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LOCAL NEWS

Kids and Cellphones

■ It's one of the biggest questions that parents of young people today have to answer: when is the right time to provide their children with cellphones? Experts agree there are inherent risks in allowing kids access to these devices.

Details on Pages 8-9

LOCAL NEWS

The Darker Side of MAiD

■ As Canada looks to expand access to its medical assistance in dying legislation, some are sounding the alarm about its impact on the disabled community.

Details on Pages 10-11

SPORTS & REC

Manitoba Team Wins Big at Elite Alberta Tournament

■ With the help of Bryenne Muntain of Niverville, the Junior Ice won the War for the Roses, the first Manitoba team to do so.

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ARTS & CULTURE

Local Artist Releases New Music Video

■ Trevor Lux of Niverville recently collaborated with Prairie Soul Dance Company to produce a slick new music video.

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Mayor Myron Dyck, Cornelius Funk, Bernie Falk, and Ernest Braun at the park's ribbon-cutting ceremony.

KIM KIELLEY

Station Lands Heritage Park Opens in Niverville

By Kim Kielley

Niverville has a new park, and it's a historically significant one. The Station Lands Heritage Park was officially opened in a ribbon-cutting ceremony on Friday, July 18 on Station Road.

Mayor Myron Dyck was on hand for the event alongside former town employee Cornelius Funk and local history enthusiasts Bernie Falk and Ernest Braun.

The park, marked by a handsome timber shelter covering a refurbished historical well, can be reached via a walking trail from Main Street.

The well is the result of an accidental discovery made in 2012. At that time, Funk was cutting grass when one of the wheels of his mower unexpectedly fell into a hole.

"He could have gone right over if it wasn't for the width of the mower

preventing it," says Braun of the lucky happenstance.

Eventually the hole was filled in, with the help of Bernie Falk, another former town employee.

In the meantime, Braun researched the significance of the hole and its proximity to the nearby railroad tracks. He concluded, through depth exploration, that this well had originally been used to provide water for steam engines.

Ten years after the discovery, in the fall of 2022, the town began construction on a park.

"If you didn't have access to water, you would not see a community here," says Mayor Dyck of the well's significance. "To have water this close in proximity shows the infrastructure that was important to the day and the significance of it, and how it connected communities."

The park was developed in collaboration with the Eastman

Historical Society, as well as a team of students from the Steinbach Regional Secondary School's carpentry class that designed and rebuilt the well and timber shelter.

Along the way, the park has been supported by numerous volunteers.

Reclaimed brick from both the well and other local sources were used to rebuild the well to its current height. Natural grasses, trees, and shrubs were then planted nearby.

Partial funding of \$75,000 was provided by the provincial government through the Building Sustainable Communities fund.

Niverville's town council matched the province's contribution, bringing the project's cost to \$150,000.

Stations Land Heritage Park is part of more than 160 acres of usable public greenspace in Niverville. The town also boasts 24 kilometres of active transportation routes.

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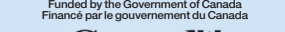
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The 2025 property tax statements have been mailed to property owners.

If you do not receive a copy of the bill, please feel free to contact the Town Office for a copy by email at taxes@wheretheyoubelong.ca or call 204-388-4600 ext. 1109.

New property owners are reminded that they are responsible for the payment of the taxes whether or not they have received a tax notice in their name.

All payments must be received in the Town Office, 329 Bronstone Drive, Niverville, by 5 p.m. on September 29th, 2025. Cheques may be post-dated to the due date (Sept. 29, 2025) but must be received by the Town Office **on or before September 29th, 2025, by 5 p.m.**, or they will be considered late and will be subject to a penalty. Receipts may be emailed upon request or picked up at the Town Office.

All taxes remaining subsequently unpaid are subject by law to a penalty of 1.25% per month (compounded annually). **STATEMENTS CURRENTLY SHOWING ARREARS WILL HAVE ADDITIONAL PENALTIES.** Call the Town Office or log in to your eServices account for an updated balance on the day the payment is remitted. Note that penalties are posted on the first of every month. (Please allow 3 business days for bank processing).

Cheques or money orders should be made payable to the "Town of Niverville". Visit www.wheretheyoubelong.ca for the various payment options.

Cornerstone Café and Deli Brings New York-Style Dining to St. Adolphe

By Brenda Sawatzky

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In midsummer, the much-anticipated Cornerstone Café and Deli opened its doors to hungry diners at 511 Main Street in St. Adolphe. So far, the business's outlook is optimistic.

Local resident and restaurant owner Peter Ecker says they've seen a steady flow of traffic, both local and Winnipeg-based.

The deli is managed by Ecker's two grown sons, James and John. It's open six days a week for breakfast, lunch, and supper.

"We've desperately been needing a restaurant here for the longest time," Ecker says. "We haven't seen much come and go after the Pic-and-Nic closed. We know that people wanted something, and the timing was good for us."

The style of dining at Cornerstone is something one might expect to find on the streets of New York—an upscale sandwich and soup deli.

But Ecker says it's so much more than that.

Stepping inside, you'll see a vast sandwich bar offering artisan breads, deli meats, many different cheeses, and a selection of gourmet condiments.

The average sandwich, Ecker says, is loaded up with a half-pound of meat before other toppings of the customer's choosing are added.

"We created a muffaletta filling," Ecker says. "It's like an Italian-style salsa. People love that stuff. I've got pickled eggplant and baba ganoush, artichokes, and imported olives from Italy. Every sandwich gets a [helping] of imported olive oil and balsamic vinegar."

If it's pickled, marinated, or roasted, he says the process was done in house.

If patrons are unsure as to what pairs well with what, Ecker says they are glad to make recommendations.



Peter Ecker with sons James and John.

✉ BRENDA SAWATZKY

In some respects, he adds, that makes them sandwich coaches.

They also reserve the right to tell a customer what they cannot put on their sandwich.

"Ketchup doesn't go with prosciutto," he says with a laugh.

In order to help people stretch their palette, Ecker says they'll soon be offering charcuterie with samplings from their sandwich bar.

Complementing the sandwich bar are daily soup specials, all made in-house and from scratch. Diners can enjoy traditional borscht, carrot and ginger soup, roasted tomato soup, and more.

For pizza lovers, there's daily features there too.

The menu supports gluten-free, lactose-free, and vegetarian options. There are senior discounts and a kids menu which includes grilled cheese, hot dogs, chicken fingers, and burger sliders.

Showcased next to the sandwich bar is a selection of pastries Ecker has brought in from Quebec.

"The croissants are a pure butter croissant," he says. "The chocolate, the marzipan, everything that's inside these pastries is absolutely incredible. Our cinnamon buns are already famous. This is a pastry-style one rather than a bread-style."

Even the coffee and espresso is hand-selected, coming from a roaster based out of Brandon. The restaurant will soon be licensed to sell wine and beer.

This deli doesn't just cater to sit-in diners, though. They provide takeout options and sandwich bundles to go. As well, individuals can choose from a selection of prepackaged whole meals to take home for the family dinner.

One of Ecker's favourites, which is quickly becoming a favourite for many patrons too, is the jumbo Italian

meatballs made from a pork, veal, and beef blend and topped with Ecker's homemade Italian tomato sauce.

The deli also carries a small retail section where shoppers can find imported ingredients such as olive oil and pastas.

How does he use quality imported ingredients and still keep prices reasonable?

Ecker says there are some key means of doing that.

"It's important not to have waste and overproduction because that can really eat up all of your money. You've got to know how to cycle food and sell food [responsibly]."

Cornerstone also provides catering services for any type of event.

Ecker has been instrumental in providing hundreds of meals every month to Life's Journey, a non-profit working with individuals with neurodiverse challenges.

As a member of the Shriners and

Freemasons, he's very familiar with charitable giving. Since the restaurant opened, he's been providing lower-cost meals to those who live in St. Adolphe's affordable housing units.

Ecker and his wife Lyne have been residents of St. Adolphe for the past 25 years. It's where they raised their sons and the boys have now both returned to their childhood stomping grounds.

When reminiscing about what drew them to St. Adolphe in the first place, Ecker says the community felt safe and the residents were kind. It didn't hurt that it was a bilingual community since both Lyne and the boys speak French.

Ecker has been a career chef for 40 years. The past 20 have been spent working for Sysco Foods where he cooks for restaurateurs as well as provides them with business management advice and menu development ideas.

Prior to that, he cooked in the kitchens of hotel chains, convention centres, and high-end restaurants. It's why he so strongly believes in providing great meals using quality ingredients.

"Everything [at Cornerstone] is either local or imported from Italy. I grew up with the Italians in Niagara Falls where I'm originally from. I'm an antipasto-style eater, so I like variety, but I like quality."

Lyne also works in the industry. She has a degree in hotel and restaurant management and owns a company called Cornerstone Hospitality and Food Sales (CHEFS).

The couple feels indebted to a number of friends and local trades who helped them get the café and deli off the ground.

It was an expensive and challenging venture, Ecker says.

While Cornerstone has an active social media presence, a new website is being developed for launch very soon.

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Helmets, Signals, and Street Smarts: A Guide to Safer Cycling

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

With an increase in dedicated bicycle paths in cities and towns around Manitoba, cycling around vehicular traffic is becoming safer.

Even so, knowing and understanding the rules of the road will make cycling an even safer activity for everyone.

According to Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI), four cyclists are killed in Manitoba each year and 140 others are injured in collisions. The majority of these riders are not wearing a helmet.

It's important to note that, when driving in areas where vehicular traffic is allowed, cyclists are subject to the Highway Traffic Act, which includes some laws specific to bicycle use. Bicycle infractions are subject to traffic fines and penalties when caught or reported.

Unlike regular drivers, though, cyclists aren't required to take tests before heading out into traffic. So it's imperative that adults learn and, in turn, teach their kids.

But if safety and regulation aren't reason enough to abide by the rules of the road, consider for a moment the drivers who have to share the road with cyclists of all ages who sometimes act like they're above the law.

We've all been there. It can be an exercise in frustration.

ARE HELMETS, LIGHTS, AND REFLECTORS COMPULSORY?

Under Manitoba law, the use of a certified and properly fitted helmet is compulsory for anyone under the age of 18. This also applies to children who are passengers on a bike or in a trailer being towed by a bike.

Helmets must be certified by standards such as the Snell Memorial Foundation, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), or the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

A parent or guardian can be fined if they knowingly allow their child to ride without a helmet. Teens over the age of 13 can be fined directly.

MPI and the RCMP encourage adults to act as role models for their kids and wear helmets when they ride.

As for compulsory bicycle safety features, a white light is required for the front of the bike and a red or amber light or reflector for the rear.



For both cyclists and motorists, it's important to carefully consider how to use the road.

✉ BRENDA SAWATZKY

The addition of a blinking LED light on the rear can significantly increase a bike's visibility in traffic, but this isn't mandatory.

STREETS, SIDEWALKS, AND CROSSWALKS

According to the Highway Traffic Act, when driving on roadways, cyclists should position themselves as close as is practical to the right edge of the road. When driving in groups of two or more, cyclists must ride in single file.

When sharing a lane with parked vehicles, it is recommended to leave a 1.5-metre gap between you and the vehicle, called the "door zone."

If parked vehicles randomly occur in your lane, keep a straight path to maintain predictability for other drivers and avoid swerving in and out of parked vehicles.

Unless you're a child driving a bike with a rear wheel that is 16 inches in diameter or less, it is illegal to drive your bike on a sidewalk.

Based on some studies, cyclists on sidewalks face a greater risk of collision as they approach intersections since motorists are watching for pedestrians at these corners as opposed

to fast-moving bikes.

Riding on sidewalks also creates a hazardous environment for pedestrians.

The MPI Bike Safely brochure has nothing to say about riding your bike along crosswalks. Live and Learn, an online resource for new Manitobans, suggests that cyclists should always dismount their bicycle and walk it across.

Other online resources suggest that this rule may differ depending on city or community bylaw.

Any way you look at it, however, cyclists must give right of way to the pedestrian just like any other vehicle. If common sense prevails, cyclists should dismount when pedestrians are on the crosswalk for everyone's safety.

As well, if cyclists choose to drive across a crosswalk, they should anticipate vehicles whose drivers won't be enthusiastic about their choice to do so.

GETTING YOUR CHILD READY FOR STREET CYCLING

According to MPI, your child should be able to manage a few basic skills before they begin driving in traffic.

These skills should be practiced in advance in a parking lot or on a quiet residential street.

First, they should be able to cycle in a straight line, keeping their head up and eyes on the road.

Next, they should be able to maintain balance with one hand while the other hand performs traffic signals. Balance and a straight line should also be maintained when shoulder-checking.

Finally, the child should be capable of making abrupt stops safely. Help them to experience what it feels like to apply varying levels of pressure to the brake controller and repeat this process, applying the brake at greater levels and higher speeds as they feel comfortable.

SIGNALLING

When cycling on the street, children should be made aware of the fact that all the same rules and responsibilities apply to them as to any motorist. That includes stopping at controlled intersections and signalling to other drivers when they're turning or braking.

Generally speaking, the left hand is used to make signals since it's the most visible to traffic around you.

There are four basic hand signals.

A left-hand turn is indicated by an arm outstretched to the side with no bend in the elbow, like an arrow pointing left. A right-hand turn is indicated when your arm is bent into an L-shape, with the hand pointing upward.

To indicate an intention to stop, use the same signal as a right turn except, this time, the hand is facing the ground. Finally, the same downward motion without a bend in the elbow indicates a slight shift in positioning within the same lane.

For everyone's safety, MPI recommends signalling well in advance of your action. Place both hands on the handlebars to manoeuvre through a turn or lane change.

If you're stopped at an intersection, signal again before making the turn or lane change.

MOTORIST RESPONSIBILITY

Motorists, too, have a responsibility to create a safe driving environment for the cyclists around them. Under all circumstances, they should be cautious and respectful of the cyclists' right to be on the road.

When it comes to children on bicycles, they should expect the unexpected and employ even greater levels of vigilance.

When approaching a bicycle, reduce your speed and leave a safe following distance.

Be aware of hazards the cyclist might face and anticipate their actions accordingly.

When passing a cyclist, it's recommended to allow at minimum one metre of clearance. This may require a lane change in order to pass. Extra distance may be required in highway situations where speeds are increased.

It's not safe to pass a cyclist in areas where traffic is reduced to one lane, such as construction zones or some residential streets with parked vehicles. Never pass a cyclist while in a yield lane.

It is recommended not to use one's horn, which can startle a cyclist.

Always be aware of your surroundings so that, when making a left or right turn, you know the whereabouts of any bikes about to enter your path.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more, visit: <https://www.mpi.mb.ca/wpcontent/uploads/2022/10/AdultsCyclingBooklet.pdf>



Grant Dyck of Artel Inland Inc. and Evan Erlandson of Red River Grain Co.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

Artel Inland and Red River Grain Announce Collaboration

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Farmers local to our area of south-eastern Manitoba now have another option in terms of managing their corn and soybean harvests.

Artel Inland Inc. and Red River Grain Co. have joined forces and will be operating collaboratively from the Artel location two miles east of Niverville.

Artel Inland, owned by Grant Dyck of Niverville, offers custom grain-drying services.

Red River Grain Co., based out of Altona, offers the same services but includes transportation and competitive corn, soybean, and oat

pricing options for both farmers and end users.

"We specialize in grain handling and marketing, and we're excited to offer more choice to growers in the Niverville area," says Evan Erlandson, president of Red River Grain. "This partnership is a truly great fit for everyone involved—Artel Inland, the local farm community, and our team at Red River Grain."

For local farmers, the partnership will provide more harvest flexibility, including off-the-combine delivery, onsite storage, and drying services.

When Dyck built Artel Inland years ago, the facility was constructed to such a scale that it could handle not only the increased yield

from his own operation but the needs of the local farming community too.

It is now one of the biggest grain-dryers in the province.

Artel Inland can receive up to 12,000 bushels per hour, unloading a Super B truck in an average of seven minutes. Trucks picking up grain, usually destined for local feed mills, can be filled in as little as four minutes.

"We see this as a really good partnership, to be a satellite for Red River as a collection point, and another option for buying in the area," says Grant Dyck, president of Artel Farms. "We really appreciate the team at Red River. [They are] very competent and like-minded progressive thinkers, and we're

looking forward to working with them."

Dyck sees this new collaboration as phase two of his growing southeast operation, which he hopes to eventually develop into a complete feed corn hub for the region.

"There's been interest in cooperative bin ownership, so that there'd be more opportunity for people that don't want to build [bins] on their own farms," says Dyck. "They could build it with Inland."

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To market grain through Red River Grain, contact: (204) 216-1006 or www.redrivergrainco.com.

IN BRIEF

Man Sentenced for Role in Fatal Shooting

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Just over one year ago, Niverville was the scene of a fatal police shooting. The unsettling incident resulted in an interprovincial manhunt that ended near the city of Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

In July, a man was charged for his involvement in that day's tragic events. David Frank Burling, 30, pleaded guilty to assaulting a police officer, fleeing police, and driving while prohibited. He was sentenced to serve four and a half years in prison.

The events began with the theft of a Ford F-350, which Burling and friend Tristian Mariash, along with an unidentified woman, are reported to have driven to Winnipeg. After the vehicle was spotted near the airport, a police helicopter followed it as it drove south. Efforts to deploy stop sticks truck were unsuccessful.

RCMP officers confronted the truck near Providence University College in Otterburne, resulting in shots being fired. Mariash was struck by a bullet.

Burling proceeded to drive the stolen truck to Niverville, where he abandoned the vehicle in the parking lot of the Shell gas station.

Mariash was found in the truck, wounded, and was later pronounced dead.

Burling has an extensive criminal record involving previous driving convictions, including flights from the police.

In addition to the current sentence, this past spring Burling was handed a two years for a different assault with a weapon, which court heard was an attempt to hit a pedestrian with a vehicle.

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Kids and Cellphones: When Is the Right Time to Introduce?

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Today's children are growing up in an unprecedented time of mobile connectivity. Landlines have been virtually eliminated, especially in homes, and cellphones are the number one way that people keep in touch.

The device itself poses little risk. But for most parents of teens and pre-teens, the dilemma is that they aren't just a tool for calling and texting. The question is larger: "When is my child ready to manage the broader implications, including addictive qualities, of cellphone ownership?"

Local parents Taylor Yetman decided to purchase a cellphone for her daughter when she turned 11.

"We got her an actual phone plan with a small amount of data when she started going to friends' houses for sleepovers... and hanging out with friends while walking around our neighbourhood," says Yetman.

The phone was one way for Yetman to feel assured of her daughter's safety while she was out in the world.

"I wanted her to have a way to contact me no matter what. And so, if she was ever in an uncomfortable situation, we'd have communication."

Yetman educated her daughter on responsible phone usage. Her daughter, now in high school, has never given Yetman a reason to feel regret over the decision.

For Shayla Therrien, the decision to equip her nine-year-old with a cellphone had more to do with Therrien's disability and the need to reach her daughter if she needed help.

"We did get her one sooner than we would have liked," Therrien says. "Her iPhone sends a request to my husband to allow app downloads [and puts] a kids restriction on YouTube."

The family also has rules that restrict social media use.

For Therrien and her partner, a child's safe use of a phone has a lot to do with parental rules and vigilance.



DEPOSITPHOTOS

Anita Peters agrees. She purchased a cellphone for her 12-year-old son when they lived in Winnipeg and he regularly walked to school.

"I had [a parental control app] on my phone," she says. "What he saw, who he texted, and who texted him—all messages came to my phone. I could turn off all his apps at any given moment and set parental locks for age-appropriate material."

She put a lock on his phone that restricted data use between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. These restrictions remained in place until he was 18 years old.

"We taught him that everyone must be accountable to someone so we don't get ourselves in trouble," Peters adds.

For Julia Shvets, parental control apps are great, but there's still a limit to the reassurance they can provide. This is especially true as savvy children find ways to beat the system.

Like Peters, Shvets purchased a cellphone for her son when he walked to school in the city. She wanted to be able to track his location.

"[His] cellphone usage became a concern," Shvets says. "We observed

how easily teens become distracted by their phones. It has truly become a modern-day addiction."

This addiction drove her son to find clever workarounds.

"Our child managed to delete the parental control app," she says. "How? We still don't know. He even offered to mow a neighbour's lawn in exchange for their wi-fi password."

Monitoring and managing a child's cellphone use can be a full-time job, she says, adding that it's important for parents to lead by example. Which, for many adults, is also a problem.

"If you're in a position to delay giving your teen a cellphone, I would strongly recommend doing so," she concludes.

Emily Lohr is 24 years old with no kids of her own—yet. When she was a teen, her parents bought her a flip phone with only basic features.

She's a keen observer of what cellphones have done to her generation and those now entering their teens.

Lohr has also noticed kids who struggle with face-to-face communication and focus after getting a cellphone of their own.

"I've seen kids at family gatherings

or school events who stay glued to their screens instead of interacting or playing with others their age," Lohr says. "Meanwhile, those without phones tend to be more engaged."

EXPERT SPEAKS OF DANGERS

Martin deSudbury lives with his family near Île-des-Chênes. He and his wife are parents to five children who range in age from toddler to 11 years old. He's also been an officer with the Winnipeg Police Service (WPS) for the past 18 years.

Seven years ago, deSudbury assumed the role of school engagement officer in the WPS's community relations unit.

During his time in this role, deSudbury has provided online safety presentations to thousands of parents and students.

His elementary school addresses focus on teaching kids about safe information-sharing and avoiding oversharing, awareness of online predators, and communication with parents about their online activities.

"Believe it or not, we're starting to see a lot more harassment, bullying, and sexting issues, even in Grades

Five and Six," deSudbury says. "I think it stems from parents giving free rein to kids to surf the net and when the phones and tablets are not taken away at bedtime. This is where kids will find stuff online and develop these unhealthy behaviours and habits."

For those in the middle and high school years, deSudbury's talks also include the mental health impacts of social media involvement and device attachment.

He gives strong warnings when it comes to the sharing and possession of intimate images.

Police have seen the phenomenon of sexting grow exponentially among young people since 2009. For deSudbury, it's likely connected to increased access to online pornography.

"Exposure to pornography really paints a [negative] picture to these very young, easily influenced minds of what a healthy sexual relationship should look like."

Over the past decade, he points out that the sharing of intimate images has provided a convenient blackmail tool for predators, ex-partners, and peers alike.

"Let's say somebody shares intimate images of themselves," he says, offering an example. "The other person might say, 'Now you need to send me more photographs or I'm going to release these photos to everyone in your Instagram account.'"

This can happen via actual acquaintances, but it's equally likely to happen with child pornography distributors who pose as young people.

"That is a big message we're trying to get across," deSudbury adds. "Who you meet online is not necessarily who you think they are. We all want to be accepted, I realize that. It's just human nature. But you have to be careful online."

If kids understood the legal ramifications of sexting, he believes that many of them might reconsider their actions.

"If a child under the age of 18 is



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sharing or distributing any images of a person that's nude or semi-nude, that is construed [by police] as possession and distribution of child pornography," deSudbury says.

In Canada, the Youth Criminal Justice Act applies to kids between the ages of 12 to 17. Any youth who is found to have intimate images of another youth on their device, or is caught sharing those intimate images with others, can be incarcerated.

In the same vein, any child or youth who sends a nude or semi-nude photo of themselves to another person is guilty of distributing child pornography, even if the photo is their own. They then put the receiver of the photo at risk by making them guilty of possession.

"The majority of issues that we encounter in schools when it comes to sexting [involve kids] in Grades Eight, Nine, and Ten," says deSudbury. "You would think it would be in Grade 11 and 12, but by that time I think they've developed a bit more maturity. There's still a lot of sexting, but not to the same level as there is [in earlier grades]."

When these images are reported, the WPS works to get them taken offline through a program provided through the Canadian Centre for Child Protection.

"Through Project Arachnid, they will look for specific images online and they will delete them," says deSudbury. "It's pretty incredible what that organization is doing."

Unfortunately, by the time that happens, the damage might already be done.

This is evident in the number of calls the WPS get from parents whose children are experiencing extreme emotional distress or suicidal ideation after their photos, shared in innocence, ignorance or while under pressure, were revealed online.

DeSudbury cites the case of a mother he met at a Youth Matters conference in Winnipeg. She lost her 17-year-old daughter, Rehtaeh Parsons, to suicide as a result of online sexual harassment that took place when she was just 15 years old.

The case received national attention and was later responsible for the enactment of new laws around sharing intimate images and cyberbullying.

Another matter of concern is toxic conversation, particularly those on the receiving

end.

But it's not just online toxicity that affects kids' mental health, he says. Screen time also reduces the number of sleep hours many kids get when they're allowed to take their cellphones or tablet to their rooms.

And, finally, there's the addictive component. Studies show that the dopamine highs kids get when they're online or gaming can be equal in proportion to that of cocaine use, and just as addictive.

ADVICE TO PARENTS

In defence of today's kids, deSudbury says it's really important to realize that, due to the prevalence of social media, they are facing pressures like no generation before them.

Although kids have always experienced bullying and harassment in school, it didn't used to follow them home. That's all changed. Home is no longer a safe zone for kids with so much online access.

And in defence of parents, they face tremendous pressure when all their child's friends get cellphones. They don't want their child to feel alienated.

The longer you can wait to give them data, though, the better, deSudbury says.

Parents should assess the timing based on each individual child. Their level of maturity and responsibility says a lot about whether they're ready to manage good and safe cellphone practices.

"If you choose to purchase a smartphone, it's okay, but you have to get involved. You have to set guidelines and rules, and you have to follow through."

In deSudbury's estimation, creating a contract between parent and child is a really good idea. The contract should clearly itemize the rules for technology use and repercussions should those rules be broken.

Passwords and cellphone entry authentication codes need to be shared between parent and child and cellphone privileges should be revoked if these passwords are changed without the parent's knowledge.

Kids should be made aware in advance that the parent will review their phone use, apps, and internet browsing on a daily or weekly basis.

As smart and effective as parental control apps are, though, deSudbury warns that there's also something they

call vault apps that a child can use to disguise their activities. These apps may appear on the phone screen as calculators or calendars but are, in fact, places where online activity can be hidden from parental view.

"They can hide secret messages or photographs and the parents will never know because you need a special code to get in," says deSudbury. "We encourage parents to look at their apps or Instagram or Snapchat. And if you know that they are on their phones a lot but you can see very little [activity], there's a very good chance that they have a second Instagram or Snapchat account hidden somewhere and they are only showing you the ones that are [safe]."

Finally, he says, lead by example. Don't spend your time scouring the internet or scrolling through social media when your children are around. Be present, available, and engaged if you're going to expect your kids to do the same.

For deSudbury and his wife, establishing regular family activities which distract kids from potentially harmful technology is a great way to help combat the problem.

"We don't want to create a robot of our child. We want to create independent, strong, responsible, and accountable people."

It's also important to recognize that there are circumstances where technology and social media have benefitted kids.

DeSudbury cites one example of a boy who didn't fit into any social group at school. He felt isolated and depressed until he found an online community that shared his interest in the game of chess.

For this child, and his parents, the discovery was life-altering.

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In recent years, governments and grassroots organizations around the world have been making headlines as they discuss legislation around childhood safety and screen time.

In the past year, the Australian government introduced a law intended to ban kids under the age of 16 from creating social media accounts.

The Spanish government is considering something similar, adding recommendations that require warning labels be attached to new

digital devices. As well, they suggest that all smartphones automatically come equipped with built-in parental controls.

President Emmanuel Macron of France commissioned a report on kids and smartphones. The findings recommend that kids under 13 be prevented from using smartphones and children under 11 be prevented from owning even the most basic mobile phone.

The report also suggests that children be banned from accessing social media until they are 18 years of age.

In 2023, the United Kingdom passed the Online Safety Act, which introduced age verification requirements for online adult services. Social media platforms must create safeguards that shield underage users from harmful content.

Some governments are pushing to take these laws even further with a ban on cellphone sales to kids under 16.

In Spain, an initiative called Adolescencia Libre de Móviles (A Phone-Free Adolescence) has grown prominent.

A study of kids in one Spanish city revealed that, in 2019, 99 percent of 12-year-old kids had a mobile phone. Today, thanks to public awareness and online initiatives, those numbers have been reversed. Now 90 percent of kids in the same age bracket do not own a cellphone.

One year ago, Manitoba issued a comprehensive ban on cellphone use in middle and early years schools. A limited ban applies to kids attending high school.

Similar legislation has been enacted or considered in other countries, many of which are now broadening the scope of law to include greater degrees of childhood protection.

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU'RE CONCERNED

For parents or youth concerned about mental health, online addiction, harassment, or abuse, deSudbury recommends reaching out to the Kids Help Phone by dialling 686868.

Professional counsellors are available 24/7 to help both parents and kids deal with questions and concerns they have.

"They've saved a lot of lives because kids have reached out to them," says deSudbury.

If you suspect that intervention is needed, the RCMP or WPS can also help.

CITIZEN POLL

Considering the inherent risks, should our government consider enacting legislation that restricts the use and/or ownership of cellphones among young people?



Yes. New laws around cellphone ownership, such as enacting a minimum legal age, would help protect young people.



No. In our current day and age, it is unrealistic to restrict cellphone ownership or usage to those of a particular age.

Have a more nuanced opinion?
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LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

Is the housing disparity in Manitoba a problem that will eventually self-correct or is outside intervention needed to expedite a solution?

It will self-correct. Market demand is in a constant state of flux and will eventually balance out again, given time.

23%

It requires intervention. Waiting for self-correction will take too long and we will lose residents if action isn't taken.

77%

YOUR COMMENTS:

Corporations and capital investments shouldn't be able to buy homes. You shouldn't be able to Airbnb a non-primary residence. Eliminating these things would help correct the market.



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The Darker Side of Medical Assistance in Dying

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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In March, *The Citizen* explored the concept of medical assistance in dying (MAiD) using real-life stories from locals. Their stories are compelling and reflect a general appreciation for the legislation that was introduced in Canada in 2016.

MAiD, which legally permits a person to choose medical assistance to die at a predetermined time, has long been advocated for by proponents of Dying with Dignity Canada.

Initially, Bill C-14 was introduced with tight controls, making it available only to mentally competent adult Canadians who make the choice from an unpressured state.

At the time, the patient had to be diagnosed with a grievous and irremediable condition causing them unbearable physical or mental suffering that cannot be relieved under terms they deem acceptable.

In 2021, amendments determined that the condition of the patient no longer needed to be fatal or terminal.

Two years later, a joint committee on MAiD made a further recommendation to expand the program under Bill C-7 to make MAiD available to persons suffering from mental illness, including mature minors, without providing a minimum age limit.

Following some public opposition, the amendment, which was to be instated in March 2024, was bumped to March 2027.

Following *The Citizen's* original article this past spring, other locals feel there is a dark side to this



Bethany Daman was recently diagnosed with Ehlers Danlos Syndrome (EDS), a connective tissue disorder.

© C/O BETHANY DAMAN

legislation that they believe deserves to be told.

BETHANY'S STORY

Bethany Daman is a former Niverville resident. She's in her early thirties, married, and until recently enjoyed an active lifestyle.

In many ways, her life was pretty typical of someone in her age bracket and socioeconomic status.

In her twenties, though, Daman started seeking medical advice for symptoms that included intense head, neck and back pain, dizziness, nausea, and brain fog. Over time, the condition began to affect her ability to walk and, at times, even move.

Daman was diagnosed as having Ehlers Danlos Syndrome (EDS), a connective tissue disorder that can cause lax and floppy ligaments, loose and painful joints, stretchy and fragile

skin, gut problems, organ dysfunction, and problems related to moving and thinking straight.

It took years of seeing medical specialists, one after another, and undergoing a barrage of inconclusive tests, before she was provided with a diagnosis. It was all in her head, doctors told her, or simply a physical response to anxiety and stress.

For someone like Daman, now in a wheelchair and living with chronic pain and neurological issues, MAiD might be a viable option, especially when confronted with medical professionals who don't believe you and a system that falls so far short.

"It's confusing to explain, but sometimes the thought of seeking care from practitioners who continue to dismiss and gaslight me feels worse than not seeking care at all and seeing how things progress," Daman admits.

But Daman didn't give up. Instead she began seeking help outside of Manitoba's borders. Daman and her partner travelled for scans to two different clinics in the U.S. and one private clinic in British Columbia, all for diagnostics not available here.

She finally got real answers when she found specialists at a clinic in Colorado that work with EDS patients.

The news wasn't good, but it was conclusive. Daman is suffering from instability where her skull meets her spine, a tethered spinal cord, as well as a chiari malformation which causes part of her brain to slide into her spinal column.

Of course, this out-of-country treatment comes with a hefty price tag. Daman recognizes the privilege that comes with having ways to finance those options as well as the privilege she experiences through the

loving support of family and friends.

"I have received validation and the beginning steps of figuring out a care plan in a way that so many people haven't had access to," says Daman. "That is a messed-up aspect of everything that is happening. I know of countless other Canadians who have received medical treatment through very massive fundraising campaigns, but it is a privilege to be connected to a network of people who are able to contribute to your care."

Even if you can financially manage this degree of outside intervention, she says, neurosurgeons here aren't quick to allow non-Canadian medical diagnoses to inform their decisions.

In the meantime, her symptoms compound. Daman's brain stem issues continue to cause further nervous system damage and, as of this spring, she struggles with breathing, swallowing, and digestion.

Continuing to act as her own advocate, she now has a team of international doctors with whom she consults and has undergone a stem cell treatment at her own cost. She's heard of good success rates with spinal fusion surgery and hopes to pursue that treatment out-of-country.

"The challenge is the extreme costs associated with the treatment as well as questions related to follow-up care back here in Canada," says Daman. "If I have a Manitoba neurosurgeon on board willing to sign off saying that these surgeries are necessary, then Manitoba Health will cover the costs."

In order to sign off on her treatment, though, it can't be deemed experimental in nature. But, Daman

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says, at some point a patient's quality of life, as well as the desire to conduct further research through experimental methods, needs to come first.

In the meantime, for all the roadblocks she's faced in getting help from the Canadian healthcare system, Daman says there's some irony in the fact that MAiD is so available.

"I am incredibly supportive of MAiD," says Daman. "I think it is a very beautiful thing for people to be able to navigate a terminal illness on their own terms. But ensuring that our society has access to all ranges of medical diagnoses and treatments should be a priority before anyone is being offered MAiD. The thing that I'm hearing time and time again from others dealing with complex medical conditions is that they don't want to die. They want care, but the idea of continuing to live in conditions of never being able to leave the house and living in debilitating pain for the rest of their life is very daunting. When you are not seeing people getting the care they need but you are seeing people qualify for and get approved for MAiD, it's not okay."

Daman doesn't blame the country's medical professionals for this disparity. They work within a poorly structured system that allows limited time for patient consults and limited resources for research.

There doesn't seem to be funding for multidisciplinary medical teams to collaborate on a patient's behalf and no one advocates for patients but the patients themselves.

"It's hard to convince the system that these changes are financially worth it because the people making the decisions aren't the ones experiencing the impact of their quality of life being taken away from them."

THE VALUE OF A LIFE

Daniel Rempel is an assistant professor at Providence University College and a former resident of Niverville.

Rempel began to take an interest in MAiD after a decade of involvement with the disabled community. He'd worked one-on-one with intellectually and physically handicapped

persons at both Envision Community Living and the St. Amant Centre.

When later choosing a topic on which to write his master's thesis, he decided to research life from the perspective of a disabled person.

"I stumbled across this subdiscipline called disability theology," Rempel says. "It's rooted in just listening to disabled voices. There is a lot of evidence [to indicate] that these are people who have been kept out of conversations. When these people aren't at the table, the conversations just naturally turn in certain ways. If we incorporate these voices, even prioritize these voices, how does that shift the conversation?"

Through research, Rempel discovered that the disability community has been sounding alarm bells from the very earliest discussions on MAiD. He wonders if enough is being done to promote the innate value of every life.

He grew up in Niverville during the years when a young local man died by suicide. It opened the door to a movement centered around destigmatizing mental health struggles.

"I grew up in this town in the era of Imagine," Rempel said. "The [message was], 'Your life is worth living. You have value and worth and we want you here. Yes, you're struggling but there's supports and help available.' But there's an angle of MAiD that just seems to throw that all out the window."

This is especially true as MAiD legislation is introduced for those who struggle with mental illness.

Rempel is not suggesting that MAiD has no place in society. He simply hopes that the process can be slowed down somewhat until thoughtful consideration is given to how we view the value of human life.

Not so many years ago, it was difficult for a person with mobility issues to get around sidewalks and public buildings. Today, that process has been made easier.

It's things like this, Rempel says, that improve quality of life and reinforce the value of each individual's existence.

On the other hand, he cites an example of an Ontario woman in her thirties who was collecting provincial disability cheques. She lived in an apartment that was affordable according to her limited disability income but developed a severe reaction to a chemical inside the building.

"She couldn't afford to move anywhere else and so she decided that the only way to move forward was MAiD, because that was the only way to eliminate her [physical] suffering," says Rempel. "Well, another way would have been to give her the supports that she needed."

Partly, he says, it's a societal problem. We don't want to be a burden on anyone and we don't want to ask for help in times of need.

That stems from a culture that puts strong emphasis on being independent. At the same time, that independence tells us that it's okay to put ourselves first and let others look after themselves.

We've moved so far, he says, from the idea of community.

"The role of community is really important. Whether that's family or our town or a religious community or a friend group or a sports team, community is the fullness of all those interconnected expressions of life lived together. And when somebody dies, that irreversibly changes our community."

Creating community is as simple as being intentional in our friendships, he says. The elderly, the sick, and the disabled are among the loneliest within our communities and also the most vulnerable when it comes to choosing MAiD.

"The impetus should be put on those of us who are able to share a little bit more of the load," Rempel says. "Equity rather than equality. Justice. Thinking about the flourishing of all people. I really think that it starts on a person-to-person basis."

THE CREATION OF A HEALTHY POPULATION

An academic journal was published in April of this year in the Canadian Journal of Disability Studies out of

the University of Waterloo. It's working title: "Canada's Medical Assistance in Dying: Eugenics under another name?"

Like Rempel, the author, Valentina Capurri, takes a hard look at the message MAiD legislation sends about the value of human life.

She uses a historical argument to suggest that MAiD is in fact a form of government-sanctioned eugenics. Eugenics refers to the belief that the human species can be improved with the removal of those people with undesirable traits.

"Variations of eugenics that are detectable in numerous countries encompass gender selection practices as well as references to the lives of the elderly or the disabled as 'burdensome,'" Capurri writes. "The latter is the focus of interest in this article since I suggest that our understanding of what constitutes a life worth living encourages disabled and diseased individuals to conceive of their existence as worthless and to look at assisted dying as a possible solution to what is regarded as a problem for the state, for communities, and for individuals."

Instead, she continues, the goal of any government should be the creation of a healthy population, to frame disability and disease as still being compatible with a quality life and perceived as a perfectly legitimate way to be in the world.

The article goes on to look at the statistics generated from those Canadians who pursued MAiD in the first year after legalization.

A large portion of the applicants, she says, did not indicate "enduring and intolerable suffering" as their reason for requesting MAiD. Instead their reasons involved their loss of autonomy and independence, thus becoming a burden on loved ones.

"Codependence and not independence is what characterizes human life," Capurri says. "Suffering, caring for, and being cared for by others are vital parts of the human experience. Putting into place a program through which we rid the possibilities for these experiences

does us a collective disservice."

Capurri agrees with Rempel that society plays a role in establishing the value of a human life. In a poll taken in 2023, 27 percent of respondents did not oppose the idea of allowing a homeless person or those living in poverty to apply for MAiD.

Still another poll conducted by the Angus Reid Institute indicated that three out of five respondents worry that MAiD will be seen as a viable alternative to difficult-to-access healthcare supports.

This number was highest among those living with a severe disability, arguably the group that is most directly affected by Canada's healthcare system.

And it's no wonder, Capurri says, when Canada has among the lowest social spending of any industrialized country as well as abysmally long wait times in the public health sector.

"Little has been published on how helping people die might end up saving federal, provincial, and territorial governments monies by freeing them of the responsibility to financially support Canadians in need and to cover their healthcare expenses," Capurri asserts. "That is an aspect of the discussion that goes largely unexamined."

Even so, she cites a report from October 2020 by the Parliamentary Budget Office in response to a senator's request for an estimate on the cost of MAiD.

Based on those results, the cost to administer MAiD under Bill C-14 was in the range of \$22 million. At the same time, the gross estimate on the reduction in healthcare costs as a result of individuals' use of MAiD came to approximately \$109 million.

With the introduction of Bill C-7, which would extend to individuals with mental illness, it is estimated that the net healthcare cost reduction would be further increased by \$62 million.

"In conclusion... it remains to be seen whether, with the legalization of medical-assisted dying, our world will be perceived by future generations as enlightened or dystopian."

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Niverville Council Approves Rezoning and Three New Businesses

By Brenda Sawatzky

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

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Niverville's town council convened for a lively public meeting on July 15. Council approved two rezoning requests which have the potential to further residential growth and even make way for a new school if the province deems one necessary.

As well, three new businesses were approved to open.

REZONINGS

The first rezoning request came from developer Stefan Hodelmann of Avedo Inc., seeking to change 2465 Krahn Road from agricultural limited to residential high-density zoning.

The property is located in the southwest area of town. Hodelmann described the lot as a farmstead with some partially deconstructed buildings on it.

"We had a number of different plans, including some larger residential lots, but the feasibility of such a development was prohibitive," said Hodelmann.

At this stage, the goal is for a three-storey building which will include an underground parkade and cater to the senior citizen demographic.

"Overall, I think the location, being on a collector street, makes it quite interesting for higher-density," he says. "I think this proposal, just in development fees alone, would bring to the town around \$2 million, plus it would add contributions to some of the infrastructure improvements [in terms of] sewer, water, and potential paving of the area."

Infrastructure easements granted by council at this meeting would, in turn, benefit developers in nearby neighbourhoods.

Mayor Myron Dyck clarified, for those gathered, that this public hearing was strictly in regard to the zoning. The matter of subdivisions



Stefan Hodelmann of Avedo Inc. makes a presentation to council about a land rezoning request.

✉ BRENDA SAWATZKY

and site plans are future concerns.

CAO Eric King reaffirmed that early planning on this section of land will aid the town and other developers in their long-term planning goals.

A second rezoning request was reviewed for the Highlands West, which is owned by Len Peters of Sunset Estates. He requested that a portion of land in the same general area be rezoned from agricultural limited to education and institutional.

"Obviously there's something in play, but will it materialize?" Dyck remarked with a shrug of uncertainty.

Following the meeting, King responded to several questions, suggesting that many new developments will be required to allow space for a potential school down the road.

King says that new residential growth taking place on the west side of town will eventually warrant

a fourth school, at which time, if approved, this section would be available.

Mayor Dyck further pointed out that these decisions are always initiated by the province, not the town or developer.

Council voted unanimously in favour of both rezoning requests.

NEW BUSINESSES

The first request for a new business came from the owner of Diana's Gourmet Pizzeria. The request: to open a bakery and licensed eating and drinking establishment at 349 Bronstone Drive on the east side of town.

The applicant was not in attendance to answer questions, leaving council to wonder about certain aspects of the business plan, including the intent to introduce an outdoor

patio on what is currently an unpaved parking lot next to an unpaved service street.

According to the application, the owner currently operates a wood-fired pizza restaurant in Winnipeg and hopes to provide breakfast, lunch, and supper at their Niverville establishment.

The next applicant, Cazden Harder, was on hand to discuss his plans to develop a used vehicle dealership at 615 Wittick Street in the industrial park.

Harder's long-term plan is to add an automotive repair and maintenance shop at the same location.

"I previously worked in Steinbach with my own car dealership," Harder told council. "I'm just looking to move to Niverville because you are a growing community and closer to the city where most of my clients come from."

Harder assured council that his vehicle count would be limited to a maximum of 20 vehicles at any given time. Eventually, he said, he hopes to hire one or two Red Seal technicians to handle repairs.

Finally, the proprietor of MaxxPro Properties Inc received the green light from council to open a contractor's yard with office and warehouse space at 758 Schultz Avenue, which is also in the industrial park.

OTHER BUSINESS

Thanks in part to a \$75,000 grant from the province, the Station Lands Historical Well Park located just west of the tracks was ready to officially open.

On Friday, July 18, Mayor Dyck and other council members were scheduled to be on site to perform a ribbon-cutting ceremony beginning at 1:00 p.m.

Community representatives integral to the park's establishment would also be present. An invitation had been extended to the Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The following Tuesday, July 22, Dyck and council were to entertain invited guests from a particular hotel chain to tour the community in the hopes of encouraging commercial hotel business here.

"These people are flying in from out of province," Dyck said. "Council plans to spend a few hours with them and then, hopefully, they'll want to set up shop here."

He confirmed that these businesspeople are not affiliated with the Blue Crescent owners who currently own land along Drovers Run.

"They've done business in Manitoba before," said Dyck of the guests. "We've gone for two years now to the restaurant/hotel convention in Winnipeg and this is a direct contact from having been there. Will anything materialize out of it? I don't know. But that's the one thing we are actively pursuing as council."

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Niverville Welcomes Traditional Indian Cuisine

By Brenda Sawatzky

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On July 1, Niverville's Pizza Pizza restaurant changed hands. While the franchise continues to serve the community from the same location, pizza now only represents half of the restaurant's offers.

Flavors of India boasts a full menu of traditional Indian takeout options from the same kitchen. The new proprietor, Harshul Monga, is excited to introduce his family's favourite foods to the rural southeast.

For Monga, the Niverville eatery is his first foray into restaurant ownership, although he has years of experience managing a Pizza Pizza franchise while living in Toronto.

Monga lives with his wife in Winnipeg—but if the business goes well, they hope to eventually make Niverville home.

"I've been cooking Indian food for the last 11 years for myself and my family," Monga says.

His sister has joined him in the business on a full-time basis. His wife is a nurse but comes out in the evenings and on off-days to help out.

Monga's family hails from the Indian state of Haryana, bordering Punjab, thus Flavors of India has a



Harshul Monga, the new owner of the local Pizza Pizza franchise, has added a full menu of Indian takeout options.

✉ BRENDA SAWATZKY

distinctly Punjabi influence. The name was created by Monga and isn't a corporate brand or franchise.

The menu offers 11 traditional

appetizers and 10 main courses as well as a variety of sides, desserts, and combo meals.

He's even complemented the

pizza side of his business with four different Indian creations including butter chicken pizza and tandoori paneer pizza.

As a first-time restaurant owner, he says he's catching on quickly.

"We're still struggling," Monga says with a laugh. "We're figuring it out. Every day new challenges come, but my family is my support. Without them, I couldn't do it."

Niverville has a great small-town vibe, he says, so he jumped at the opportunity when the local Pizza Pizza franchise went up for sale.

"I've already had so much love from the community," Monga says. "I didn't advertise anywhere except the [Facebook] community group and people started ordering from there right away."

Just weeks into business, Monga's already considering an expansion to include sit-down dining. With his neighbour Negash Coffee soon moving to a new location, opportunity is already upon him. Still, he says, he'll need to be assured that the community is ready to support his endeavour.

"We'll give the takeout and delivery a shot first," Monga says. "If it goes good and people want me to open a dine in, I'll do that."

Monga and his team will be hosting their first customer appreciation day on July 31. Residents should stay tuned to the local Facebook pages for more information.

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During their exploration of central Manitoba, Dawna Anderson and her husband Kyle took their three children to Paint Lake Provincial Park.

DAWNA ANDERSON

Exploring the Hidden Gems of Central and Northern Manitoba

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Southern Manitoba is home to some of the world's most amazing forests, parks, lakes, and hiking trails, and it's where most outdoorsy Manitobans choose to vacation every summer.

But if you're a little adventurous, there are vast areas north of Lake Winnipeg that offer stunning vistas and one-of-a-kind sights just waiting to be explored.

Mostly, these hidden gems go underappreciated.

A pair of Niverville residents, though, have broadened their perspectives on Manitoba's natural wonders in recent years, setting their sights on non-traditional trips around the province they call home.

DISCOVERING CENTRAL MANITOBA

In July 2024, Dawna Anderson and her husband Kyle packed their five

children into the family van and headed north. Their goal? To take in as much of Manitoba's beauty as they could on a four-day road trip.

In hindsight, they admit that it wasn't enough time, but it gave them a taste of what central Manitoba has to offer—and they came home changed by the experience.

Anderson was inspired by an Instagram post from a Winnipeg couple who love to share about their extensive Canadian travels.

"One of their routes was out to Thompson," Anderson says. "They shared a lot about their journey and the stops they made, so I tweaked it to fit our family."

Anderson's kids ranged in age from three to nine years old at the time, requiring them to factor in frequent pitstops. Their itinerary included points of interest every two hours or so.

She and her husband had a few other prerequisites. Firstly, they had

a relatively tight budget, leading Anderson to pack four days' worth of food plus a portable barbecue.

Secondly, as much as possible, they wanted to avoid crowds.

"When you think of [places like] West Edmonton Mall, you're going into crowds and you're going to spend money," Anderson says.

"It was July, and we could do this road trip cheaper and see so much of our province that we typically wouldn't otherwise see. We didn't want this trip to be something that was rushed. If our kids were enjoying their time somewhere, we didn't want to cut it short, so we spent two or three hours at each place."

Stop one for the Andersons was Steep Rock, described as home to some of the world's best sunsets. Amazing cliff and rock formations jut over Lake Manitoba to create fantastic views.

The next stop was Little Limestone Lake.

"This place is known for its blue, blue water," Anderson says. "There were no people where we stopped and it was great. We had beautiful views. We cooked our meal right by the water while the kids played."

The final stop that day was Thompson, which Anderson says is about seven driving hours from Niverville.

All in all, it was a full day but well worth the investment in time. They spent the night in a hotel and continued their adventures outside the city the next day.

Day two included Pisew Falls, located on Mystery Lake. This is Manitoba's highest waterfall. Its name is derived from the Cree word for lynx, since the sound of the waterfall is said to bear a resemblance to the sound of the wild cat.

Next came Paint Lake Provincial Park, which Anderson says contains one of the prettiest campgrounds she's ever seen.

All in all, Paint Lake covers 55,950 acres of Precambrian boreal forest and provides some of Manitoba's best fishing opportunities.

"The lake has big rocks and huge evergreens everywhere you look."

The second night was once again spent in Thompson, although at this point she admittedly wished they'd come prepared to camp.

Day three began with a stop at Wekusko Falls.

"Here, my son and my husband fished while me and my girls cooked food on the grill right on the rocks at the waterfront."

Unfortunately, rain altered their plans for the rest of the day, so they headed to The Pas to stay at a hotel with a pool.

By day four, the family headed off to Clearwater Lake.

"The water is insanely clear here and there are tunnels through the rocks that you can go through. There are high-up views on cliffs

that you can look down and it was gorgeous.”

From there, they headed to their final destination in Duck Mountain Provincial Park.

“As soon as we got there, I texted my girlfriend and said, ‘We need to come back to Duck Mountain.’ It’s a park that you could spend many days in. It is huge and it is gorgeous.”

From Baldy Mountain, Manitoba’s highest point at 2,727 feet, visitors can take in the view from the top of an observation tower.

Of course, the Anderson road trip wasn’t without incident. There was car sickness, a washed-out road, and an unforeseen detour thanks to some poor GPS guidance.

All these things only added to the adventure, Anderson says.

A six-hour drive through the night brought the Andersons from Duck Mountain back to their home in Niverville.

“When we got back, I felt so refreshed,” she says. “My kids were not on screens for the whole trip. I just said, ‘Look out the window and see the [beauty].’ I find that, when we give our kids screens and then get out of the car, they just want to go back to the car to be on the screens. But I wanted them to take in all the moments we experienced.”

The road trip, she adds, inspired a deeper love of nature for the whole family and a realization of how easy it can be to completely unplug from devices and the everyday stressors of life.

Anderson is already thinking about making the trip again, this time including stops they missed the first time around, but repeating those experiences that proved especially memorable.

VISITING CHURCHILL

Last month, Shereen Rashwan of Niverville headed north to spend her summer vacation with a friend in Churchill. For Rashwan, this marks her

eighth or ninth visit to Churchill, a place she’s been frequenting since 2017.

Rashwan has family there. It’s where her mother grew up and her grandmother lives to this day. Her grandparents moved to Churchill from Montreal 63 years ago to take a temporary job—and they never left.

Her grandmother, now alone and in her eighties, can’t imagine living anywhere else.

It’s also where Rashwan became engaged to her husband, Curtis Sawatzky.

Even without family to visit, Rashwan says Churchill is a magnificent place to vacation any time of year.

Churchill is a subarctic port town on the Hudson Bay with a population of just under 1,000. It’s known worldwide as the polar bear capital of the world.

Polar bear season generally runs from October to November. Thanks to an inflow of tourists, the town is said to literally double in population during those weeks. Many of them visit for the opportunity to take tours into the wild courtesy of fortified tundra buggies.

Understandably, most people associate these tundra buggies with bear season. But according to Rashwan, tour operators run sightseeing excursions all summer long.

“You will see foxes and caribou and lots of pretty wildflowers and birds in the summer,” she says.

February and March in Churchill provide the perfect opportunity to view the aurora borealis. The night skies are dark and clear at that time of year, a fantastic backdrop for the dancing northern lights.

Rashwan will be visiting this year during whale season. During the months of July and August, whales arrive in the bay by the thousands.

“You can be standing on the shore and see humps of beluga whales,” Rashwan says. “People come from all

over to go boating, kayaking, or paddleboarding with them.”

Rashwan and her friend have booked a paddleboard excursion to get up close and personal with these creatures of the deep.

“The whales are very playful. They literally follow you like dolphins. When you’re kayaking, oftentimes they’ll come and nudge and play around with you. You have to be comfortable with that.”

According to Travel Manitoba, the western expanse of Hudson Bay is home to 57,000 beluga whales. Every summer, roughly 4,000 of them make their way to the Churchill River estuary to feed, mate, and give birth.

Remote as Churchill may be, there are a number of travel options to get there.

Taking a flight is one of them, of course, but Rashwan warns that it’s an expensive mode of travel. Flights to Churchill range in price from \$1,000 to \$2,000 per person.

A much more affordable option is to book a train. These trips leave from Union Station in Winnipeg and travel directly to Churchill.

Unfortunately, the journey can be prohibitively long, requiring 36 hours of travel time.

Rashwan’s preferred itinerary is to drive as far as Thompson, then take a train from there. This cuts the train trip down to 12 hours. The whole journey can be completed in less than 20 hours, saving both money and time.

If you’re travelling by train, Rashwan has tips to offer. First off, she says, expect to have no cell service or wifi.

“Book in advance and bring cozies like a pillow and a blanket. You’re going to be sleeping on the train, because typically it leaves around 5:00 p.m. Bring snacks and entertainment. They also have a part of the train that’s all glass so you can look up at the sky and, if you’re lucky, there could be northern lights.”

When you arrive in Churchill, visitors should be

prepared for many expenses. Groceries, restaurant dining, hotels, and car rentals will be costly since it takes a lot of effort to get goods and commodities to this port town.

The town itself, according to Rashwan, is quaint and modest. Churchillians are proud people, however, and incredibly friendly to visitors.

Virtually everything within town limits is accessible on foot. Taxis can be hired to travel further afield.

“If you want to drive around the outskirts of Churchill, which is a really pretty drive, you need a car. Sometimes people will call a taxi and just pay for a scenic ride.”

There’s also a rich history to explore, and this is best done at the two local museums, as well as the town’s community centre.

Tours can be taken to the Prince of Wales Fort, a massive star-shaped stone fort that was first constructed in the early 1700s. This historic structure is the oldest building in western Canada and the most northerly fort in North America. Located on the west bank of the Churchill River, it was erected to protect and control the Hudson Bay Company’s interests in the fur trade.

Another point of interest outside town is the wreckage of a twin-prop cargo plane that crashed in 1979. Locals have named it Miss Piggy. Today, the aircraft’s hull is adorned with local art.

Between excursions, many restaurants in Churchill are worth checking out in order to sample the local cuisine.

For the most part, Rashwan says that four or five days in Churchill is plenty of time, at least if one’s excursions have been booked well in advance.

“One thing to keep in mind, when you go up specifically for whale or bear season, is that you’re kind of at Mother Nature’s mercy,” she says. “If the waters are rough, sometimes things get cancelled. They do their best to rebook.”



Taking in the view at Pisew Falls.

DAWNA ANDERSON



Churchill is home to stunning natural beauty.

SHEREEN RASHWAN



Kayaking on Hudson Bay near Churchill.

SHEREEN RASHWAN



The wreckage of “Miss Piggy,” which crashed in 1979.

SHEREEN RASHWAN








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PRE SEASON	SEP. 7		SELKIRK STEELERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	SEP. 9		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		SELKIRK STEELERS
	SEP. 10		WINNIPEG BLUES	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	SEP. 12		STEINBACH PISTONS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	SEP. 13		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		STEINBACH PISTONS
	SEP. 19		WINNIPEG BLUES	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	SEP. 26		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		VIRIDEN OIL CAPITALS
	OCT. 1		PORTAGE TERRIERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	OCT. 3		WINKLER FLYERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	OCT. 5		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WINKLER FLYERS
	OCT. 10		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		NEEPAWA TITANS
	OCT. 12		DAUPHIN KINGS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	OCT. 15		WINNIPEG MONARCHS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	OCT. 18		SELKIRK STEELERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	OCT. 19		NEEPAWA TITANS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	OCT. 24		STEINBACH PISTONS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	OCT. 25		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		STEINBACH PISTONS
	OCT. 28		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		SELKIRK STEELERS
	NOV. 1		NORTHERN MANITOBA BLIZZARD	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	NOV. 2		DAUPHIN KINGS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	NOV. 7		WINKLER FLYERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	NOV. 9		WAYWAYSEECAPPO WOLVERINES	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	NOV. 11		STEINBACH PISTONS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	NOV. 15		NORTHERN MANITOBA BLIZZARD	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	NOV. 21		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		NORTHERN MANITOBA BLIZZARD
	NOV. 22		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDERS
	NOV. 27		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		VIRIDEN OIL CAPITALS
	DEC. 2		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WAYWAYSEECAPPO WOLVERINES
	DEC. 5		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		STEINBACH PISTONS
	DEC. 7		VIRIDEN OIL CAPITALS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	DEC. 9		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		SELKIRK STEELERS
	DEC. 10		PORTAGE TERRIERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	DEC. 13		WINKLER FLYERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	DEC. 14		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WINNIPEG BLUES
	DEC. 17		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		PORTAGE TERRIERS
	DEC. 19		SELKIRK STEELERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	DEC. 20		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WINNIPEG MONARCHS
	JAN. 3		STEINBACH PISTONS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	JAN. 4		WINNIPEG BLUES	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	JAN. 7		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		NEEPAWA TITANS
	JAN. 9		SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	JAN. 13		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WINNIPEG MONARCHS
	JAN. 15		SELKIRK STEELERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	JAN. 20		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WINNIPEG BLUES
	JAN. 24		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		DAUPHIN KINGS
	JAN. 30		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WINNIPEG BLUES
	FEB. 1		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		DAUPHIN KINGS
	FEB. 3		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WINNIPEG MONARCHS
	FEB. 6		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WINKLER FLYERS
	FEB. 7		VIRIDEN OIL CAPITALS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	FEB. 11		WINNIPEG BLUES	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	FEB. 13		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		STEINBACH PISTONS
	FEB. 14		NEEPAWA TITANS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	FEB. 20		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDERS
	FEB. 21		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		NORTHERN MANITOBA BLIZZARD
	FEB. 25		PORTAGE TERRIERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	FEB. 27		SWAN VALLEY STAMPEDERS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	FEB. 28		WAYWAYSEECAPPO WOLVERINES	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	MAR. 3		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WAYWAYSEECAPPO WOLVERINES
	MAR. 6		WINNIPEG MONARCHS	@		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS
	MAR. 7		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		WINKLER FLYERS
	MAR. 10		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		SELKIRK STEELERS
	MAR. 13		NIVERVILLE NIGHTHAWKS	@		PORTAGE TERRIERS

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Sports & Recreation

Nighthawks Introduce New Game Day Announcers

By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Fans of the notorious Kevin Pauls, flamboyant game day broadcaster for the Niverville Nighthawks, may be sorry to see him go. But the team's board members say that the two new hires set to replace him will bring their own high level of charisma.

When the season gets underway this September, Bill Burfoot and Tavyn Arnason will share the press box as duo announcers at home games.

Kevin Dunn, the team's sales and marketing manager, says the two will likely rotate between the roles of play-by-play commentator and colour person. Dunn describes the job of the colour person as one who adds pizzazz to the broadcast between plays.

"Both have experience in broadcasting and we're happy for the fact that there's two of them," says Dunn. "It's nice to have a female broadcaster, too."

It took only one month for the Nighthawks to find the duo. Pauls gave his notice earlier in the summer in order to return to his hometown team, the Winkler Flyers, in a marketing capacity.

Dunn says the ad for broadcasters was posted online and nine applications came in, including some from Ontario and Saskatchewan.

"It's people that want to get a career in broadcasting and this is a jumpstart for them," Dunn says. "Once we narrowed it down to five or six applicants, we watched their video and audio. It came down to, 'Who has the personality when you close your eyes and listen to them? Who's painting the best picture?'"

Arnason hails from Clandeboye,



Bill Burfoot and Tavyn Arnason are taking over as game day announcers for the Niverville Nighthawks.

✉ BRENDA SAWATZKY

Manitoba. She currently works as a digital media assistant for the Winnipeg Goldeyes.

In years past, she volunteered with the Selkirk Steelers, her first MJHL experience. She also dabbled in hockey broadcasting for the Interlake Lightning in the province's AAA league.

At first, she says, broadcasting was an experiment to push herself out of her comfort zone. She enjoyed it so much, though, that she followed it up with a college degree in Creative Communications at Red River

Polytechnic.

"It ended up having an impact on me by giving me a voice that I never thought I had," Arnason says. "Pushing myself forward and pushing my limits led me to where I am now."

Arnason saw the Nighthawks ad on LinkedIn.

"The ad definitely caught my eye," Arnason says. "I was trying to convince my co-worker at the Goldeyes to do it, because he was talking about doing hockey in the winter. And then the PA announcer [looked at me and said], 'You should do it.'"

For Arnason, the career move could be a stepping stone to greater things, including the NHL one day.

One of Arnason's great inspirations is Daniella Ponticelli, who has worked as a play-by-play broadcaster, journalist, and radio host for elite sports in recent years.

"I started following her on Instagram because everyone was mentioning her," Arnason says. "I listened to a couple of her broadcasts and I was like, 'If she can do it, I can do it.'"

Burfoot, too, comes with the right background. He was a play-by-play

announcer in the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League with the La Ronge Ice Wolves for one year and followed that with five years with the Winnipeg Blues.

Currently, he works as league coordinator with the Winnipeg Youth Soccer Association.

"I just love being involved in sports and competition," Burfoot says. "Anything that gets you fired up."

Burfoot heard about the Nighthawks opportunity by word of mouth.

"I was hesitant because my son is a draft pick for [the Nighthawks] and he's trying out for the team," says Burfoot. "But after talking to [some board members], they assured me [that it's okay]. Just be professional."

Burfoot's son was 15 when the Nighthawks first got off the ground and he's been attending their camps ever since. He's since been drafted by the team and was called in as backup goalie during last year's playoffs.

"[Niverville's] game day experience is one of the best," says Burfoot. "It's so loud in there when it's packed. I don't know if there's any better place to be. It's fun to be in a small town that supports their team."

It's a thrill and honour for Burfoot to follow in the heels of a guy like Kevin Pauls, who he says has set the broadcasting bar very high.

"If we can keep that legacy going and add our own twist to it, I'm looking forward to that."

As for working together with Arnason, Burfoot says he can't wait for the season to begin.

"I remember starting out, just how hard it was to get an opportunity," Burfoot says. "I'm also a dad of three girls and knowing that there's someone [like Tavyn] trying to get in, I'm more than honoured to help with that."



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Nighthawks Announce Ace Winner, New Hire, and Fresh Brew

By Brenda Sawatzky

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After more than 40 weeks of anticipation, the winning ace of spades was finally pulled at the Nighthawks' weekly Chase the Ace fundraiser in the Smitty's lounge. On Monday, July 28, Joe Strebly of Winnipeg walked away with the final jackpot of \$46,483.

He also took home the weekly win of \$3,330.

Strebly is a Winnipeg resident with Niverville connections, and that's how he came to learn about the local MJHL team's fundraising initiative.

His good friend, Gord Buczko, took one of the weekly draw prizes early in the contest. From that time forward, Strebly was investing on a weekly basis, too.

Strebly says he's won some nominal prizes in various contests prior, but never anything this big.

"I'm probably going to invest most of it and then vacation a little," says the retired Strebly.

He hopes to enjoy a couple of weeks in Aruba alongside his wife.

Speaking on behalf of the team, announcer Kevin Dunn says that he's been buoyed by the full house of fans every Monday evening, showing up week after week in their Nighthawks gear to participate.

Chase the Ace, he says, has played an integral part of the organization's fundraising efforts in the past year.

"Not only is it building the brand of the Nighthawks, but when you get to these kinds of jackpots, [the news] starts reaching out beyond Niverville," Dunn says.

At the end of the day, Nighthawks board vice president Ray Dowse says the team will benefit to the tune of around \$50,000 from the fundraising initiative. Final accounting, once the various costs and fees associated with the contest have been calculated, will determine the exact revenue.

NEW SALES AND MARKETING HIRE

As the Nighthawks gear up for the 2025-26 hockey season, the team is



Joe Strebly, winner of the Niverville Nighthawks Chase the Ace fundraiser, picks up his winnings.

✉ BRENDA SAWATZKY

excited to announce some changes behind the scenes. Board vice president Ray Dowse says they're ready to reveal the hiring of a dedicated sales and marketing director.

That new hire is none other than Kevin Dunn.

According to Dowse, 25 to 30 applicants vied for the advertised position. After the board conducted interviews, it was agreed that Dunn had everything they were looking for.

"He knows the direction that the team is going and he's just a great person," Dowse says. "We're really excited to have him in this role."

Dunn, who has sat on the team's board of directors, will step down from that position as he takes on the new paid role.

"I'll be taking over the duties of marketing, sponsorship sales, and basically all the same duties that I have now," Dunn says. "It's just

a great fit. I love sports, I love the team, and I love Niverville. To be able to give back to the town that I've been associated with for over 15 years, it's been great to be a part of."

A big part of his new focus will be to build deeper connections with both new and existing sponsors. As well, he hopes to broaden the scope of sponsors by soliciting businesses and individuals across the province.

The opportunity arose at a good time in Dunn's life, as he recently retired from his full-time career. With an education and years of experience in sales and marketing, he has much to bring to the table.

He's also very familiar with sports and sporting organizations. Dunn was himself a junior hockey player as a young man. Later, his focus turned to baseball. He coached at the university level.

"I understand this age group and the pressures they go through,"

says Dunn. "You need to treat them differently than just a community team. This is almost a professional organization when you consider the operating costs that we put into making this thing work."

These costs are what drive the need for commercial and individual sponsorships.

"You look at the growth that's happening in Niverville right now," Dunn says. "We're definitely putting ourselves on the map and that makes it easier to attract [sponsors] that have an interest in hockey. It's amazing right now, when you go out in the broader public and wear a Nighthawks hat, how many people recognize the team. That makes you feel proud."

Currently, sponsorships comprise about 40 percent of operational funding, with ticket sales making up the other 60 percent. Eventually, Dunn hopes to flip that

ratio, which will open the door to capital improvements such as dressing rooms, a scoreboard, and digital replay technology.

It also means improving the game day experience for fans by offering theme nights and prize giveaways on a regular basis. This, in turn, helps sell more season tickets.

Dunn has already set a goal of reaching 400 season ticket sales for the upcoming season.

"That's going to fill probably about 40 percent of the arena," says Dunn. "And if we can then take walk-up sales, which are generally pretty good for us, we'll have good attendance."

NEW BEER LINE

Also new this season will be the introduction of a second Torque Brewing beer. Alongside the Nighthawks lager, available on tap in The Kettle, fans will now have a light beer alternative.

"It's something that's a little easier drinking," Dowse says. "I got to taste the beer on the weekend and it was great. For people who like something like a Bud Light with just a touch more flavour, that's kind of what you'll be getting."

For the second term, Torque Brewing was awarded the Nighthawks contract when tenders were opened up. Thanks to the collaboration, 33 cents from every can sold will go to the Nighthawks.

Like sponsorships, Dowse hopes to sell the Nighthawks beer label beyond the CRRC. In the coming months, the organization will promote the brand to other facilities across the province.

As far as Dowse is aware, the Nighthawks is the only MJHL team with its own beer brand.

"Usually that's reserved for larger organizations like the Jets or the Bombers," says Dowse. "This is some of the value that Torque brings. It's been a great partnership and we're looking forward to what it can become over the years to come."



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Junior Ice Capture Historic Win at Elite Girls Hockey Tournament

By Evan Waldner

Earlier this summer, Niverville's own Bryelle Muntain and her teammates did more than just win a hockey tournament—they made history for Manitoba.

Competing at the prestigious War for the Roses tournament at the West Edmonton Mall, the Manitoba Junior Ice became the first team from this province to ever win the event.

It's a groundbreaking achievement that should turn heads across Manitoba and inspire the next generation of young female athletes.

Often compared to the legendary BRICK Invitational for boys, War for the Roses showcases top-tier U13 girls talent from across North America. Many players who compete here are expected to go on to play at the NCAA or USports level, with some even reaching the PWHL or representing their countries at the Olympics.

"I was so lucky to be able to play in such a cool tournament," Muntain says. "We played against the best teams and players in North America."

The tournament was unlike any other. Played in the heart of Canada's largest shopping centre, the setting itself brought some unique challenges—and some unforgettable moments.

"The sun shines through the glass roof and can get pretty warm sometimes, so that brought an added challenge to the game," says Muntain.



The Manitoba Junior Ice captured the prestigious War of the Roses tournament for the first time this year.

© C/O BRYELLE MUNTAIN

"We kind of prayed for clouds while we were playing so it wasn't too, too warm."

Despite the heat, the open atmosphere added to the magic.

"Our families and friends got to

stand right next to the ice surface," she adds. "When we would score, they would reach over the glass to high-five us... that was super cool."

The team didn't just rely on talent. They came prepared, both mentally

and physically.

From practices to pre-game routines, the Junior Ice were locked in from the start.

"We had a lot of practices before the tournament, so we knew each

other well. Many of us have played together in previous years, and our coaches knew how to get us ready. They were awesome."

Off the ice, team bonding played a major role. They ate meals together, did team activities, and even brought small gifts—like sunglasses, bracelets, and keychains—to exchange with each other.

And when it was time to hit the ice, all that chemistry translated into meaningful results.

"We all had the same goal: to win War for the Roses," she says. "We wanted to win for each other, not just for ourselves."

From the first puck drop to the final buzzer, the Junior Ice played with discipline, unity, and heart.

They defeated the Western Selects Girls 1-0 in a tightly contested final. Olivia Roberts stopped all 23 shots in net while Lilian Wang scored the game's only goal in the second period.

The tournament ended with a special tradition: a jersey swap between all the teams, where players traded jerseys with girls from opposing teams as a keepsake and sign of mutual respect.

With gold medals around their necks and their names now part of the tournament's history, Muntain and her teammates are proud of what they've accomplished.

"Making Manitoba history is pretty cool," she says. "It's something we'll remember."

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The Niverville Force are in their fourth season.

SUE THOMPSON

In Fourth Year, the Niverville Force Provides Reliable Entertainment

By Brenda Sawatzky

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If you're taking a stroll through Hespeler Park and you hear the shouts and cheers of excited locals, there's a good chance you're hearing the fan club of the local men's soccer team, the Niverville Force.

And if that happens, consider stopping to take in the spectacle. Chances are, you're in for a treat.

Now in its fourth year, the Force have built a reputation for themselves in the Manitoba Major Soccer League (MMSL).

The team's 18 players are almost exclusively from Niverville, with a couple coming from Steinbach and Winnipeg.

Their division's only other rural team comes from Winkler, with the

balance based out of Winnipeg.

The MMSL is the province's premier league for adult male soccer. The season runs from May through September and half of the Force's 18 guaranteed games are hosted in Hespeler Park.

Niverville's Sue Thompson is both the owner and manager of the Force.

She's thrilled by the community's support and hopes the fanbase will continue to build as the season continues.

"We get 100 to sometimes 150 people coming [to watch]," Thompson says.

As an appreciation to the fans, Thompson handed out complimentary ice cream sandwiches to the first 100 people who showed up for the home game on Sunday, July 20.

At this point, there are only a few

home games left in the season.

Thompson organized the first Niverville Force team alongside Andry Giesbrecht in 2021. Her son Brendan played with the team that year.

"In this league, when you start a team from the ground up, they'll start you at the lowest level," Thompson says. "That's your entry point. But we were too good for that level, so we actually had to pay for a spot [in the division]. As you get up the ladder, as we have, if the team folds, we can sell the spot."

In their fourth year, the Force has placed in division one.

And Giesbrecht has since moved away, leaving Thompson to manage the team on her own.

It's Thompson's job to find annual sponsorships to pay for team jerseys, field rental costs, and league fees.

She also sets up the field for each home game, and for the rest of the week she manages the team's social media presence. The Force's Instagram account has more than 800 followers.

It's also Thompson's job to recruit new players.

"Every spring we have a sort of training session and we rent the CRRC," Thompson says. "Typically, what we've done is keep our [existing] guys. We don't make them try out again. If some guys leave, we have spots open, but these guys are like family."

Thompson also sits on the board of the MMSL. She's one of the only female members.

For the last decade and a half, the local soccer scene has been a significant part of Thompson's life. She

moved to Niverville with her family in 2009, and by 2010 she was an active volunteer with the local youth soccer program.

Her kids have since grown up and moved on, but Thompson's dedication to local soccer at both the youth and adult levels continues.

She says 2025 hasn't been their strongest year thanks so far, thanks in large part to player injuries and other hurdles. Still, she says there's still time to turn it around.

In the meantime, she encourages locals to check out their Instagram (@nivervilleforcesc) to get the details of every game.

The Force also hosted their annual golf tournament, held this year on July 26 at Old Drovers Run. The funds raised went towards the purchase of team equipment.



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Arts & Culture



Trevor Lux performs in his latest music video, "Ghosts of Everything in You."

C/O TREVOR LUX

Local Artist and Dancers Collaborate in New Music Video

By Brenda Sawatzky

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These days, there's plenty of excitement going on in Niverville. And thanks to Trevor Lux of The World on Loan, the town again serves as the backdrop for a slick new music video.

Lux will be releasing his second original single, "Ghosts of Everything in You."

"I just wanted to phrase it in a way that was sort of quirky," Lux says of the song title. "For me, the song is inspired by my kids, the things that they do that would have created a spark in me when I was younger."

Lux had some fun planning and performing the accompanying video, executed in collaboration with the Prairie Soul Dance Company.

Filmed at the dance studio, it

features a variety of dancers, Lux's wife and kids as judges, and Lux himself playing the role of a referee.

The video stages a dance competition between adults and kids where the kids rank each other higher than the adults, and vice versa.

Lux says his role as referee provides a bit of a metaphor for the responsibility of adulthood versus the carefree life of a child.

Lux's pitch for the new song reflects that idea, too.

"Do you remember when we were kids and we looked at the world with wide-eyed wonder? What if we could feel that again?"

The fun vibe of "Ghosts of Everything in You" is an attempt to help listeners rediscover their inner youthfulness.

As is the case with any such

creative project, some creative muscle has helped pull it all together. Local musician Evan St. Cyr handled the musical production and most of the mixing and mastering. Adam Hallstrom is responsible for the artwork and graphics.

Holly Dunphy of Hold Light Photography took charge of the photos while Travis Anema and Kris Pollard were masters of the filming and production.

Anema and Pollard are behind all three of the music videos produced by The World on Loan.

The only other original song Lux has produced so far is titled "3AM Soul," which was released on YouTube in December of last year.

It's a song, he says, about capturing people in their rawest form, which is most likely to happen around 3:00

a.m. in the morning

After the release of this song, Lux says he received his first negative online feedback.

"A lot of the people on the thread basically said, 'You're too old. You should give up music,'" Lux muses.

Lux is 43. He's been performing music for the better part of 25 years. He admits to being shocked to realize there's a segment of the population that believes any musical artist could have a best-before date.

The World on Loan has also recorded cover songs, most recently "Joey" by Concrete Blond. For this song, Lux also created the cover artwork.

"The song 'Joey' kind of speaks to loving someone that's been struggling," Lux says. "Anyone that knows me knows that I've dealt with that as

well. It's something that spoke to me growing up."

Lux's goal in the coming months is to complete around 12 songs, which will eventually come out together in an album.

"To my detriment, I'm a person that loves albums," Lux says. "I like the flow and the feel of that. But with streaming services, albums are not the same experience anymore. Producing singles allows an artist to stretch their reach, so I have to embrace that for now."

The World on Loan, as described by Lux, is introspective alternative rock with a drop of tie-dyed rebellious free spirit.

"Ghosts of Everything in You" premiered on YouTube on Friday, July 11. Fans can also find it on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

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