has been a struggle for the Niverville Nighthawks, as the team suffered through a four-game losing streak that saw them struggle to muster offence.

However, January ended on a high note, with a breakthrough offensive performance against the Waywayseecappo Wolverines in which the Nighthawks found the back of the net eight times in 60 minutes.

February will be an important month for the team as they seek to secure their first-ever playoff berth.

Despite losing some ground in January, the team still sits in fourth place in the MJHL's East Division. They maintain a seven-point lead over the fifth-place Winnipeg Blues.

## JANUARY 4 (SELKIRK STEELERS, HOME)

The Nighthawks started the new year with a 4-1 loss at the CRRC to the Selkirk Steelers.

After a scoreless first period, the two teams got into it a little bit. The game turned into a chippy affair, with many penalties being awarded to both teams.

The story of the game was special teams—as the Nighthawks couldn't score on the power play, while the Steelers could. Selkirk scored three times in the second period, including twice on the power play to break the game open.

"We had a strong start with a lot of offensive zone time and possession, but couldn't finish on the five-on-three," said head coach Kelvin Cech. "And then we had a stretch in the second period where the game got away from us with some penalties. We know their power play is strong, and we didn't have an answer for it."

In the third period, the Nighthawks couldn't get anything going. The teams traded goals once, with Josh Paulhus scoring for Niverville.

"It just wasn't enough tonight," said Cech. "Selkirk played with some major passion and desperation. They're trying to catch up with us in the standings, and it showed, and we needed to be better. This league is so tight, and especially after Christmas, every game is life and death. There's



The Niverville Nighthawks in action on home ice at the CRRC.

ZACHARY LANSARD

pressure, but pressure is a privilege."

"Once they started calling so many penalties on the other team and us not scoring on the power play, I got worried, because we were going to get some stuff called as well," said defenceman Ethan Kelly. "Once we were down in the game, Selkirk stopped trying to score and just shut us down the rest of the way... Once we get down a couple of goals, we get angry and try to do fancy things instead of sticking to our game plan. The game plan is there for a reason. If we stick to it, I think we'll win."

## JANUARY 6 (NEEPAWA TITANS, AWAY)

The Nighthawks rebounded with a big win on the road two nights later, outlasting the Neepawa Titans 4-3 in overtime.

Ty Kennett got the Nighthawks on the board halfway through the first

period. After Neepawa tied the game in the second frame, Carter Spirig then scored to give Niverville a 2-1 lead heading to the third period.

Neepawa came out strong in the third with a pair of goals to take a 3-2 lead.

However, the Nighthawks wouldn't stop fighting and were rewarded when Ben Whitford scored for Niverville to tie the game at 3-3 and send it to overtime.

Josh Paulhus gave the Nighthawks a happy ending to their night, scoring in overtime to give Niverville the win.

"To get one of our first overtime wins in franchise history, it was a happy bus for sure coming home," said Cech. "When you get to this time of the year, the points mean so much, and it's great that we're in the lead for a playoff spot. The Winnipeg Blues, who are chasing us, had a big win tonight too, so it's great that we won."

It's going to be a grind to make the playoffs in their inaugural season, and every single game from now on is important, but Cech believes his group has what it takes to reach its full potential.

"We believe that the league is strong and anyone can beat anyone, but we also believe in the guys that we have here and believe that if we play the right way, more often than not we'll get the results. We focus on our habits, and if we get to our identity, the score will take care of itself most nights."

Nonetheless, Cech pointed out that there are some things the team can do better. For example, they lost the special teams battle for the second straight game.

"We can take a look at things there," he said. "But five-on-five we liked our game a lot, so we'll try to give the guys a clear and concise

message for tomorrow's game and keep it going."

## JANUARY 7 (NEEPAWA TITANS, HOME)

The fans got their money's worth at the CRRC on Saturday night, but in the end the Nighthawks fell 6-5 in a shootout to the Titans.

"It was a total special teams battle, as both teams' power plays were clicking early, which amounts to the high scoring. But it was back-and-forth all the way through," said Cech. "Those are just aggravating games to play for both sides."

Both teams came out flying with plenty of offence in the first period, with the teams scoring three goals apiece. For Niverville, the goals came from Brendan Bottem, Paulhus, and Brett Tataryn.

Things slowed down a touch in the second period, but again the teams traded goals and many chances. Hayden Wheddon scored for the Nighthawks, and the score was 4-4 heading into the final period.

After Isaac Rentmeester put the Nighthawks ahead 5-4 early in the third period, it looked like Niverville might get out of the game with a regulation win. However, with the goalie pulled, Neepawa scored in the final minute to tie the game and send it to overtime.

The Nighthawks failed to convert on an overtime power play, and thus the game went into a shootout.

The shootout turned out to be a 12-round marathon, with neither team able to convert the winning goal.

Finally Neepawa was finally able to find the net and win the game 6-5.

"It's frustrating when you're up with a minute left in the game, and they tie it. But that's hockey. They're desperate, and we're able to push it to overtime," said Cech. "We're happy we got a point. We would have wanted two, but now we get a bit of a rest and then we'll get back at it."

## JANUARY 13 (WINKLER FLYERS, AWAY)

The Nighthawks had another big effort on Friday evening as they dispatched the Winkler Flyers on the road by a score of 4-2.

It was a strong game in which the





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Nighthawks never trailed.

Paulhus opened the scoring in the first period to give Niverville a 1-0 lead.

After Winkler tied the game early in the second frame, the Nighthawks quickly replied when captain Tataryn potted home his twelfth counter of the season.

In the third period, Winkler once again tied the game. But again, shortly thereafter Paulhus got the go-ahead goal—and this one proved to be the game-winner.

Bottem added an empty-netter before the horn sounded.

"We're chasing them in the standings, so it's a big win for us," said Cech. "We were solid in the middle of the ice and really good defensively. And we limited them to shots from the perimeter. And the ones that did get through, our goalie was great and made some enormous saves, especially late in the game."

Netminder Chris Fines stopped 28 shots in goal for the Nighthawks.

"Everyone is contributing for us lately with their minutes, and it really shows," said Cech. "For us, it seems to be someone different every night contributing on the score sheet. But tonight, Josh Paulhus was just fantastic. He stays on the edge but plays with discipline. And for him to get the game-winner tonight was just awesome to see."

#### JANUARY 14

(SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDERS, HOME)

The Nighthawks had an off-night at the CRRC as they fell hard 4-1 to Swan Valley.

The Stampeders scored in the first five minutes of the game to take the lead before the newest Nighthawk, Ethan Whillans, scored his first goal as a member of the team to level the game at 1-1.

Another relative newcomer, Kayden Skulmoski, scored his first Nighthawks point as well, with an assist on the goal.

Unfortunately, it would prove to be the only counter for the home team.

"Skulmoski has been here for a week now and has been getting better every game," said Cech of the goal. "He made a really nice play on that goal, and for Ethan to bury one in his second game, it just builds some confidence for him. We're excited for both those guys."

Swan Valley scored once in the second period and twice in the third period in a frustrating game for Niverville. It was a game where nothing seemed to go right.

When it was all said and done, the scoreboard showed 4-1 in favour of the Stampeders.

"Swan Valley did a really good job of keeping us on the perimeter, as we didn't quite have the energy to go to the middle of the ice and the greasy areas," Cech said. "And they defended well, too, and were much

quicker than us, I thought. So it was tough to create offence."

"They were tough to crack getting into their zone," added Tataryn about the on-ice grind. "They were quick to attack us."

Cech emphasized that the team needed to get back to the drawing board and focus on good practices.

"We're in the dog days of winter," Cech said. "So we need to find our game and be professional and go about our business and really be prepared for next weekend's games."

"I like how we're playing to our advantages lately and making the best of our chances," added Tataryn. "Some things we will work on this week are our breakout and entries. And also working as a unit instead of individuals."

#### JANUARY 20

(VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS, AWAY)

The Nighthawks gave it their all but came up a little short on the road Friday night as they lost to the Virden Oil Capitals by 3-1.

Goals were hard to come by for both teams.

Virden got one towards the end of the first period, and the Nighthawks got one back in the dying minutes of the second period when Tataryn scored his thirteenth goal of the year.

In the third period, Virden got the go-ahead goal early on and the Nighthawks couldn't tie it up. The Oil Capitals got another goal in the game's final minute to secure the win.

Chris Fines stopped 23 shots in goal for the Nighthawks.

"We had a lot of possession and a lot of offensive zone time," said Cech. "We just couldn't quite have enough greasiness around the net and play to our identity a little more and involve all five guys on the offense. It's a boring cliché, but we needed more traffic if we wanted to solve their goalie, who had a great game."

Cech and the Nighthawks are realizing that every game is becoming more and more important as teams around the league start to get desperate in their chase for the playoffs.

"It's heavier now," he said. "There's tighter checking and everything needs to be done quicker. That's why this league is so strong. Everyone is improving from the start of the year, us included. So there's lots of races for the playoffs in both divisions."

The team would look to the coming rematch against Virden to exact some revenge the night's tough loss.

"We need to play with emotion and edge, but stay out of the penalty box as well," said Cech. "Offensively

we need to have offensive zone time and invest in our game. If one line gets chances, then they improve the conditions of the next line, and we just gotta roll with that. Everyone needs to be involved, like an offence by committee, and bring that game on Sunday."

#### JANUARY 22

(VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS, HOME)

The Nighthawks couldn't find the win column again on Sunday afternoon at the CRRC as they dropped their third straight game, losing 4-2 to the Virden Oil Capitals.

"We had a lot of chances," said Cech. "But we're at the point where we know a lot about our team, and things like moral victory mean nothing right now."

Carson Reed got the Nighthawks on the board late in the first period with a power play marker.

Virden scored twice in the second period to take the lead before Desmond Johnson scored again for Niverville to tie the game at 2-2.

The third period was a hard-fought battle between both sides, with neither side giving much to the other team.

*"There's tighter checking and everything needs to be done quicker. That's why this league is so strong. Everyone is improving from the start of the year, us included. There's lots of races for the playoffs in both divisions."*

**Kelvin Cech | Head Coach**

However, Virden was the one who broke through with a goal and empty-netter to defeat Niverville 4-2.

"I thought we did well early on in the game, and then we had an even-strength goal called back that wasn't even close to being not a goal after looking at the video," said Cech. "So that hurt. But those things happen, and I thought we really stuck with it. We continued getting in the other goalie's crease and in his grill legally, but in the end our special teams cost us, so we have more questions than answers right now."

Dane Couture had a great night in goal for the Nighthawks in just his second game with the club, stopping 22 shots.

"We have two good goalies and want both of them to play," Cech said. "Dane was great and didn't have much chance on the goals he did let in. He was real strong."

Couture had spent much of the 2022-23 campaign with the NAHL's Minot Minotauros before being dealt to Niverville around the trade deadline.

"Niverville is awesome," Couture

said of his opportunity to play here with a new team. "The guys are really including me when I first got here, and I'm really enjoying it and the program that they've built. And we're going to turn the page here from this weekend and get on a roll, hopefully."

Although Couture knows that he's currently the number two goalie on the depth chart behind incumbent starter Chris Fines, he is still excited at the prospect of working hard and earning more starts for the Nighthawks.

"I think my tracking ability was pretty solid today, and I felt clean and crisp out there," he said. "If I stay true to myself out there and my game, I think I'll see the ice more."

"We gotta be more polished and need to move the puck better, as when we have chances, we have to bury the puck," said Cech. "So we have some stuff to figure out and need to get better in a hurry."

#### JANUARY 26

(WAYWAYSEECAPPO WOLVERINES, AWAY)

The Nighthawks continued their losing skid on Thursday, dropping their fourth game in a row after a tough contest against the Waywayseecappo Wolverines.

That said, the Nighthawks did at least managed to escape with a single point after coming up short in the shootout.

It wasn't a great start on the evening, as Waywayseecappo got on the board just 30 seconds into the game.

After the Wolverines made it 2-0 later in the period, Niverville stormed back with a pair of goals in quick succession by Paulhus and Reed to knot the game at 2-2.

Spirig scored in the second to give Niverville a 3-2 lead. And it stayed that way until midway through the third period when the Wolverines tied the game to send it to overtime.

Overtime couldn't decide a winner, and in the end the Nighthawks came up short in a four-round shootout.

Couture stopped 26 shots in goal for the Nighthawks.

"It almost hurts more because we were up in the game, and they scored in the third period to tie it and then beat us in the shootout," said Cech. "It's a step in the right direction, but that's all it is. We managed the puck well and did some things well that we worked on in practice, so that's good."

Cech also noted that getting points in the standings is getting increasingly important every night, so his team can take some solace in the fat that they're leaving Waywayseecappo with one point.

"Every point is so crucial to

everybody, so we're happy that we competed and were right there in a game against one of the league's best teams. We'll take it and try to get better for our next one," Cech said. "We need to stop taking penalties, and mainly the ill-advised penalties as it's really hurting us. Our penalty kill is getting better, but we're just on it too much. So we need to be much more disciplined, play our game, and realize it's 60 minutes and we don't have to be a hero on every shift to get the puck back. If we clean that up and play more of the game at five-on-five, we'll be okay."

#### JANUARY 28

(WAYWAYSEECAPPO WOLVERINES, HOME)

The Nighthawks finally snapped their four-game losing streak, and they did it in style with a massive 8-5 win at home on Saturday evening against the Wolverines.

It wasn't an easy game by any stretch of the imagination.

In fact, the Nighthawks were down 3-1 after the first period and 4-1 just a few minutes into the second period.

That's when something clicked for the Nighthawks. From there, they rattled off five straight goals in the second period to take a 6-4 lead.

Niverville would add a couple more in the third period, with the game ending 8-5 in their favour.

Braden Panzer and Gavin Gunderson led the way with two goals apiece. Other Nighthawks goals on the night were scored by Bottem, Tataryn, Paulhus, and Rentmeester.

Fines stopped 25 of 30 shots in goal for Niverville on the evening.

"It feels awesome, and I'm really proud of the guys for the win," said Cech. "We were in a deep hole in the early minutes of the second period, but then we changed tactics. We stopped trying to do too much, and we started to have fun and enjoy each other out there. So to come back and get the win is fantastic."

Cech was ecstatic to get the monkey off the back and get his Niverville club back in the win column.

"We scored a lot of goals early in the season, but then all of a sudden we couldn't score for a few games," he said. "Then we scored eight tonight and gave up five. So it was a fun night at the rink, and the crowd was buzzing, so we definitely fed off that energy. After the game, Braden Panzer said, 'We're back!' And I think we all believe him."

The Nighthawks will return to action on Friday, February 3 for the first of back-to-back contests with the Dauphin Kings.

"Everyone contributes to the team in their own way, and it showed tonight," said Cech. "We're going to keep sticking to the process and hopefully get more positive results next week. I really believe in this group and am very proud of them today."





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VS. WINKLER FLYERS



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VS. PORTAGE TERRIERS



**FEB. 17 @ 7:30 P.M.**  
VS. OCN BLIZZARD



**FEB. 18 @ 7:30 P.M.**  
VS. SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDERS



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# Turn Signal at Highway 59 Intersection Improves Commute

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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Morning commuters travelling through the intersection of Highways 311 and 59 are noticing a big improvement in their commute lately thanks to a new left turn signal that was quietly added on December 28.

The turn signal, installed by Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI), affects eastbound traffic waiting to make a north turn toward Winnipeg.

This signal is only operational, though, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 a.m., the peak time for daily commuter traffic as determined by MTI and local officials.

Jim Ingelbeen has been travelling this route on a daily basis since long before traffic lights existed here.

Adding the lights, he says, was already a major improvement. However, the new left turn signal has provided one more layer of safety.

"In regard to early morning traffic, I would say at least 75 percent of the cars [at that intersection] are turning north," Ingelbeen says. "There's not very many cars that are waiting to go straight. Now you have a chance to make a [safe] turn instead of five cars trying to beat the yellow. I would say at least 50 percent more cars move through with each light."

Another Niverville commuter has been passing through this intersection on their eastbound journey for the better part of 30 years. Commuter A chooses to remain anonymous but says that, even though she's not making a left turn at the intersection, the signal has led to an improvement to traffic flow.

Before the signal was added, she says, it wasn't at all uncommon for drivers to run the red light instead of waiting for the next opportune green light.

The addition of this turn signal means that three directions of



The intersection of Highways 59 and 311 has a new turn signal. **BRENDASAWATZKY**

traffic are now able to make protected turns. Northbound and southbound Highway 59 traffic have had left turn signals with dedicated turning lanes since the traffic lights were first installed.

Westbound traffic, on the other hand, still has no turn signals and so good judgment is the only thing protecting drivers as they make left or right turns onto Highway 59.

Commuter A says that there's often a long line-up of westbound cars waiting at the light at the end of the workday. Unless the province adds a turn signal here as well, she says it's just a matter of time before a fatality occurs.

She adds that while the new left turn signal provides a marked improvement to traffic flow and driver safety, it's only somewhat better than it was before as long as dedicated turn lanes aren't added for eastbound and westbound travellers.

Commuter A says that she's witnessed occasions when impatient drivers illegally pass stopped vehicles on the right shoulder

in order to take advantage of the green light.

## SENSORED LIGHTS ALSO IMPROVE TRAFFIC FLOW

Niverville resident Gerry Trapp says that there's one more thing that affects the efficiency of traffic flow at intersections, something which too many drivers don't understand.

It's the traffic light sensors that are built right into the pavement at almost every rural light-controlled intersection, including the one at Highways 59 and 311.

The sensor's job is to detect a vehicle as it comes to a halt at the stop line of an intersection, signalling to the traffic control system that a vehicle is waiting.

"It's a diamond shape cut into the [pavement]," says Trapp. "They make it a diamond shape so that it will catch a wheel or both wheels. It's probably about six feet wide by six feet in length."

For 26 years, Trapp worked as a bus driver with Winnipeg's public transit system and he says he has

witnessed a lot of driver naïveté in his day.

On many such occasions, this has meant getting stuck behind a vehicle that came to a stop well in advance of where the sensor was able to detect it.

When this happens, the light won't change to accommodate the growing number of vehicles piling up behind the unwitting driver at the front.

"I've had to get out of my bus and go up to somebody's window and say, 'If you don't move up another three feet, we're going to sit here for another ten minutes,'" says Trapp.

Most commonly, he adds, these sensors are placed at the stop lines of highways where the traffic flow is lighter.

In the case of Highway 59, the traffic light for northbound and southbound commuters will stay green until a sensor detects waiting traffic in the eastbound and westbound lanes of Highway 311.

So it's important for the first driver that comes to a stop at the lights on Highway 311 to make sure that they pull right up to the stop line.

The same is true for the intersection where Highway 200 crosses the Perimeter Highway. Here, Trapp says, there are at least two sensors for each direction of northbound and southbound traffic: one in the forward lane and another in the turning lane.

If you've ever sat and watched the light cycle through numerous times while you waited for your turn, it's likely because the person at the head of the lane you're occupying isn't stopped in the correct spot.

To make things more confusing for drivers at the Highway 200 intersection, the two turning lanes and one forward lane have graduated stop lines, each in a different location. If you're in the straightaway lane but stop next to the driver waiting to make a left turn, they may get their green light while you sit and wait indefinitely for yours.

## IN BRIEF



## Ritchot Landfill Serves as Backup During Brady Landfill Blockade

By Brenda Sawatzky

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For nearly a month, the Ritchot landfill was alive with plenty of activity—more than usual. As of December 12, the refuse site, located just southwest of Île-des-Chênes, became the primary dumping ground for residential and commercial waste coming from the southeast region of Winnipeg.

This new arrangement was short-lived, a temporary measure put in place while Winnipeg's Brady Landfill was closed due to blockades erected in mid-December by advocates for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirited people.

The blockade was initiated after weeks of outcry for searches to be conducted at the Brady Road and Prairie Green landfills in the hopes of locating the remains of several missing women who are believed to have been dumped at these sites.

Mayor Chris Ewen said that the RM worked with the City of Winnipeg throughout December and January.

There was no hard stop date, he said, adding that the RM was fortunate to have a team and a facility that was able to handle the extra amount of refuse.

According to Ewen and Ritchot landfill manager Stephen McCabe, the extra amount varied between 15 to 40 loads per day, with each load averaging around six metric tonnes of waste.

Since the Ritchot landfill is already registered as a Class 1 facility, no special arrangements were required in order to accept the additional waste.

The Ritchot landfill is a drop-off point for only solid residential and commercial waste. Highly sensitive waste materials such as livestock and animal waste or asbestos are never accepted.

Mayor Ewen added that the RM did not incur any additional expenses that weren't being compensated for.

"We collect fees for taking in landfill," Ewen says. "It's the same as other providers bringing their waste. They are charged and any costs to the landfill or Ritchot are covered by [these] fees."



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## IN BRIEF

## Third-Party Auditor Reviews Ritchot 2021 Financial Statements

By Brenda Sawatzky

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In the spirit of better-late-than-never, Ritchot's council hosted a virtual meeting in January with Ian Hyslop, contracted auditor from The Exchange Group. Hyslop's purpose was to present an overall review of the RM of Ritchot's 2021 financial statements.

Hyslop's company oversees financial audits for 32 municipalities around the province.

Hyslop was quick to point out that his company was delayed in delivering a timely financial review due to a number of factors beyond their control. Not the least of these was the late receipt of required data coming from GFL Environmental Inc., a company with whom the RM partners for landfill management services.

Normally, Hyslop says, The Exchange Group attempts to finalize audits by June of the proceeding year. In this case, GFL's 2021 financial data pertaining to the landfill didn't arrive until sometime in October 2022. Only after this could the audit company complete their mandated services.

Hyslop adds that timely and accurate financial statements are the best tool that a council has for exposing needed changes or adjustments which help with future financial goal-setting. They are also the basis by which a municipality creates its next budget.

Hyslop raised concerns in regards to council's ongoing arrangement with GFL.

The RM has partnered with the large-scale refuse collection company for 20 years now. Contractually, the RM has split the assets and profits with the collection company, currently GFL, at a 63/37 split, with the majority belonging to the RM.

Regardless of the smaller share, the collection company is tasked with the financial record-keeping.

"My question is, 'Would it not make more sense for Ritchot to take that over?'" Hyslop asked. "It certainly would make some sense if you're controlling that process."

Apart from this, Hyslop said that Ritchot's 2021 financial statements are clean.

He added that the reserve funds set aside by a council are a good indicator of how they're doing in terms of managing the RM's financial aspects.

Hyslop pointed out that Ritchot had \$8.7 million in reserves at the end of 2021.

While not excessive, it looks sufficient for the RM's needs at this stage, he said, but the future must also be considered in the bottom line of any reserve fund.

"You need to keep in mind that the fiduciary duty of council is not just to the lovely ratepayers that elected them," said Hyslop. "It's a perpetual fiduciary duty to recognize that you can't simply abandon future ratepayers for the current ones, even though that's the tendency as politicians... These decisions that you make [today] will either haunt you or not haunt you [into the future]."

Council voted in favour of adopting the 2021 audited financial statement as presented.

Following Hyslop's presentation, follow-up discussion got underway around the virtual council table.

Regarding the delay in submission of financial data to the auditor last year, CAO Mitch Duval says it was likely a series of events that led to that outcome, including the hiring of a new chief financial officer (CFO) for the RM as well as council's decision to contract a new auditing company.

Ritchot CFO Muhammad Zaman shared with council his intent to begin work on the 2022 year-end financials in March of this year with the anticipation of completing them sometime in June.

Councillor Janine Boulanger queried council about whether reconsideration should be given to GFL's financial management of Ritchot's landfill.

Mayor Chris Ewen and Duval weighed in, suggesting that this would most likely require resources that the RM simply doesn't have at this point.

"It would be nice if we had total control, but it is a bigger beast than what it once was," Duval said.

# Super Citizens: YFC Drop-In, Providers of Kindness and Encouragement

By Jennifer Lavin

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*In this series, The Citizen profiles 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: jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com.*

The team members at Cornerstone Youth for Christ (YFC) drop-in centre in Niverville are this month's Super Citizens.

Gord Kroeker, a lifelong Niverville resident, has led the team at YFC for 15 years.

"After my first year in college, I was feeling stagnant and I prayed for opportunities to grow and learn," says Kroeker. "My summer job that year was agricultural and slower than usual and I was invited to be a summer worker at the drop-in... I said yes and haven't stopped learning from that day on."

Kroeker explains that anyone from Grades Seven through Twelve can hang out at the drop-in centre.

The centre is filled with board games, movies, video games, a pool table, a ping pong table, and snacks.

All kids, regardless of income or social status, can relax on comfortable couches or go wild in the gym area.

Kenzie Prudhomme, one of the people who nominated YFC says, that she has nothing but positive things to say about the people who make the drop-in centre the welcoming space that it is. She says that her four children have all been regular visitors.

This same sentiment is echoed by many others.

"My children have learned and developed a love of skateboarding from a previous staff member who held competitions and summer day camps," says Prudhomme. "Savannah has been an incredible addition to their program and the girls love to spend time with her during 'girls club.'"

Cyndi Wiebe, another local parent, considers the drop-in centre to be a safe haven for her children.

"Throughout the year,



Justin Marchand, David Ward, Gordon Kroeker, and Michael Driedger. Missing: Savannah Driedger.

CORNERSTONE YFC

the drop-in evenings are an opportunity to hang out with friends and play board games, video games, card games, pool, etc. while they build connections with the dedicated volunteers," Wiebe says. "These volunteers pour their time, energy, and humour into every teen they encounter."

Plus, she adds, it doesn't hurt that they have great snacks!

"I love knowing that my kids have a community of invested adults who give them a safe place through their teen years," says Wiebe. "I am so thankful to have the centre available to us in town."

Cody Roy attended YFC regularly as a teen between 2006 and 2011 and still looks back on his visits there with special appreciation.

"As somebody who used to go there, I can definitely say the guys running the place care about everyone who enters their doors and were a lot like older brothers to me and my friends when we all went there," Roy says. "They're great people and I can't give them enough good press!"

The centre is about more than fun, though.

"As we get to know kids, we're often, when need arises, able to provide a level of support," says Kroeker of the centre's service. "We recognize that for a youth, or anyone for that matter, to be happy and healthy, they'll need their emotional, physical, and spiritual needs attended to. These vary from youth to youth and family to family, but a constant truism is that for these needs to be met everyone needs a

community to love, guide, and support them. We seek to be a resource to youth and families with unmet needs, to be a nourishing part of their community, and to guide them to greater resources and helpful tools."

Another local parent who wishes to remain anonymous for the sake of their child shares that Kroeker has gone out of his way on many occasions to help that teen.

"Gord has invested time and energy in connecting with them, meeting where they are at, offering resources, assistance, and above all unwavering friendship and support," this parent says. "He has made himself available to us as parents, walking with us through struggles without judgment or any harsh words. He has offered so much support and showed a teen in a hard place that they are valuable, loved, worthy, and that he believes in their future."

Kroeker and the rest of his team—Eunice Wiebe, David Ward, Michael Driedger, Savannah Driedger, and Justin Marchand—have created many initiatives and programs over the years.

Some of their programs involve life skills like barbecue club, music lessons, or video game coding. Other times the focus is just on having fun, like ball hockey league, in-person roleplaying games, or nerf tournaments.

"We've had the privilege of working with many parts of our community," says Kroeker, "such as Helping Hands, the fair committee to bring some bands to the [fair], and serving at the Image

Run. Also we've assisted many people who are moving when they weren't sure who else to call. In crisis moments, we have found ourselves acting as conflict mediators, finding emergency housing solutions, providing suicide prevention care, addictions counselling, and guiding youth towards legal aid amongst other things. Eunice Wiebe is a certified counsellor and provides counselling at a cost proportional to your income so anyone in need can afford it."

Kroeker is quick to credit others for the success of the drop-in centre.

"It's hard to oversell the generosity of our local businesses and citizens," he says. "It's a privilege to work with our team of volunteers and staff whom I have great love and admiration for. Their dedication to serving others is most admirable and several [of them] work extra jobs to be able to continue to serve with us."

The people of the Cornerstone Youth for Christ (YFC) drop-in centre have been both a figurative and literal life-saver for many local young people and it's easy to see why.

Kroeker shares part of his team's philosophy. "We like to encourage people to engage with life, ask questions, and seek understanding. Ultimately one of the most important things we do is create space. Space for basic acts of kindness, a listening ear, words of encouragement. It's amazing how a few words of wisdom given in a time of need stay with people as they grow."



# Commentary

## What's Making Us So Angry?

By Daniel Dacombe

It may be an article shared on Facebook, a meme you see on Twitter, or the comment section under a news story.

Somewhere, at some point in time, all of us who spend time online have seen something that filled us with shock, disgust, and anger. We ask ourselves questions like “How could they say that?” or “What kind of person would do this?”

We're flooded with emotion and sometimes even inspired to act, typing out an angry response and sending it out into the internet as a comment, email, or instant message.

Oftentimes these responses include things we would never say in person, and in fact they may be completely out of character for us.

If you can relate to this, then you know very well the outrage that can be provoked on social media.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, online spaces had already been getting increasingly vitriolic. Politics, religion, and even differences over sports teams could ignite furious debate.

And occasionally these debates spilled over into real life.

However, the past three years has turned the internet into a pressure cooker. Now more than ever social media is a battleground, with extremes on both ends of the spectrum that show the uglier side of humanity. Even people close to the middle of every issue are starting to join in the fight.

It seems clear that the prevailing emotion of social media is outrage.

So what's making us so angry these days, and how can we turn this trend around? As with so many mysteries of human behaviour, the



answer lies in the field of evolutionary psychology.

As natural selection occurred, humans who were better able to survive in the face of challenges were more likely to pass on their genes to future generations. One of the responses we evolved in order to better face threats was the fight-or-flight response—the ability to shift our body's resources away from everyday activities, like problem-solving and controlling our emotions, and reallocate those resources to being aggressive.

This skill has helped us survive.

It's also made us worse at so many things that make us human, like being empathic and understanding and examining our own thoughts and beliefs for errors.

Flooding our brains with adrenaline causes this fight-or-flight shift to occur, gearing us up for conflict and less ready to hear out someone else's opposing point of view.

This physical change in our brain also makes us less able to examine our own views. When we're in this heightened activated state, we are filled with a strong drive to protect ourselves. This includes our beliefs.

In fact, research shows that we tend to mentally and emotionally react to an attack on our views as if we were being physically attacked.

Our brains just can't tell the difference between an online attack, and a physical one.

How is this relevant for understanding social media outrage? Simply put, when we get into an argument on the internet, we become unable to think clearly, examine evidence that may contradict what we believe, and change our beliefs in the face of new evidence.

And just as importantly, neither can the person with whom we're arguing.

There is another element to our relationship with social media outrage, that this is where the addiction component comes in.

Research has shown that when we engage with social media—when we get messages, likes, comments, and notifications—our brains give us tiny boosts of dopamine. Dopamine is our brain's reward chemical, and it's present whenever we do something pleasurable. Food, sex, laughter, and many other good things in our lives give us dopamine.

Dopamine production can also be triggered by other sources, such as alcohol, certain drugs, and getting angry. Our fight-or-flight response gives us a hit of dopamine, too, in order to help us feel motivated.

On the plus side, this has been hugely beneficial for our survival.

On the other hand, this also means we can feel a sense of pleasure when we're outraged. We can crave that feeling, which is why we find ourselves gravitating towards stories and interactions online which allow us to get angry and lash out at others.

Let's face it: it feels good to crusade for a cause, to feel righteous anger. But those same feelings prevent us from critically examining our views and the views of others. Crusading prevents us from being human.

And in the long run, it can be bad for our health.

This isn't to say that we should never feel angry about what we read or see online. There's certainly enough going wrong in the world, and at times outrage is not only appropriate—it's necessary. Racism, fascism, homophobia, sexism...

for all these things and more, only collective action, often spurred by outrage, will make a difference.

However, if you find yourself continually drawn to arguing online or to stories that keep you in a stage of simmering rage to the point that it affects your life, your health, and your relationships, you may want to try a few strategies to reduce your social media experience.

**1. Avoid triggers.** The best way to avoid feeding your outrage addiction is to cut it off. Unfollow or block media outlets, or even friends and family, that continually feed the anger. Avoid reading about certain subjects you know to be triggering. And consider staying out of online discussions entirely. If you don't engage, you can't get drawn into late-night arguments with strangers in the CBC comments section.

**2. Improve your communication skills,** especially when talking to people with whom you disagree. Listen, summarize, ask for clarification, and seek understanding before you respond. If you model this for others, they might be more likely to respond in kind.

**3. Finally, unplug**—if not forever, then at least for a while. The jury is still out on whether social media has been a net benefit for humanity, but the evidence isn't looking good. It might be better for us all if we spent less time in the fake environment of the “metaverse” and more time with our neighbours, and others whom we may have an opportunity to help and support.

The world is full of problems and anger is often the appropriate response. However, it can take over.

Maybe it's time to prevent its spread and flatten the curve of social media outrage.

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# Sports & Recreation

## At Midseason Break, Minor Hockey Clippers Having a Banner Year

By Jennifer Lavin

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Clipper Ice Sports (CIS) is having a banner year, according to its board president, Travis Mason. This season, CIS has 225 registered players and a record number of players who have graduated out of CIS into Eastman AA and AAA regional teams.

The Clippers have successfully run their U9 and U11 home tournaments for the season. Mason says the tournaments were especially memorable for giving everyone the chance to welcome so many families from other communities.

However, the season hasn't been without its challenges.

"It has been a lot more difficult this year versus last year to run tournaments, as we have had to use the Ste. Agathe Arena, since the CRRC wasn't as available to our tournament committee as the Nighthawks games and practices took some ice away," Mason says.

That being said, Mason has found the presence of the Nighthawks to be a tremendous boon to the minor hockey program and its many players.

"The addition of the Nighthawks in Niverville has been refreshing, as the players have been going to CIS practices and working with coaches to help provide role models for our players, as well as give coaches help with drills," he says. "We also have had Ethan Maertens-Poole, the Nighthawks assistant coach, come work with each team as part of a coach mentorship pilot project we're looking to implement next year."

The CIS programs have continued to grow this year from a developmental standpoint, in large part due to an ongoing partnership with the RINK Training Centre in Winnipeg. Coaches from the RINK have been on hand to work with each team and their



The undefeated Clippers U11A team won gold at three tournaments this season.

✉ LISA SAURETTE AND BRITTANY ARBUTHNOT

coaches once per month.

Niverville has also been able to revive the CanSkate program once a month for the players on local U7 teams.

This year, the organization has created a goalie development subcommittee as well to create a plan that focuses on goalies, as they are sometimes a bit neglected in team practices.

"These types of programs and our unbelievably dedicated coaches have helped with the success of our program at all ages," says Mason.

He reports that the U11 home tournament, which was hosted mid-November, saw a clean sweep at all three levels—A, B, and C. All three home teams brought home the gold that weekend.

As for other midseason updates, Mason says that the U7 teams will be starting their fun league this month, during which they will play against St. Adolphe, Grunthal, and Rat River.

The U9A team currently holds a 1-4 record. Despite this, they have found success in tournament play, going undefeated at an event earlier this season in Portage la Prairie. The U9B team, on the other hand, has a 4-1

record in league play. The U9C Gold team sits at 4-2, and the U9C Blue team are at 2-3 as of the midseason break.

The four U11 teams are dominating this year at all levels.

"The U11A team has been a force in the first half of the season, as they have won the Winnipeg Rob West Tournament A1 Division, the Clippers Heritage Classic, and the Winkler Cup," says Mason. "They're undefeated in league play and sit in first place with 93 goals for and 10 goals against. They have some tough tournaments ahead with Grand Forks, the Tournament of Champions in Brandon, and Provincials. Their team play has been something teams all over the province have been talking about."

The U11B team is currently tied for first place with Lac du Bonnet with a record of 6-0. They went undefeated in the Clippers Heritage Classic tournament. They have 59 goals for and nine goals against in six league games. They will have a busy second half of the season and Mason says they already have their sights set on Provincials.

The U11C White team has also had a great start to the season, winning a

gold medal at a tournament in Morden and another at the Clippers Heritage Classic. They currently hold a 4-1-1 record, scoring 42 goals and giving up only 23.

The U11C Blue team also sits at a 4-1-1 record after losing a tough battle against the U11C White Clippers during the gold medal finals of the Clippers Heritage Classic. U11C Blue has only given up 14 goals in six league games.

In the U13 division, a few strong players have moved on to the 13AA male and female programs.

The U13A team holds a 2-5-1 record after eight games.

"They will come back after the break hungry to move up in the standings," Mason says. "They will look to focus on creating some offence down the stretch."

The U13B team has had a tough start to the season, however, as they're still searching for their first win in league play.

As for the U13C squad, they've completed the first half of the season with a 2-5 record and they'll look to build on that as 2023 moves along.

The U15 team lost a lot of players

to the U15AA Southwest Jets and U15AAA program. However, they're still holding their heads above water, with a 4-3-1 record.

"They will look to make a big push, as the coaching staff will have them prepared for playoffs," Mason says.

Finally, the U18 team has a 5-3-1 record and have scored the second most goals in the league. December was a difficult month for them, though, as they were 1-3-1 for the month. They started 2023 off by taking on the Grunthal Red Wings, who are one spot below the Clippers in the standings.

Mason credits the board members with much of CIS's success this year.

"We have a really green board, as most are in their first or second year," he says. "They all have done a great job filling the roles of long-term board members. Without each board member, our program would struggle. I'm so grateful for the work they put in."

Mason points to two people who he feels should receive some well-deserved extra recognition.

"I would like to thank Elissa Leah, who has a challenging job as ice convenor, managing ice for three rinks and 21 teams. Her work goes unnoticed. She does a wonderful job with keeping us all on the ice."

The other board member he would like to single out is Pat Guenette, who has taken on the role of referee-and-chief.

"Pat has always looked after our refs very well, helping support them," says Mason. "She has started to host a try-to-be-a-ref clinic so young refs can feel comfortable on the ice. They get a feel of what it takes to be a ref. Thanks, Pat, for the work you do. Without refs, our kids can't play games."

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more about the Clippers, visit: <http://clippersicesports.ca>

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Players and volunteers for the Nighthawks stand alongside the Flight Crew.

RAELYN VOULGARIS

# Celebrating the Flight Crew

By Jennifer Lavin

jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

A lot has to be done behind the scenes to get the Niverville Nighthawks ready for their games—and that's when their trusty Flight Crew steps in.

Currently, there are seven members of the Flight Crew. These are students with physical or cognitive disabilities from the Niverville High School (NHS) who take care of pre-game prep and attend the CRRC nearly every day to organize and help out wherever their services are needed.

Different crew members, with the help of NHS educational assistants, have jobs based on their talents.

One member washes the team's water bottles every day, fills them back up, and leaves them out, ready for the players. Several others do laundry every day and then hang the team's jerseys up in numerical order.

Crew members also clean pucks after each practice and tidy the Nighthawks office.

On game days, they have even more to do. They set up equipment and snack tables for the team and make sure game day pucks are ready.

An hour before each game, the members show up to hand out programs, stamp hands, and scan tickets at the door.

The Flight Crew has been given NHS hoodies. Recently, they each received Nighthawks

toques so they can represent both organizations while they watch the game.

The Nighthawks benefit greatly from the Crew, but there are perks for the crew as well. They learn valuable life skills from the work they do.

Raelyn Voulgaris, the learning support teacher at NHS, says that each student is matched with the task that suits them best.

"The adult services that are available in this community are kind of slim to none, and we figured we have these kids who have so much to offer," says Voulgaris. "We don't want them to leave our community."

Another perk for the crew is that every Thursday they get to play in the gym for an hour with members of the Nighthawks.

This time is sponsored by Penn-co Construction and Voulgaris says she's had offers from multiple parents to pay for gym time next year.

Voulgaris says that for some of these kids, a standard gym class is intimidating.

"We have kids who are wheelchair users, kids who are blind, so a regular game of dodgeball isn't going to always work," Voulgaris says. "So we worked with our occupational therapist to create a bunch of modified gym activities and a whole group of Nighthawks joins us in the gym and we do a gym class with them."

The Flight Crew's gym time

has been improved with the help of Chantal Todd, recreation programmer for the Town of Niverville. Todd applied for and received funding for support from the Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities. The grant allows the group to purchase modified gym equipment and pay three Nighthawks players to run these activities.

Todd explains that she applied for a Jumpstart Grant in the 2022 with the intention of running a program to help children and young adults with disabilities get active.

After receiving the grant, Todd tried to run a program but didn't get enough sufficient participation to be able to make it work.

"It wasn't until we saw the Flight Crew using the field-house here in the CRRC with the Nighthawks that we had the idea to partner with the two groups to run this program with them," Todd says. "Both groups were very excited to get started with this six-week multi-sport program and build deeper connections with the Nighthawks athletes."

The symbiosis of this collaboration is ideal. The students get dedicated support from athletes and the athletes can use these positions on their resumes.

And everyone has fun.

Nighthawks captain Brett Tataryn is one of the athletes who helps run these gym classes.

"This is a great time for both us and the Flight Crew!" says Tataryn. "The Crew are huge supporters of ours and we try our best to give back to them for all the time, hard work, and support that they give us."

Gail Chornoboy, the Nighthawks' billeting coordinator, had the idea of getting students with disabilities to form a symbiotic relationship with the Nighthawks.

"I organised it," says Chornoboy. "It was something I always thought should happen once I got more involved with the team."

Nighthawks head coach Kelvin Cech also has a lot of praise for the Flight Crew.

"One of the bright spots of my day is when the Flight Crew comes in to help out in the dressing room," says the coach. "From laundry to water bottles to pucks, there are a lot of details behind the scenes that the players and I value, so having the Flight Crew come in and take on a huge part of that is just massive. We appreciate it so much. The gang is so full of energy and enthusiasm. They take pride in what they're doing, and we're simply so lucky to have them."

"These students are so lovely," adds Voulgaris. "They work so hard and they love it so much and I just want to celebrate them. You have to put them on a really high pedestal and say, 'Yes, you can! It's all good! We've got you!'"

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# Pickering Helps Win Gold for Canada

By Ty Dilello

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St. Adolphe's very own Avery Pickering has won the gold medal as a member of Team Canada at the IIHF World U18 Women's Hockey Championship in Osterund, Sweden.

Canada went through the tournament undefeated, winning all five games they played. In Sunday's gold medal game, Canada defeated Sweden by a wide 10-0 margin. It was Canada's second straight gold medal at the Women's U18 Worlds and also its third in four years.

"It's really been amazing the entire experience," says Pickering. "Obviously playing for Team Canada has been a dream for as long as I can remember. So getting the opportunity to experience this is incredible. Being in Sweden, too, that's a pretty cool part of the experience because I'd never been outside of North America before. Getting to be here and seeing European culture and the scenery has been really incredible."

Pickering grew up in a hockey family in St. Adolphe, as her two brothers and parents all play the game. Her older brother, Owen Pickering, was a 2022 first-round draft pick of the NHL's Pittsburgh Penguins.

"I got into hockey just through my family," she says. "Both of my parents played and still play in a St. Adolphe Sunday night league. My older brother got really interested when he was young, so I basically watched everyone



Avery Pickering of St. Adolphe.

© C/O AVERY PICKERING

in my family play growing up. I can't even remember the first time I played or skated because I was so young."

Pickering's parents did their best to make sure the kids had as much exposure to hockey as possible, even going as far as to build an outdoor rink every winter for their children to play on.

"I think it was just something that was so easy to love, working on the game and putting in the time. My dad built an outdoor rink in our backyard every year and has added improvements every

year, with things like nets to make sure we don't hit any houses. Just little things to try and make it easier and better for us to work on our skills."

The 16-year-old Pickering has been attending high school at Balmoral Hall in Winnipeg, a school known for its hockey program and training future college athletes.

Although she's only in Grade 11, Pickering has been a star defenceman for the Balmoral Hall Blazers ever since she joined the school

in 2020.

"I really love our coaches at Balmoral Hall," says Pickering. "It's been a great experience as a whole because it feels like a family. I love going to school and playing hockey with those girls every day."

Pickering has also already committed to attend Colgate University, a top NCAA women's hockey program, after she graduates from Balmoral Hall in 2024.

It was in mid-December when Pickering found out that she had been selected to play for Team Canada at the 2023 IIHF World U18 Women's Hockey Championship.

"I was in a car ride home with my mom from a workout," she recalls. "I knew the time of day that I would be getting the call to find out either way if I made the team or not. So I got the call, and it was incredible sharing it with my mom as both of us were smiling, crying, and laughing. I really wasn't expecting to make the team, so it was just an amazing feeling."

Pickering scored one assist in five games and was a +8 for the tournament. Her one assist was an important one, however, as it came in the gold medal game.

"I've been working towards this for so long. And I'm so thankful to have been given this experience and opportunity. I've dreamed of being here and being up against the top girls for this age group in the entire world, so I'm glad I was able to soak everything up and enjoy this experience."

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# Friendship Trail Receives David Suzuki Foundation Grant

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

In the fall of 2019, a group of St. Adolphe residents realized that there was some great potential to create a beautiful trail along the Red River in their town. The Friendship Trail, as they named it, has since become a welcoming spot of tranquility for all who visit.

Throughout 2022, the trail became even more memorable.

The St. Adolphe Friendship Trail Volunteer Group (FTVG), which maintains the site all year round, consists of five local senior citizens: Henriette and Richard Collette, Diane Delorme, Bill Gibson, and Gerry Lagasse.

In 2022, the group sought help from Shane Ray and Liam Harder, recreational directors for the RM of Ritchot. With their aid, the group was able to secure a \$2,000 grant from The David Suzuki Foundation (DSF) Healing Forest Initiative.

The Healing Forest Initiative was founded by Saulteaux Cree lawyer Patricia Stirbys and geologist and international development consultant Peter Croal in the wake of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report. The pair didn't have a specific plan for the forests, but they asked only that they be, according to their website, "a quiet green space dedicated to the spirit of reconciliation."

The Friendship Trail is now one of 16 Healing Forests being sponsored by the DSF.



The Friendship Trail in St. Adolphe.

ST. ADOLPHE FRIENDSHIP TRAIL VOLUNTEER GROUP

On September 30, the Friendship Trail played host to a Truth and Reconciliation Day gathering in honour of residential school survivors. Approximately 400 people visited the trail that day.

"We had a Red River cart on display built by Armand and Kelly Jerome," says Gerry Lagasse. "We also had two wood carvers, Marc and Richard Collette, [and] two elders from the Manitoba Métis explaining the history of the Métis fur traders that travelled from the Hudson Bay to St. Paul, Minnesota along the Red River with their valuable fur pelts."

In early December, the St.

Adolphe Manitoba Métis Local, whose chairperson is Paul Lagasse, sponsored the purchase of three Christmas trees from the Lacoste Garden Centre.

The day after Christmas, the Friendship Trail group heard from Lacoste Garden Centre again, letting them know that the store had more than 35 Christmas trees left over from the holiday season—and they wanted to donate them to the trail.

The FTVG then received help from local resident Brock Gibson and his son Mack, who used their large snowmobile trailer to pick up the donated trees.

"One of the main reasons we wanted three Christmas trees at the beginning of December is that the volunteer group wanted to involve the St. Adolphe Day-care children to participate with a Christmas project. We brought about 100 wooden pucks for them to decorate and then brought them to hang on the three Christmas trees."

The volunteer group now invites everyone to visit the trail and take a peaceful walk in the beautiful, healing woods.

"The trail offers physical, mental, and spiritual healing for all of us to enjoy," adds Lagasse.

## Force Soccer Team Looks to Add Players

By Jennifer Lavin

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Although the Niverville Force soccer team has only been around for two years, they are already accomplishing great things and looking for more players.

This year, the Force are playing indoor soccer for the first time.

The team competes in the Manitoba Major Soccer League's (MMSL) Second Division. After ten games, they are number one in the standings with an impressive 8-0-2 record.

Indoor soccer is the same as the outdoor version, with only a few

modifications. Games are played on a half-field and are played with either eight or nine players per side as opposed to the usual 11 per side in outdoor soccer.

Co-owners Andry Giesbrecht and Sue Thompson are very pleased with their team's current roster.

However, the Force will be looking for some new players, with tryouts to start in February.

Giesbrecht says that the team is recreational but competitive so they will require players to have significant skills on the field.

Potential players need to be males aged 16 or older. They

also need to be people of good character.

In general, the Niverville team holds one practice and has one game per week, so players need to be prepared to commit this amount of time.

"You have to be a good teammate, be supportive, come to practices, have a good work ethic, etc.," says Giesbrecht.

The Force currently has players from at least five different countries, including a diverse range of ethnicities, religions, and ages. Some athletes, Giesbrecht says, don't even speak a lot of English. But it doesn't matter because

they are bonded by the language of soccer.

"It's a global game and we all just want to be together so the more diversity the better."

Training sessions for the Force's indoor and outdoor soccer team are scheduled to take place February 10, 20, and 23 and they require pre-registration.

Those chosen to participate will incur a \$5 fee.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more or to register for tryouts, email [nivervilleforce@gmail.com](mailto:nivervilleforce@gmail.com).





JENN HYDE

# Soccer Club Sets Sight on Spring Season

By Jennifer Lavin

jlavin@nivervillecitizen.com

We may be in the middle of another cold Manitoba winter, but the Niverville Soccer Club (NSC) is already gearing up for another season.

NSC is a youth soccer program that aims to provide a fun introduction to soccer for the young people of Niverville.

Last year, more than 350 kids played in the club and at least as many are anticipated to join this year. Games and practices take place week-nights during the months of May and June.

Players in the U7 and U9 age groups (kids born in 2014 to 2017) play mini-soccer, a non-competitive version of the game that requires no travelling to other towns.

The kids participate in activities that introduce them to the rules and skills involved in the game.

Youth soccer, U11 to U18, is for those born between 2005 and 2013. This is the more traditional style of

competitive play and does involve travelling to neighbouring towns for regular matches.

Registration for the Niverville Soccer Club starts on February 1 and the season usually starts the first week of May, depending on weather.

Jenn Hyde, the organization's president and treasurer, says that NSC is always looking for coaches.

The club encourages parents to get involved with the teams whether that be as coaches, assistants, or even snack providers.

The club will also need referees for the upcoming season. Referring for the club is a paid position available to adults or teens born in 2009 or later.

Sue Thompson, a current NSC board member, invites anyone to apply to be a referee. She says that refs are given free training, need only have a basic grasp of the game, and will be utilized a maximum of two times per week.

Thompson points out that

even a person with a background in hockey can referee a soccer game.

"Last year we had a hockey player that [refed for us]," says Thompson. "She had never played soccer, but the two sports are actually quite similar."

NSC's Doug Zapp has stepped down from the board after more than 15 years. In the past, Zapp has served as president, treasurer, registrar, referee-in-chief, and generally helped keep the club together.

Thompson is starting her sixth year on the board and will be helping the new board with referees and equipment this year with the intention of diminishing her responsibilities next year.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like to get more information about the Niverville Soccer Club, sign your child up to play, or volunteer your time, check out the NSC website (<https://nivervillesoccer.sportsengine-prelive.com>) or contact nivsoccerclub@gmail.com.



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For those who do not have access to the Internet, please call the school nearest your residence. School staff will assist in completing the first step of the registration process over the phone.

### Eligibility

To be eligible for registration, children must be five years of age on or before December 31, 2023. Students are required to attend the school within the catchment area where they reside, which ensures balanced enrollment across the division. Please view catchment maps at [www.HSD.ca](http://www.HSD.ca).

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# Arts & Entertainment



JR Charron, recently the recipient of the MCMA for Fans' Choice, has a new single out.

by C/O JR CHARRON

## New Single Coming from Popular Niverville Artist

By Sara Beth Dacombe

✉ sdacombe@nivervillecitizen.com

Fresh off his Manitoba Country Music Awards win, Niverville's JR Charron released a brand-new, emotionally driven single on January 27 entitled "Who You're Gonna Be."

The song is about Charron's experience in becoming a father.

He says that this is his most heartfelt and personal release to date.

Driving home that point, the song even includes his baby's ultrasound heartbeat in the first

few seconds.

He hopes the details and raw emotion of the song will invite the listener into making a closer connection with the artist, who is very open about life's challenges and what it's like to balance being a musician, songwriter, performer, and family man.

"My goal is to put the listener in the driver's seat," Charron explains. "I hope that [they] can reflect on what I'm saying to have a relatable emotional experience, whether they are expecting, thinking about trying, have had children, or anywhere in between."

In November 2022, Charron debuted the new single at his performance during the MCMA's where he was nominated for four awards and left with a win for Fans' Choice.

Addressing his growing fan-base, Charron shared the win on social media saying, "This could not have happened without you, my fans. We may not have the most, but you are in fact, the most loyal. I am so grateful for this massive show of support and to be a part of this country music lovin' community."

2023 is shaping up to be a big

year for the small-town singer who moved to Niverville in 2018 from Binscarth, Manitoba.

"Since our MCMA win, I'm getting calls left, right, and centre," says Charron. "I think the release of this latest single should only put that into hyper drive. So damn excited for the future!"

"Who You're Gonna Be" is available for purchase on Charron's website.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

To purchase the new single, visit: [www.jrcharron.com](http://www.jrcharron.com).

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## PREGNANCY & INFANT LOSS SUPPORT

Angel Baby supports women through the difficulties of miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth, and infant death.

### We offer the following services for grieving women:

- a peer support group
- a virtual memory wall
- care packages

Our Peer Support Group meets the first Tuesday of every month at our Steinbach office or via Zoom. Email [contact@angelbaby.ca](mailto:contact@angelbaby.ca) for more information.

**[contact@angelbaby.ca](mailto:contact@angelbaby.ca) | [www.angelbaby.ca](http://www.angelbaby.ca) | [@angelbaby.ca](https://www.instagram.com/angelbaby.ca) on IG**



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1-204-388-4600  
[feedback@wheretheybelong.ca](mailto:feedback@wheretheybelong.ca)  
[www.wheretheybelong.ca](http://www.wheretheybelong.ca)

## You are invited!

To support future development in the west end of Town, the Town of Niverville has undertaken a conceptual design study for future intersection improvements along PR 311 between Wallace Road and Krahn Road. This work will be required to handle increased traffic volumes and resolve associated safety concerns. The Town is seeking input from local stakeholders and the public. Please join us at one of the following Open Houses to see the proposed options and leave your feedback:

**Tuesday, February 21, 2023,  
between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm;**

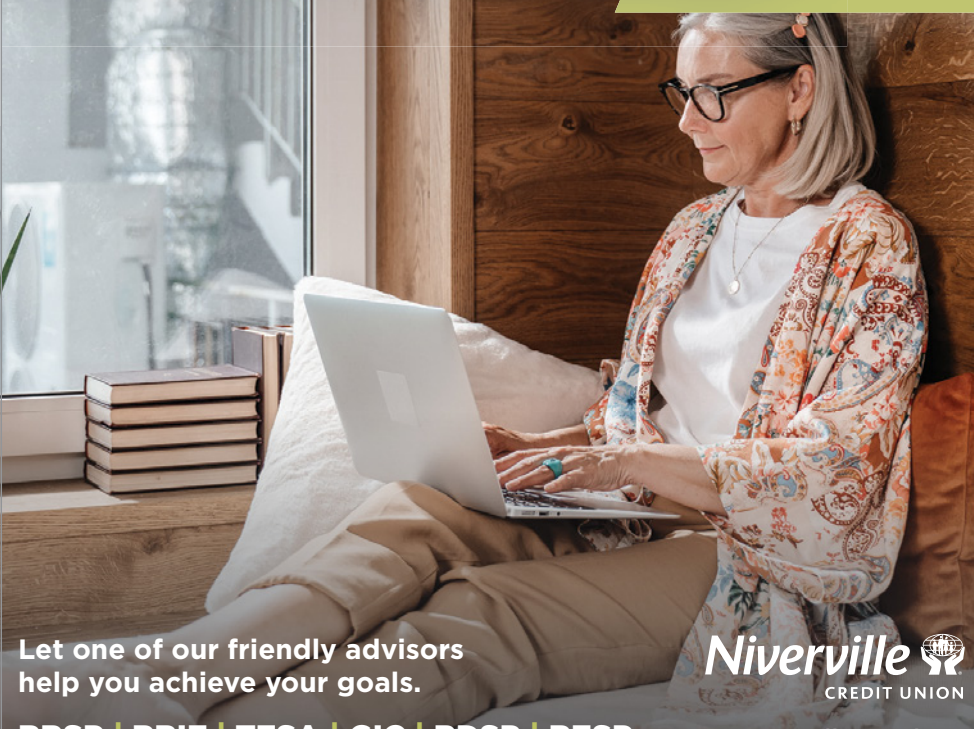
or

**Thursday, February 23, 2023,  
between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm**

Location: Second Floor, Multi Purpose Room,  
Niverville Community Resource & Recreation Centre,  
501 Centre Street, Niverville, MB

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**\$949**

- 2-in-1 Removable Agitator
- Built-In Water Faucet

DRYER: YWED5050LW  
**\$849**

- Moisture Sensing
- Wrinkle Shield™ Option

† Equivalent volume per I.E.C. International Standard, 5th Ed., based on 5.4 cu. ft. DOE measurement.

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ONE YEAR  
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AND 7.4 CU. FT. ELECTRIC DRYER**

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**\$1149**

- Quick Wash Cycle
- Tumble Fresh Option

DRYER: YWED5605MW  
**\$1049**

- Wrinkle Shield™ Option
- Sanitize Cycle

† Equivalent volume per I.E.C. International Standard, 5th Ed., based on 5.0 cu. ft. DOE measurement.

\* While quantities last. This offer is open only to residents of Canada purchasing a qualifying Whirlpool®, Maytag®, Amana®, Inglis® laundry pair purchased between January 5, 2023 - January 3, 2024. Qualifying laundry pair must consist of one washer and one dryer. Multiple purchases must be made at the same time from the same participating authorized Canadian dealers only. See Sales Associate for list of eligible laundry appliances. Only one Bonus Gift per household allowed. No substitute Bonus Gift available. Not convertible to cash. To claim Bonus Gift, visit [www.swashpromo.ca](http://www.swashpromo.ca) and complete online claim form. Submission must include a copy of invoice of the qualifying purchases. COMPLETED SUBMISSIONS MUST BE RECEIVED WITHIN 60 DAYS OF LAUNDRY PAIR PURCHASE OR WILL BE VOID. Missing information will delay offer fulfillment or disqualify claim. Allow 4 to 6 weeks from claim validation to receive your Bonus Gift which will be couriered directly to the Canadian shipping address provided. OFFER MAY NOT BE COMBINED WITH ANY OTHER OFFER. All Claims are Subject to Audit. Offer is not available to second channel, dealers, builders or contractors. All models may not be available at all dealers. No substitute models qualify. Dealer prices may vary. Dealer alone has sole discretion to set retail prices. Qualifying laundry appliances excludes discontinued models.

† 3 (887 mL) bottles, each washing up to 83 regular loads. Based on mean of 3.8 regular loads/week; Survey of 1325 Canadian households, September 2022.

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**Valid from February 2-22, 2023. See In-Store Associate for Details.**

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