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VOLUME 6 - ISSUE 1

JANUARY 2020

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LOCAL NEWS

Anytime Fitness to Open Soon

■ A new Anytime Fitness location is poised to open in Niverville, in the retail strip along Drovers Run. Construction on the 5,000-square-foot facility is expected to begin in February and be complete by mid to late summer.

Details on Pages 3-4

COMMENTARY

Free Market Anxiety

■ A pair of editorials this month explore the question of who decides which businesses should be able to operate in our towns, and the effects of competition.

Details on Page 13

SPORTS & REC

Victory on the Volleyball Court

■ Schools in Ste. Agathe and Île-des-Chênes had especially strong volleyball seasons, with teams headed to provincials.

Details on Pages 14-15

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Appreciating Art through a New Lens

■ Students at the Niverville Middle School were offered a new, very popular program this year: photography.

Details on Page 18



Intermunicipal Wastewater Initiative Proposed

» DETAILS ON PAGE 8

Ritchot mayor Chris Ewen, Tache mayor Justin Bohemier, Hanover reeve Stan Toews, and Niverville mayor Myron Dyck.

EVAN BRAUN

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HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION

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Kindergarten registration follows a two-step process:

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2. Bring supporting documentation to the designated school

Online Registration

Register your child for Kindergarten at www.HSD.ca. If you do not have access to the Internet, please visit the school nearest your place of residence for assistance. Our staff will assist you in completing the registration on a school computer. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to register their children as soon as possible. Early registration will assist schools in planning for September 2020, and provide parents/guardians with the opportunity to attend upcoming Kindergarten orientation events.

Eligibility

To be eligible for registration, children must be five years of age on or before December 31, 2020. To ensure balanced enrollment across the division, students are required to attend the school within the catchment area in which they reside. To confirm your child's designated school, please view catchment maps at www.HSD.ca.

Questions? Please email info@hsd.ca or call 204-326-6471.

Online Anmeldung

Um Ihr Kind für den Kindergarten anzumelden, gehen sie bitte auf die www.HSD.ca Webseite. Falls Sie keinen Zugang zum Internet haben, möchten wir Sie bitten die nächstgelegene Schule aufzusuchen, um diesbezüglich Hilfe zu bekommen. Das Schulpersonal wird Ihnen bei der Anmeldung zur Verfügung stehen. Die Eltern bzw Erziehungsberechtigte sind aufgefordert Ihre Kinder so bald wie möglich anzumelden. Ihre frühe Anmeldung hilft den Schulen in der Vorbereitung für den Herbst und bietet Eltern bzw Erziehungsberechtigten die Möglichkeit an den bevorstehenden Kindergarten-Orientierungs-Veranstaltungen teilzunehmen.

Qualifikationen

Für die Anmeldung des Schuljahres 2020-21 muss Ihr Kind bis zum 31. Dezember 2020 fünf Jahre alt sein. Um die ausgeglichene Anmeldung der Schulen im ganzen Schulbezirk sicherstellen zu können, sind die Schüler aufgefordert an der Schule Ihres Wohnbezirks angemeldet zu werden. Um die Schule Ihres Wohnbezirks ausfindig zu machen, wenden Sie sich bitte and die "HSD catchment maps" (HSD Schulbezirkkarte) auf der HSD Webseite.

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2019 Financial Plan OPEN HOUSE

LOCATION:

Niverville Heritage Centre - West Ballroom
100B Heritage Trail, Niverville, MB.

DATE & TIME:

January 21, 2020 | 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

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HANOVER SCHOOL DIVISION

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

The advertising deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the 15th of each month. The paper will be distributed the last week of every month.

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Anytime Fitness Coming to Niverville

By Evan Braun & Brenda Sawatzky
editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The town of Niverville will soon welcome the global fitness franchise Anytime Fitness to its business community.

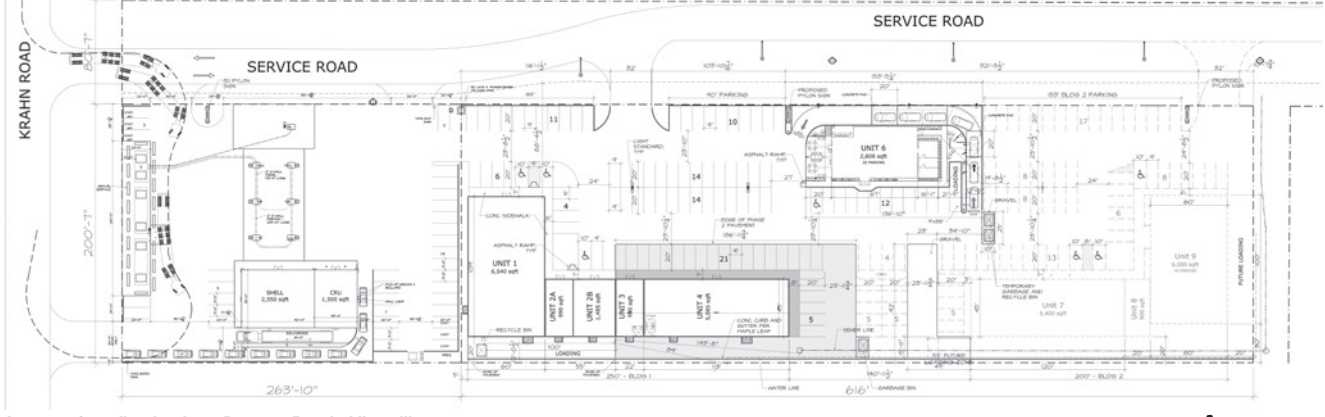
The owners of the new facility plan to locate along Drovers Run, next to Negash Coffee and Niverville's Pizzeria, in an area that's quickly becoming a retail hub.

"Niverville has been on our radar for about five years," says Nathen Dyck, a member of the ownership team. "It is a progressive community that has proven its ability to sustain massive, predictable growth stemming from spectacular leadership. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that?"

The facility will boast more than 5,000 square feet of exercise space plus private restrooms and showers. Members can expect a large variety of state-of-the-art exercise equipment and free weights, so there won't be any waiting around during your limited workout time.

A turf floor will provide comfort underfoot and all equipment will be commercial grade. Members can access free Wi-Fi and personal TVs on the cardio equipment allow users to watch either Netflix series or the interactive workout courses of their choice. Treadmills will be equipped with both incline and decline options.

Qualified trainers will also be onsite to provide personalized and group-training



Layout of retail strip along Drovers Run in Niverville.

RAY DOWSE

options.

"We offer free accountability to help keep our members coming back and reaching their goals," Dyck says. "Free workout programs are also available to every member. [What sets us apart is that] we offer high levels of customer service and support in a clean, well-lit environment."

A variety of memberships will be available, including three-, six- and 12-month options. Members will have 24/7 access to the facility, and the memberships will be recognized at all of the franchise's 4,800 locations around the world.

APPLICATION TO TOWN COUNCIL

On December 17, Niverville's council held a public hearing to decide whether to allow Anytime Fitness to set up shop. Representing the owners were Nathen Dyck and Kelly Barkman. A third member of their group, Jayson Barkman, was not present.

"We've wanted to bring

something very different to Niverville, something that has not been here before," said Dyck, who explained that they already own Anytime Fitness locations in Lorette and Steinbach.

The Niverville gym, Dyck said, would include the hiring of three to six new employees from the local area. In the coming months, the team will look to hire a local facility manager as well as part-time staff and trainers.

"All three of us [Anytime Fitness franchisees] are born and raised in southeastern Manitoba," said Barkman of their local roots. "My brother [Jayson] and I grew up on a farm in southeastern Manitoba. He's a physician in Steinbach and Nathen is a firefighter in Winnipeg. I reside in Lorette... This is a very progressive company that we are running, and we're very interested in health and wellness of the people and towns around us."

One question came from Councillor John Funk, who

wanted to know if they intend to install security cameras around the property. Dyck and Barkman confirmed there will be cameras to offer a comprehensive monitoring system, which they note is mandatory.

Dyck then addressed some lingering anxiety about the introduction of a chain like Anytime Fitness to a community that already has a couple of gyms.

"We understand there's some uneasiness about us applying for and wanting to be part of this community," Dyck said. "Our market studies show that because we're bringing so many people in, we're actually having a trickle-down effect... We think we can work in this community."

Dyck noted that not one other gym has closed down in either Lorette or Steinbach since those locations opened. He said they do not foresee damaging effects to the other gyms in Niverville, like Average Joe's or ShopGym.

LOCAL BUSINESS CONCERN

After the presentation, Chris Friesen, owner of Average Joe's, came forward to express his concerns.

"When our family took over Elite Fitness five years ago and began to transform it into what it is today, it was in a very dire state," Friesen said. "We have invested tens of thousands of dollars to fix all these issues, add more equipment, remodel, and do renovations in order to save and improve this business... The fact of the matter remains that another 24-hour gym opening in a town the size of Niverville is a very real threat to our livelihood."

Friesen indicated that he believed only 10 percent of the local population would hold an active gym membership at any one time, and that Niverville, with a population of 5,000, won't be large enough to sustain multiple gyms.

(continued on page 4)

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Anytime Fitness boasts a large selection of exercise equipment.

 NATHEN DYCK

(continued from page 3)

He also raised concerns that Anytime Fitness will duplicate some of the services his business already provides.

"I would like to end with the following question for the town council: do you want to allow a big brand fitness franchise to set up shop in Niverville and take money out of the local economy, a franchise with deep pockets that is not a part of the community and at the same time potentially start two local family businesses down the road to bankruptcy?" Friesen asked. "Average Joe's Fitness sincerely hopes the answer to that question is a resounding no."

Two emails were read into the record, both expressing concern about allowing Anytime Fitness to set up shop in Niverville. One of those emails came from Crystal Stott, owner of ShopGym.

"I understand that it's council's mandate to grow business in our town and that we are a capitalistic society, survival and the fittest and all that," wrote Stott. "But I also believe that in our zeal to encourage more mainstream chain retailers, recognizable names, we need to be mindful of the small, locally owned businesses that continue to add value to the fabric of our community and spend those dollars in our community. While there are numerous businesses that can successfully compete in a small town, restaurants coming to mind first, fitness facilities are not one of them... We may weather the storm, or we may not. So our town could

lose two or three businesses to gain one."

Nathen Dyck and Kelly Barkman were then given an opportunity to respond to these concerns. Barkman refuted the notion that only 10 percent of residents would hold gym memberships, citing market research showing that the national average is 15.7 percent—and that in Steinbach the number is actually higher, at 18 percent.

The pair also pointed out that the local market is bigger than Niverville alone, and that there are potentially about 20,000 people in Niverville and the surrounding area. Barkman noted that their facility will attract a large number of new gym members, and many commuters who currently work out in Winnipeg will be attracted to the new Anytime Fitness location.

Finally, they made it clear that although Anytime Fitness is a global brand with thousands of stores around the world, the money invested in the Niverville location is local—and they expect the revenue generated will come back to the community in many ways.

ROLE OF COUNCIL

Before the vote, Councillor Nathan Dueck addressed his fellow members of council.

"I think our population currently is about 5,000 people, possibly just over at this point, but we have expanded growth models that we've been looking at with the province of pushing upwards of 10,000 people in the next 15 to 20 years," said Dueck. "When we're dealing

with businesses, although we really appreciate every single business that's in Niverville that's invested their time and effort, one thing just to note at the end of the day is that as Niverville grows, we have to expect a lot of change."

Dueck then reminded everyone present of the role of council. He quoted from The Planning Act, which lays out the conditions that can be considered when council hears a proposal of this type.

The Planning Act states that a proposal must be "compatible with the general nature of the surrounding area, will not be detrimental to the health or general welfare of people living or working in the surrounding area, or negatively affect other properties or potential development in the surrounding area, [and]... is generally consistent with the applicable provisions of the development plan by-law, the zoning by-law and any secondary plan by-law."

The role of council, Dueck pointed out, is to make sure that growth is safe, controlled, and made with the safety of the public in mind.

"But it's not for us to determine what should or shouldn't come to town," he concluded. "That's just the point I'm going to be making. But I do appreciate every single business and everybody that's ever put anything into Niverville."

Council then voted unanimously in favour of Anytime Fitness's application.

Nathen Dyck says construction should begin sometime in February 2020 with a planned completion date by mid to late summer.

Programs Help Special Needs Kids, and Their Parents, Get Active and Stay Social

By Brenda Sawatzky

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Organized by a group of Niverville parents, MoveNGroove is a unique program designed with special needs kids and their caregivers in mind. The program is designed for children from four to 14 and hosts events geared around having fun, getting active, grooving to music, and sharing a snack with friends.

Kids and their caregivers can drop in for a night of moving and grooving on the first Thursday of every month from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Fourth Avenue Bible Church in Niverville.

Regardless of a child's physical capabilities or social proclivities, everyone is welcome. Kids can choose to participate in activities or just hang out and do their own thing. There is no pressure to interact.

Leah Dyck organizes the program along with Lisa Sakwi, Laurie Loeppky, Lyndsay Eidse, and Chantal Todd, the recreation director for the Town of Niverville.

"Typically, we don't have siblings or other kids come because we want it to be a night where our kids don't have to compete," Dyck says. "Most of our other kids are involved in sports."

Todd has a passion for kids with special needs and has helped the group access grants over the four years that the program has been running. The initial grant provided for the purchase of \$2,700 worth of play equipment such as balls, hoops, pylons, scooter boards, parachutes, and safe indoor hockey equipment.

"We'll have Hockey Night in Canada where we play the hockey theme, and some of our kids are super into hockey so they have their fantasy 'skate' around the perimeter [of the room]... and then we just play floor hockey together," Dyck says.

The second grant, received this past year, allows the group to enjoy outings such as bowling, swimming, and trips to Niverville's ShopGym to get active on the fitness equipment.

The organizers also make a point of inviting special guests for children's book readings or leading in arts and



MoveNGroove participants at their annual birthday party, with organizers Laurie Loeppky, Lisa Sakwi, and Leah Dyck.

BRENDA SAWATZKY

crafts, like shaving cream painting. One night per year, they throw a collective birthday party, complete with a clown and cake.

"Birthday party invites are not very common for our kids," Dyck says. "That's life. It's not a self-pity thing, it's just a reality. So we created a birthday party where kids can come [and celebrate together]."

This spring, the group will take a trip to the Lil' Steps Wellness Farm in St. Malo. Lil' Steps is a hobby farm run by child therapist Lucy Sloan.

Dyck says there is a core group of five to nine kids who attend every month. Others come on a more casual basis throughout the year from as far away as Steinbach, Blumenort, and Ste. Anne.

This fall, Dyck also began a second group for special needs kids ages 12 and up. She calls it Hang Ten and they meet one Saturday per month at the Youth for Christ drop-in centre.

"It's not a drop-in sponsored event, but we meet there because that might be a branch for our kids into the community," Dyck says.

Average attendance so far of Hang Ten, she says, is around five to six kids. This age group is encouraged to bring a friend or sibling along. Hang Ten kids can expect an afternoon of table games, puzzles, indoor hockey or soccer, and high-spirited rounds of Guitar Hero.

"Some of our kids can drum like you would not believe and so they have a blast with that," Dyck says. "[Our daughter] gets on the guitar and one boy likes to sing so they are their own rock band."

Every activity they do can be modified to the abilities of the kids

who attend. Kids in wheelchairs can get involved in hockey or soccer right alongside the others. The rules are lax in order to make room for anyone at any level of ability.

Organizers for these two programs chose the locations based on their mobility-friendly access and washroom facilities.

Sometimes, though, it's the parents of special needs kids who have a need for support and socializing. Dyck is also responsible for organizing a caregiver support group called Common Ground. This group meets every second Thursday of the month in the youth room at Fourth Avenue Bible Church.

At Common Ground, organizers invite special speakers from a variety of advocacy groups to cover topics such as safe housing and standardized care, things each parent needs to consider before their child enters adulthood.

As well, they focus on self-care for the caregiver, and the activities planned around mutual interests. Dyck says that about eight to 12 parents show up each month for these gatherings but, like MoveNGroove and Hang Ten, there's always room for more.

"We always say, 'You establish your core and you invite one more,'" says Dyck. "There's always room for one more [in our groups]."

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- www.facebook.com/groups/HangTenGroup
- www.facebook.com/groups/MoveNGroove

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IN BRIEF



Students Aubrey Kyle, Brianna Johnston, Keira Penner, and Griffen Poettcker with teacher Laurie Loeppky.

Middle School Captures Scholarship

By Sydney Hildebrandt

Niverville Middle School recently won a scholarship which could help pay for a new learning tool. Students and staff applied to the All About Me School Scholarship, a product of myBlueprint, a Canadian website that provides learning programs to secondary students.

"It was exciting to find out we won," says Aubrey Kyle, one of the Grade Five students involved.

Scholarship entrants were required to submit a video of students explaining why they enjoy using All About Me, myBlueprint's digital portfolio program which allows students to showcase their work and enables them to explore different career paths.

Fellow students Brianna Johnston, Keira Penner, and Griffen Poettcker, along with Kyle, assisted in writing the script and creating the video under the guidance of teacher Laurie Loeppky.

"I was so proud of these four," Loeppky says.

With the money, Loeppky says the school is considering purchasing Osmo, an interactive tool used for education and recreation. The user connects their device, such as an iPad, to the Osmo technology, which can then

scan real-life game pieces in front of the individual. Osmo offers specialized programs for math, puzzling, coding, business, spelling, and drawing.

Without the scholarship, the school wouldn't be able to find room in its budget to purchase Osmo, Loeppky points out, estimating that each unit ranges between \$200 and \$400. If purchased, she says, the school will keep the technology in the Learning Commons.

In addition to the scholarship, Niverville Middle School will also receive an All About Me banner, student and teacher certificates, as well as be featured on the myBlueprint blog.

All 400 students at Niverville Middle School use myBlueprint.

"I like the job choices and I like how you can explore different career options," Kyle says about the program.

Johnston, meanwhile, explained in the video submission why she enjoys using the program: "I like myBlueprint because it's very fun and easy and it's like a video game for your work and you can collect badges."

Niverville was one of three Canadian schools selected to receive the \$1,000 award, and the only one in Manitoba.

Niverville School Awarded Unique Gift

By Brenda Sawatzky

bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Niverville Middle School (NMS) was a beneficiary this year of a unique gift—a bench made almost entirely of recycled single-use plastics. Students participated this year in a program called Bag Up Manitoba, an initiative promoting the collection of plastic bags to be repurposed into something altogether different.

Bag Up Manitoba is a product of Take Pride Winnipeg!, a charitable organization dedicated to keeping Manitoba's capital city clean and beautiful. Opportunities to participate in the plastic bag recycling program are extended to rural schools as well, giving students from around the province the chance to do something important for the environment.

As well, the initiative is intended as a learning tool regarding mankind's plastic bag overuse and waste.

Since the program's inception in 2008, more than 10 million plastic bags have been taken out of circulation and repurposed into Frisbees, birdhouses, planter boxes, birdfeeders, and benches.

This fall, 168 elementary schools participated.

"This year we made it a competition," says middle school teacher Laura van den Brul. "We have 16 home rooms and the class that collected the most bags would get a treat... and a certificate that we made for them."

Rising to the challenge, every classroom participated, and together they collected more than 11,000 plastic bags in 30 days. In the end, Ms. Heinz's Grade Six class got top marks for collecting almost 3,000 of those bags.

ReGen Composites is the final destination for all the collected bags. This Winnipeg manufacturing company uses plastic and wood waste as their base materials,



Members of SWAG, alongside teacher Laura van den Brul, on the school's new bench.

ROBIN MARCHADOUR

creating strong, durable, and eco-friendly products while diverting all of this waste from the landfill.

This year, ReGen awarded composite benches to six schools in a random draw. Niverville Middle School was among the lucky recipients and the bench now provides a resting spot in the school's foyer. It's also a regular reminder of the positive things that can happen when you work together toward a common goal.

The bag collection initiative in the school was headed up by a young team of activists known as SWAG: Students Working Around the Globe. Van den Brul oversees this extracurricular social justice group comprised of students from Grades Five through Eight. Twice a month, they meet during their lunch hour to discuss ways they might affect climate justice, social justice, and human rights.

Early each school year, a variety of global and local initiatives are chosen. Throughout the balance of the year, SWAG organizes school-wide fundraising efforts, such as monthly bake sales and annual pop-up shops, to raise awareness and money

for their chosen causes.

This year's global initiative includes the support of the Osu Children's Library Fund in Ghana, West Africa. The fund was created by Canadian Kathy Knowles to provide fully stocked libraries in the hopes of promoting reading among children and literacy for adults.

"I've never been to Ghana, but my husband was there two summers ago and he kept hearing about these libraries," says van den Brul, who adds that it was a campaign these young students could really get behind.

Local fundraising campaigns include many initiatives the students have been working at for years, like a winter clothing and sundries collection for Siloam Mission and a pop-up shop of products from Ten Thousand Villages.

"[The pop-up shop is] a huge hit," van den Brul says. "This year we sold about \$3,000 worth, and a lot of it was chocolate bars... Every class can sign up for a store visit... It's very, very sweet because these kids come and buy something pretty for their mom or something nice for their dad [for Christmas]."

Van den Brul says it also gives SWAG members an opportunity to teach other kids about the importance of making purchases with fair trade in mind.

On the environmental side, SWAG has successfully implemented school-wide composting, which is run by the Grade Seven classes.

Van den Brul says it's never hard to find volunteers to organize this program. On a rotational basis, volunteers from each class take turns collecting pails of compost from every classroom, removing it to an outdoor cart and returning the washed pails to their rightful spots. The compost is picked up by a local composting company every Thursday.

"We're trying to build a culture here at NMS," van den Brul says. "We care about the environment, we care about people, we care about human rights, and we care about education."

She adds that since young Greta Thunberg took up the cause's banner in the past year, students have become even more aware of environmental concerns. For many young people, the issue of climate change has created a level of fear over what their future will hold.

"When you're doing something to help, I think it helps to alleviate anxiety and I think that's important," says van den Brul.

Without question, organizing the SWAG team of 15 to 20 students eats into van den Brul's non-teaching hours, but she says her passion for social justice and the climate make it all worth her while.

"There were a lot of people here before me that were really forward-thinking in getting [social justice initiatives] going," van den Brul says. "Hopefully, when I'm retired, somebody will take these things on and keep improving [on them]."



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Niverville Council Plans for New Year

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

At a meeting of town council on December 3, Niverville mayor Mayor Dyck opened by calling back to the recent 2020 planning session that occurred during the last week-end of November. By the end of that session, council had arrived at a preliminary budget.

The preliminary budget includes a number of major capital projects, including the paving of Sixth Avenue from Main Street to south of Sheffield Way, a renewal of the town's core sidewalk network, the rebuilding of the intersections at Main and Third Avenue and Main and Prairie Trail, the second phase of pathway lighting at Hespeler Park, and an increase to the town's tree-planting and maintenance budget from \$30,000 to \$40,000.

Additionally, Arena Road will be reconstructed following the road work that occurred this fall, pathways will be built to connect the rail crossing and the CRRC,



and the CRRC parking lot will be expanded.

In conjunction with students of the Niverville High School art department, an art project installation will also be undertaken to improve the façade of the current area.

As an update to the previous year's planning session, council once again brought up the subject of replacing the sewer mains in the core of Niverville.

"Following further analysis

over the past year, the project is now set to commence in 2021 and will include four blocks of Niverville every second year," reads a press release provided by council. "In addition, the project has been expanded to include the laying of water mains on the same block as the sewer repair. It is anticipated that residents will receive advance notice of when their blocks will be scheduled for infrastructure upgrades."



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Intermunicipal Wastewater Initiative Proposed

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Four municipalities in southeastern Manitoba are joining forces to propose a large-scale wastewater solution of unique scope in Manitoba. The regional initiative includes the RMs of Hanover, Tache, Ritchot, and the Town of Niverville, all of which have entered into a memorandum of understanding to create the Red-Seine-Rat Wastewater Cooperative.

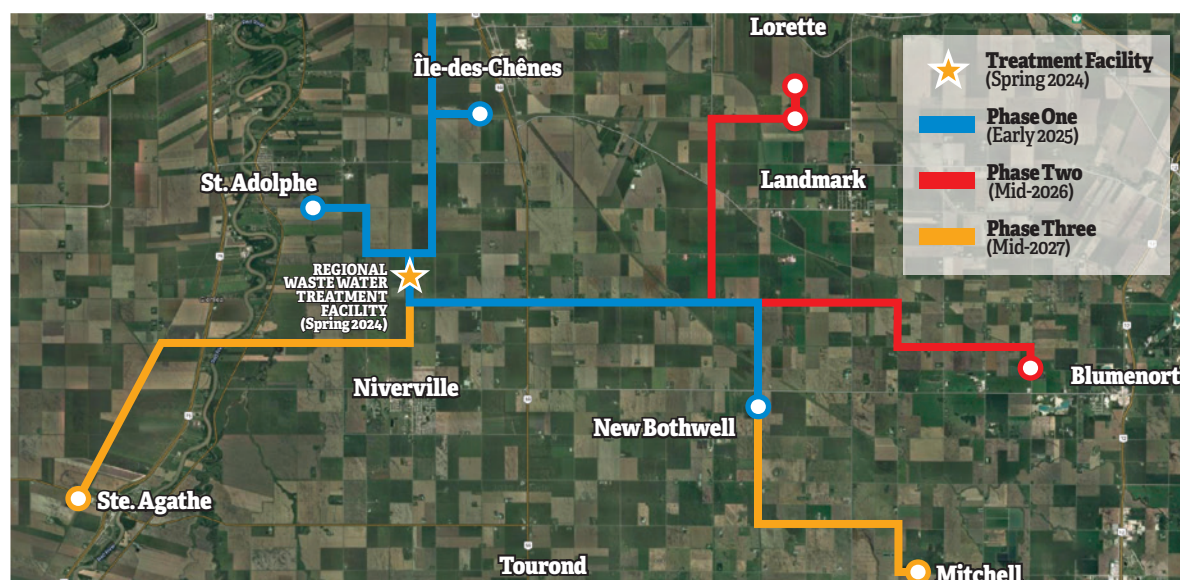
The Cooperative, which made the announcement to the media on December 19, intends to create a regional wastewater collection system and treatment plant that will enhance wastewater management to meet new environmental standards and ensure affordable utility rates for taxpayers in all four municipalities.

“Working collaboratively, the four municipalities will be able to achieve economic and environmental objectives that will benefit the region in a manner typically only afforded to larger municipal entities,” reads a press release from the Cooperative.

The cost of the new wastewater treatment facility is projected to hit \$109 million dollars, and a cost-sharing arrangement is being proposed which will include contributions from the federal government, the provincial government, and all four municipalities. The amount of the municipalities’ contributions will be proportional based on population.

Although the price tag may seem high, the Cooperative points out that over the next five to 15 years, every community in this region will be faced with the need to expand or replace their current lagoon. These projects would add up to an estimated cost of \$170 million, meaning that about \$60 million can be saved by working collaboratively in this way.

“Forming a cooperative utility will help to ensure more efficient operating costs, which benefit ratepayers directly,” the press release continues. “Finally, the proposed plant will have a longer economic life than conventional lagoons and be expandable to address long-term growth in the region over the next half-century.”



The next step is for the municipalities to submit a joint funding proposal to the provincial and federal governments.

Specifically, the proposed wastewater system will serve the communities of Niverville, Ste. Agathe, St. Adolphe, Île-des-Chênes, New Bothwell, Landmark, Lorette, Grande Pointe, Mitchell, and Blumenort. Other rural residents will also be included.

The system proposes a mechanical wastewater treatment plant to be located just north of Niverville in the RM of Ritchot. Initially the plant will serve about 30,000 people, although it will have a capacity to accommodate up to 70,000 residents, which is the projected growth expected to take place in the next 25 years.

A key principle of the Cooperative is that our communities need to move away from lagoon-based treatment and embrace mechanical plant solutions. Lagoons pose a number of problems in that they place demands on prime agricultural land and produce high levels of methane, nitrous oxide, and other greenhouse gases.

The proposed plant will allow our local communities to meet new provincial regulations designed to limit effluent discharge. Those regulations restrict phosphorous to one milligram per litre and nitrogen to

15 milligrams per litre, targets which would be difficult to achieve through conventional lagoon systems. The plant also allows valuable farmland to remain in production.

TEN YEARS AGO

This is actually the second attempt at building an intermunicipal wastewater system in the southeast region.

Back in 2008, the RM of Hanover saw that most of their communities were in need of lagoon expansion, so they conceptualized a system that would have been even larger than the one proposed by the Cooperative today.

The previous version, according to Hanover reeve Stan Toews, would have included La Broquerie and St. Pierre.

“At that time, I think it was way more money than we’re looking at now, because it was so big,” says Toews. “Now we’ve downsized it, and said, ‘Let’s get this going, and then we can add later on.’”

They were unable to secure the necessary funding back in 2008, and so in the intervening years Hanover went forward with necessary lagoon expansions in Blumenort, Mitchell, and New Bothwell.

But the need hasn’t gone away. In fact, Toews says that less than ten years later, New Bothwell’s lagoon

needs to be expanded yet again to meet the demands of recent growth.

INITIATIVE REVIVED

The shared wastewater initiative was revived this past summer when Niverville’s council made their own application for an expanded lagoon. All aspects of development in Niverville are booming right now—residential, commercial, and industrial—and a long-term solution is needed.

“We probably have the greatest need of the municipalities as far as urgency is concerned,” says Niverville mayor Myron Dyck. “But then we started to hear about other projects being rejected if they’re solo in nature.”

Realizing there was a good chance Niverville’s application for a lagoon expansion would be rejected by the provincial and federal governments, which he says seem to be more focused right now on regional projects, council decided to approach Hanover, knowing that ten years earlier they had proposed a regional system to meet their collective needs.

“We said to them, ‘You guys talked about this ten years ago. Where are you guys at with your vision?’” says Dyck. “And they were, like, ‘Well, talk to us.’”

From there, the vision grew. Dyck

says they initially thought Tache might want to hook up a few homes in the Heritage Lane area, and some parts of Ritchot might be interested in joining. But the Tache and Ritchot councils immediately saw the benefit and wanted to be more involved.

“What’s been really exciting about this is that every council had a chance to sign this MOU [memorandum of understanding],” says Dyck. “It was passed unanimously by every council. So there was not one dissenting vote by any council member in any of the four municipalities. I think that goes to how strongly we are committed to standing together and how important we believe this is.”

Dyck also recognizes the importance of preserving as much agricultural land as possible.

“This is going to preserve 2,000 acres,” he says. “That doesn’t sound like a lot in the whole provincial scheme, but that’s 2,000 acres that can continue to provide income to those families that work them as well as contribute to the provincial economy. I think from a land sustainability [point of view], that’s one of the things I like about it.”

GRADUAL IMPLEMENTATION

The Cooperative’s projected timeline is gradual over a period of seven years, with different communities being hooked up to the system as the need arises.

The design process will begin this May, and if the funds fall into place construction could start up as early as April 2022. According to this timeline, the treatment plant north of Niverville would go online by the spring of 2024, and by early 2025 the first communities would be connected—Niverville, Île-des-Chênes, St. Adolphe, New Bothwell, and Grande Pointe. A year later, the next towns would be Blumenort, Lorette, and Landmark. Finally, in 2027, Mitchell and Ste. Agathe would be added.

One of the benefits of this system, according to Stan Toews, is that other communities can then join the stream.

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Chamber News

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Updates from the Ritchot Chamber

The Ritchot Regional Chamber of Commerce is anxious to get the ball rolling in 2020! With plenty of announcements and opportunities coming to the chamber and its members, 2020 is sure to be a year of advancement and prosperity.

5 TIPS FOR ACHIEVING YOUR GOALS IN 2020

Set specific goals – Make sure your goals are clear and well defined. This will help you to define your goals precisely and identify how to reach them.

Break goals down into smaller, more manageable tasks – When larger goals are broken down they become more attainable and less daunting.

Reassess your goals – We all know that business is an ever-changing world. As your circumstances change, be sure that your goals change accordingly. This will allow you to be more realistic about achieving your goals.

Talk about your goals – Communicating your goals with other will help increase its chance for success. This will help draw in support and make connections required to make your goals a reality.

Avoid procrastination – start now!

The Ritchot Regional Chamber of Commerce is proud to continue to support local businesses and entrepreneurs. It is the strength of our community and connectivity amongst one another that makes our region continue to strive year after year. From the Ritchot Chamber of Commerce, we wish you wellness, wonderful business opportunities and prosperity throughout 2020. Happy New Year!

To become a member or to learn more about the Ritchot Regional Chamber of Commerce please contact Maranda: 204-270-0116 or marandarosko@hotmail.ca

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Christmas Town Nets Funds for CRRC

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Earlier this month, on Saturday, December 7, the Community Resource and Recreation Centre (CRRC) got a fundraising boost. The Friends of the Plex, the committee responsible to raise money for the facility currently under construction in Niverville, organized a family-friendly event at Whitetail Meadow—Christmas Town.

The event was a great success, with 625 people attending. All the proceeds of the event, which came to about \$3,000, were donated to the CRRC project.

Kids got the chance to meet Mr. and Mrs. Claus and have their photos taken with Santa. In addition to the Santa photo op, there were many activity stations to keep visitors busy, including those devoted to



Volunteers for Christmas Town, with Mr. and Mrs. Claus.

JAIME LOEVEN

games, crafts and ornaments, selfies, storytime with Mrs. Claus, Elf School, a bake sale, and the Kids Christmas Shop. Coffee, hot chocolate, and snacks were available for purchase.

The committee wishes to thank all the volunteers who

made the event possible, including Lindsay Unrau, Ester Raftis, Annette Fast, Tyler Savard, Tim Hamm, Katie Knebel, Brynne Knebel, B'Elanna Piasta, Cara Dowse, Jamie King, Monique Lasko, Sheila Doerksen, Claudia Jofre, Marcelle Nadeau, Anais

Santerre-Ratte, Nathan Boucher, Alvina Funk, Michelle Barnes, Amy Barnes, Brooke Adam, Danielle Calcaen, and Marcelle Nadeau.

They also extend heartfelt gratitude to Whitetail Meadows owners Dave and Lori Neufeld for their service.

Community Champion: Leonard Larner



By Brenda Sawatzky

✉ bsawatzky@nivervillecitizen.com

Four years ago, St. Adolphe families were thrilled at the

construction of a year-round outdoor sport facility on the north end of town. It provided an idyllic spot for kids to hang out, playing basketball in the summertime and hockey and pleasure-skating through the winter months.

And each winter, Leonard Larner can be found there, quietly spending his extra hours flooding and clearing the ice so the children can keep active on it.

Together with the Parc Pointe Coupee group, Larner has spent much of his time fundraising for improvements to the facility. Since then, he's

invested his own money into a Zamboni and Skid-steer to maintain it.

Like many residents, Evelina Pescitelli's family has been enjoying the facility and the fruits of Larner's labour for years. She says he never seeks attention for the many contributions he makes to the community, but to Pescitelli and others, Larner is an "earth angel" who needs to be recognized.

"Leonard is just a good person who wants his community to be a better place for all families," Pescitelli says. "He is kind-hearted and one of the

loveliest humans I am lucky enough to know. He doesn't ever want anyone to give him props for what he does. He just does it for the betterment of the community. I just want him to know how much we all love and appreciate the time and effort he puts into the community. We see him and appreciate his constant acts of kindness."

So, to Leonard and all of the other selfless residents out there, the community of St. Adolphe and *The Citizen* newspaper would like to say a heartfelt thank you!

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Who is your choice for outstanding customer service?

The following businesses have been nominated for the **2019 Outstanding Customer Service Award**. Congratulations to them.

- The Event Centre, Niverville Heritage Centre
- RuffMutts

You can help decide who the recipient will be. Send your vote to chamber@niverville.com. Please **include some comments** about why you chose the business that you did. Comments help the judges in their review of the nominees.

What makes outstanding customer service? Consider whether the nominees are:

- welcoming and considerate of your time and needs
- attentive and focussed
- aware of innovation and/or trends in products and services
- interested in how your individual needs can be met
- knowledgeable
- capable of providing service when they say they will or in a timely manner
- willing to stand behind their product/service

A panel of three judges will consider the votes and comments as well as a completed business background form provided by each nominee.

Send your vote and comments by January 30, 2020 to chamber@niverville.com. Please no votes from employees of the businesses nominated unless you have used the services or products of the nominated businesses

Congratulations to nominees for Outstanding Business of the Year

The following businesses have been nominated for outstanding business of the year. Judges will review the background information provided by each business and determine the recipient.

- Country Snacks
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Searching for an executive director

The board of the Niverville Chamber of Commerce has opened a search for a new executive director. The position is part time – 48 to 60 hours per month, hours may vary per week.

For description of the position, please go to niverville.com/jobs.

Applications must include a covering letter indicating why you are a suitable candidate and a resumé. Please send your application to the chamber president, John Magri, at john@wmdyck.com.

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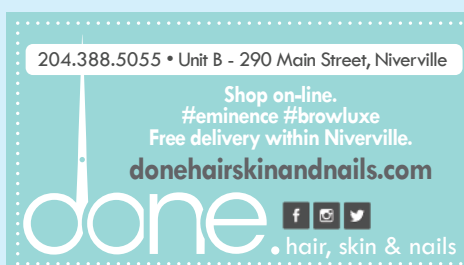
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Shoni Cree's: A One-Stop Shop for Indigenous Giftware

By Gabrielle Taylor

The strip mall along Meadowlark Boulevard in Île-des-Chênes has a new business, Shoni Cree's, a small family gift shop that specializes in Indigenous giftware.

"This is just sort of like coming home to semi-retire," says Mike Lafrenier, co-owner of Shoni Cree's.

Lafrenier and his wife Karen opened the gift shop with the help of their daughter Vanessa. The store itself was named after Lafrenier's granddaughter, Vanessa's daughter, Shoni Cree. Retirement is on the way for Lafrenier, and he hopes to pass the store on to his daughter one day. He himself is a businessman and wants to share his entrepreneurial passion.

"I have another store up north at Norway House Cree Nation," he says. "But I've worked in this area for years and years."

While his wife grew up on Rosseau River Ojibway Nation, Lafrenier is



Mike Lafrenier, co-owner of Shoni Cree's in Île-des-Chênes..

GABRIELLE TAYLOR

home-grown, having called this area home for many generations. He is pleased to have had the opportunity to live and work in Île-des-Chênes, where he has a lot of family.

Lafrenier is very proud of his Metis heritage and his store is packed with Canadian-made goods that showcase his cultural pride. Shoni Cree's has many unique products, including handmade soaps, leather bracelets, and

moccasins.

Although there are many locally sourced products to choose from, Lafrenier still acknowledges that he has a favourite.

"I have a line of mukluks out of Quebec," he says. "They are quite nice... and they're made in Canada. I like to stick with as much as possible domestic suppliers."

The shop's grand opening happened back on October

12, but a major unseasonal snowstorm derailed the event. Despite the whiteout, however, he was determined to open for business.

"It did affect us," says Lafrenier. "People are still asking when the grand opening is. I said I'd do another one after Christmas."

Lafrenier says business at his gift shop has been steady.

Senior Gift-Giving Program a Big Success in First Year

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

This year, the Niverville United Church partnered with Home Instead Senior Care to introduce Be a Santa to a Senior, a gift-giving program aimed at supplying Christmas presents to our senior residents who might otherwise not receive gifts.

With Christmas now in the rear-view mirror, the church's pastoral care team has announced that the program was a great success, with just under 100 seniors in the Niverville area being provided with gifts.

The town's Service to Seniors coordinator, along with the recreation director for the Heritage Life Personal Care Home, provided names of older members of the community who might otherwise not receive a Christmas gift this year, would be alone at Christmas, or had suffered a recent hardship.

Further names were also submitted by the United Church congregation and members of the community at large.

Each recipient's name was written on a tag along with a wish list of items particular to them. The nametags were

then hung on a Christmas tree, first at the Heritage Centre and later at Niverville Bigway. All the tags were picked up, and gifts were purchased, wrapped, and returned to the United Church.

"A big thank you to Damien Gagne and Angela Leonard from Service to Seniors Niverville for delivering the gifts and visiting with the recipients," says Cathy Neyedley of the United Church pastoral care team. "Gifts were wrapped with care and several gift-givers expressed their enjoyment in shopping for the person they had chosen."

Some members of the

community still wanted to contribute despite having missed the opportunity to pick a name. Their contributions therefore took the form of cash donations, crocheted blankets, hats, mitts, scarfs, diabetic socks, candies, and hygiene products. These items were added to many of the gifts.

The program was such a success that the pastoral care team, which includes Cathy Neyedley, Ellen Gaudry, Clare McClarty, Joan Rempel, Betty Koop, and Val Neyedley, looks forward to running it again next Christmas.

CITIZEN POLL

Are you concerned about franchise businesses moving into your community and putting pressure on the small businesses already there?

- ☐ Yes. We need to protect the business owners who are already investing in our towns.
- ☐ No. Competition brings innovation, and local government shouldn't be in the business of deciding who opens and who doesn't.
- ☐ Have another opinion? Share your thoughts in a comment online.

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LAST MONTH'S RESULTS:

Do you see social media as a positive or negative force in the world today?



YOUR COMMENTS:

Social media essentially has no positive aspect to it. From my perspective, it only causes addiction, decreases real, verbal, vocal skills and leads to a decline in grammar. Many people I know, especially those of the younger generation, are wasting away their lives in front of a screen for no reason. Think about it, would it be worth it to look back in fifty years and think about just how much time you wasted when you could have been doing something productive?
-A. Q. G. ROGULZINSKI

I have a conflicted view. There alot of positivity and negatively. You have to find the common ground.

Both...I've been threatened a couple times,because of a difference of opinion..I actually am honored ..the person who threatened me went out of their way to make a fake profile on Facebook, just to message me. I've also been praised and thanked from people I don't even know.

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Commentary

Free Market Anxiety: Who Decides Who Stays and Goes?

By Greg Fehr

I wouldn't say I'm Walmart's biggest fan. In fact, I dread shopping there for a number of reasons, including their reputation for supply-chain bullying and questionable ethics in product sourcing.

Perhaps this dread is also driven by my memories of a number of 80s movies where Walmart serves as a situational protagonist, popping up along interstates and killing small-town America.

No doubt I'm not alone in my mixed feelings—mixed, because despite my disdain I also can't help but appreciate the convenience and selection businesses like Walmart offer.

Feelings of protectionism for local business will continue to be felt in Niverville for a long time to come, due to the recent growth. Growth spurs both the need for employment as well as services.

And when a gap in the market is perceived by the business community, the so-called "invisible hand of the market" kicks in and entrepreneurs act.

Whether there's truly a gap or a need will sometimes be uncertain.

Some people in Niverville right now are questioning the need for a new fitness centre that's coming to town. While competition provides choice, is there a need right now for another choice? Is there enough demand for all the businesses to survive?

And ultimately, who makes that decision?

When Dairy Queen's arrival in Niverville was announced, I suspect the owners of every restaurant in town cringed a little. And I'd be surprised if there wasn't some impact felt

by them all. I suspect the addition of our local Niverville's Pizzeria had the same effect.

Yet no one has closed their doors. At least not yet. Perhaps the products are different enough to tap different corners of the market, or at least draw a new dollar out of the public's collective pockets. Or perhaps the current businesses have simply had to adapt.

So who controls which businesses are allowed to open and operate?

Local government, to some extent, ensures conformity through zoning and other by-laws... but other than the true Marxists among us, almost nobody wants an overbearing government to interfere in our free market system. Government is there to set the stage, not to run the show.

On the other side of the equation, the Chamber of Commerce is the business association whose mandate is to support both the existing and new businesses in our communities.

So where does the control lie? Well, control is placed entirely within the market itself.

As scary as this may sound, consider the two parts of the marketplace—the businesses themselves and the consumers.

Let's talk about the businesses first. Ultimately, it's the prerogative of anyone to start a reasonable and lawful business within the parameters of a community's laws. But if the market cannot support the business, it will fail. Entrepreneurs will typically take this risk into account and not enter a market that cannot produce a profit.

It is a utopian ideal to believe that only new

businesses that don't already exist will come to our communities. In some cases, competitors will enter the market because they believe they have a better product than an existing business. The existing business must then analyze, change, and adapt—or face the consequences.

But the market also consists of consumers, and they are the driving force.

Ultimately it is up to us, as purchasers, to determine the success (or failure) of a business. We have the ability to determine which businesses stay and which go.

We can vote with our wallets, based on our priorities.

Our priorities could be low prices, better customer service, or business ethics. A person could have any number of priorities to take into account.

My priorities likely aren't the same as yours; as such, we may "vote" differently with our wallets. This often has more to do with personal

philosophy than anything else.

But I would suggest that our purchasing decisions have a much larger impact than our social media posts. We can rage online as much as we want, but for wrong or right, good or bad, our support is only as good as the dollars and cents we spend.

The Certainty of Change

By Clare Braun

As we come to the end of another decade, it's helpful to observe through the rearview mirror how far we've come as a community. The one thing we know is that change is a certainty.

In the past few months, there has been some back-and-forth related to commercial development and growth in Niverville. This concern is understandable and isn't necessarily a bad thing. The strength of our community is determined by the robust conversations we can have without things becoming personal.

I have lived in Niverville my whole life. I was born in 1955 on Second Street North, and the house we lived in was located immediately next door to the town garbage dump—literally. This is where everyone in town brought their daily garbage, throwaway appliances, and even old cars.

As the village grew, the RM of Hanover received enough complaints about the dump that change appeared on the horizon: the dump was going to be moved. This was

bothersome to some, since people would now have to drive farther to get rid of their garbage.

But change happened and it was good.

In the 1960s, Main Street Niverville was lined with residential houses. The present Subway building and the strip mall next to it were residential properties. The lot where the MCC Thrift Store stands today had a house on it, as did the lots where you now find BSI, the Niverville Credit Union, Chicken Chef, Gan's Kitchen, HUB Insurance, Wiens Furniture, and Niverville Autobody.

The idea of changing Main Street was scary, yet the town needed to encourage new businesses to open up, and the cost was moving residents off Main Street.

But change happened and it was good.

In the early 1960s, Niverville got a new business, The Pines Restaurant, located in the building that was recently torn down to make room for the new gas bays at Country Snacks. This added a new food service besides the only other restaurant in town at the time, Krause's

Restaurant, which could be found in the building immediately east of the present-day Chicken Chef. Many people feared that the addition of a second restaurant would destroy the existing one, and yet the businesses co-existed for many years.

By 1980, the food services industry was evolving and I felt the need to bring something new and fresh to town—hence the arrival of the Chicken Chef in August of that year. By opening this business, Niverville had takeout for the first time.

Before I built the Chicken Chef, I met with the owners of The Pines. There was much fear amongst people in the community that my new restaurant would cause The Pines to shutter its doors.

However, in the second full year of the new restaurant opening, it turned out we had done very well. And guess what? I found out sometime later that The Pines also increased their volume of business that year, by 25 percent.

Change happened and it was good.

Change and growth is a

certainty in any community. Today we're approaching 5,500 residents and new business offerings are attractive to the people living here. They're also attractive to people who are considering a move to Niverville.

New retail offerings will come, and they will change the dynamics of our business sector. They will add something different than what we presently have. This will give people choices. The arrival of competition will also challenge existing businesses to be better.

In my lifetime, I've seen a lot of change. The MCC Thrift Store was a hatchery on two occasions before it was repurposed to be what it is today. The first phase of the Heritage Centre was a large chicken eviscerating plant—the largest in Manitoba, in fact.

Inevitably, a business or building will reach the end of its life cycle and need to be changed or repurposed. Buildings will be torn down to create things that are new and fresh, and this is part of the healthy cycle of life.

But change will happen—and it will be good.

Sports & Recreation

Ste. Agathe Volleyball Teams Serve Up Big Season

By Evan Braun

✉ editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The volleyball program is very popular at École Sainte-Agathe, the Kindergarten to Grade Eight school in Ste. Agathe, and according to a pair of coaches all four teams had great seasons this fall.

The success these teams have enjoyed is especially impressive considering how small the school is, and how few players are available to compete on each team.

GRADE EIGHT BOYS

The Grade Eight Boys team is actually made up of ten students from both Grades Seven and Eight, and they had the distinction this year of going undefeated in the regular season. During the season, they played other teams within the French-language DSFM school division.

"They are coached by Mr. Nhat Doan and also entered two city tournaments," says Éric Cousineau, who coaches the Grade Six team. "They placed fourth in the Grade Eight Hedges Middle School tournament, third in the Grade Eight John W. Gunn tournament, and third as well in our divisional tournament."

At the Grade Eight divisional tournament, Cousineau says the team lost only three sets all day.

GRADE SIX BOYS

Impressively, the Grade Six Boys competed at the Grade Seven level throughout the season—and they, too, went undefeated in regular season play.

This team also played in a couple of tournaments that took them into the big city, and they excelled at both. At the Grade Seven Hedges Middle School tournament, the team came out on top. This



The Grade Six Boys volleyball team.

ERIC COUSINEAU

was followed up by another first-place finish at the Grade Seven John W. Gunn tournament. In both tournaments combined, the Grade Six Boys lost just one set.

Ten teams from around the province met at the Grade Seven divisional tournament, hosted this year at the Dakota Field House (DFH) in Winnipeg on Wednesday, November 27.

"DFH is the perfect facility for this kind of event, with six full-sized volleyball courts," says Cousineau. "We played four round robin games of two sets and ended up first in our pool, winning all of them."

They went on to play École Lagimodière in the semifinals. Lagimodière had placed second in their pool, but Ste. Agathe won both sets.

"The final game was against École Christine-Lespérance and promised to be a close one, based on the round robin game we had already played against them earlier that day," Cousineau says. "It didn't disappoint. We were down 10-1 in the first set and the boys

looked extremely tired. But every time we'd get a point to bring us a little closer, you could feel their energy level was increasing again, and once we finally took the lead, there was no turning back."

Ste. Agathe won both sets and claimed top spot, having gone undefeated all day.

"This year has definitely been one of my greatest coaching experience in my 20-some years of coaching youth sports," he adds. "I've had very few teams with the same work ethic, dedication, leadership, respect, and team-first attitude. I couldn't be prouder of that group of young but extremely mature boys."

GRADE EIGHT GIRLS

The Grade Eight Girls battled hard all year, and the work they put into their game paid off when they won their divisional tournament against a big local rival.

"The regular season was consistent," says coach Julie Bacon-Papineau. "We would either split the matches or



The Grade Eight Girls volleyball team.

JULIE BACON-PAPINEAU

win them both. The girls were working on some specific technique every game... serving, serve receive, positioning on the court, reading the flight of the ball, etc."

The girls competed in one city tournament in mid-November, where they finished in second place. Bacon-Papineau says this was a real confidence-booster.

"At that point, I believed that we could win the divisionals," she says. "At divisionals, Gabrielle-Roy [in Île-des-Chênes] was certainly our number one competition, and École La Source [from Shilo, Manitoba]. The girls needed some encouragement and belief in themselves that they could win against Gabrielle-Roy. During the season, we managed to win one game. The others were close with some small mistakes."

Bacon-Papineau says she wasn't overly concerned, since her team had shown they had the ability to win. It was just a matter of them improving their mindset.

"In the divisional final,

we lost the first set, won the second, and then won the tiebreaker," she says. "All the girls contributed either with their serving, back court play, or front row near the net. I would have to say the final, being behind and coming back to win, was definitely the highlight of the divisionals. During the timeouts, I had to remind them that they could win as a team. To succeed, they needed to communicate on the court and control the ball with three passes. These were the key to our success."

Having won their division, the Ste. Agathe girls then had the opportunity to compete at provincials.

"The first evening of provincials, the girls were a little frustrated after losing both matches. I reminded them to appreciate where they were, at the provincials representing the division," she says. "The next day, the girls seemed to enjoy themselves and spent some time watching and learning the game."

Ultimately, they lost all of their provincials matches,

but the girls learned a lot—and they have a lot to look forward to next year. After all, the school's younger team, the Grade Six Girls, also had a very good year competing at the Grade Seven level. Bacon-Papineau says there is a lot of talent coming up.

"In my head, my plan for the girls volleyball at École Sainte-Agathe was always a two-year plan. This year, we started with the basics and then progressed with more strategy, positioning, and ball control. To have a chance to compete in the provincials was not even on my radar."

SMALL SCHOOL PRIDE

One of the reasons these success stories are so impressive, according to the coaches, is that the school is so small. Cousineau says it's a tremendous source of pride for the staff and students that their volleyball teams are capable of punching so far above their weight class.

"I remember a time when our Grade Seven and Eight students couldn't wait to move on to the bigger high schools," he says. "Now, with that new sense of pride and accomplishment, we see quite the opposite. They cherish their time here and appreciate more what our school has to offer."

Bacon-Papineau agrees with this assessment. "The girls, the parents, and the school were very proud. The girls throughout the provincials held their heads high and never gave up. Imagine, a small rural school with a total of 11 girls in Grades Seven and Eight—that's all the girls in the school—made it to the provincials representing their division! The other teams were from schools with over 350 students."



The Junior Varsity Boys The Roys volleyball team.

ALAIN HIEBERT

Trio of Gab-Roy Teams All Take Second Place at Provincials

By Dan Hoeppner

Gabrielle-Roy in Île-des-Chênes had an especially productive volleyball season, with three of its Les Roys teams winning their divisions and heading to provincials. From there, each team was a force to be reckoned with, dominating the competition through the round robin and making it all the way to the finals.

But in all three cases, the Gab-Roy teams were forced to settle for second place.

VARSITY GIRLS

The Varsity Girls competed at the AA Girls Volleyball Provincials in Boissevain, where 10 teams met from across the province to compete over three days. Ultimately, it was the home team, the Boissevain Broncos, who earned top spot, despite Gab-Roy having notched six consecutive victories to get to the final.

Several players were given special recognition. Sophie

Morrice and Lynne Wallack were among those named tournament all-stars.

Sophie Morrice and Christina Harboway were also named grad all-stars. Only 24 girls from over a hundred schools receive this award. The pair have been invited to attend a banquet and participate in an all-star game.

On December 11, it was announced that Sophie Morrice had been named the Rural High School Athlete of the Week by the Manitoba High School Athletic Association.

"She's the captain of the team and leads by example," says coach Alain Hebert of the 5'11" left-side hitter. "She isn't scared to make mistakes and take the shot when the team needs her. She has an aggressive serve and is very smart about her plays. She lives and breathes volleyball and has a great appreciation for the sport and her coaches."

In addition to Morrice's athletic prowess, she maintains an 88

percent academic average.

Earlier in the season, in mid-November, Michelle Préjet was named Rural High School Athlete of the Week as well.

VARSITY BOYS

The Varsity Boys found themselves in a similar position. Before provincials began, they were ranked third in Manitoba. They won four straight games to get to the final, but then they ran into the Landmark 96ers and had to settle for second place.

Again, several players were recognized for their outstanding play. The tournament all-stars included Noah Bartlett and Reece Clarke, and Sacha Delaquis and Noah Bartlett were named grad all-stars. Like their counterparts from the Varsity Girls team, they'll also take in the banquet and all-star game.

JUNIOR VARSITY BOYS

One week earlier, on November 23, the Junior Varsity Boys fell short in their provincial final as

well. Had they won, it would have been their third consecutive title. Twelve teams competed in the tournament, with the Rosenort RedHawks coming out on top.

Kalen Nordick and Cabrel Sorin were named tournament all-stars. The team was coached by Daniel Lothar and Roger Turenne.

The Junior Varsity Boys had played well all season long, ranking third in their division with a 6-2 record.

The Junior Varsity Girls also had an excellent season and made it provincials, but they lost their round robin games and fell short of the playoffs.

Roger Vermette, Michel Lavergne, and several club alumni manage the volleyball program at Collège Régional Gabrielle-Roy. Over the last few decades, they have developed a strong feeder network of schools in the area to supply top-end talent—a long-term strategy which has paid off in a big way.

IN BRIEF

Local Parks Awarded Provincial Grants

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

On Thursday, December 12, MLA Ron Schuler announced a series of grants to help the local communities augment and improve their parks and greenspaces. The total investment by the provincial government equals \$220,000, made possible through the Building Sustainable Communities Program.

The Town of Niverville has been awarded a grant of up to \$74,446 for the Hespeler Park playground. Additionally, Niverville Youth Baseball will receive a grant of up to \$29,803 to improve the Hespeler Park baseball diamonds.

In Ste. Agathe, the Belle Rivière Park Committee is getting a \$43,500 boost to use toward the second phase of their project. Earlier in the year, the committee had a fundraiser in which people were given the opportunities to sponsor the planting of trees. At the time, several park improvements were proposed, including a ninja-style obstacle course, an asphalt bike path, a picnic shelter, and further landscaping.

"Overall, we want the park to offer something for everyone to enjoy for years to come," said Danielle Robert, a committee member, in the spring. "The changes to the park will positively impact the community as they will improve our local park to become a better gathering place for the community. There will be something for everyone."

Elsewhere, the Grande Pointe Homeowners Association will receive a grant of up to \$75,000 for an addition to their community clubhouse.

"The Building Sustainable Communities Program is having a positive impact across Manitoba," says Schuler. "The Springfield-Ritchot constituency is a wonderful place to live, work, and raise a family. I am proud to be part of a government that is making major investments to strengthen the quality of life in our communities."

Schuler also notes that the Town of Niverville was recently issued their latest payment from the Federal Gas Tax Fund, totalling \$124,048. As part of an agreement between the Province of Manitoba and the Government of Canada, these funds are provided to Manitoba municipalities to support productivity and economic growth, a cleaner environment, and stronger communities.

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Ryder Couzens of Niverville sits on the bench at a Jets home game warm-up.

MEG COUZENS

Young Hockey Player Wins Jets Junior Trainer Contest

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

An eight-year-old hockey player from Niverville got the experience of a lifetime earlier this month. On Sunday, December 8, Ryder Couzens, who plays for the Novice B Clippers, was selected to be the Winnipeg Jets Junior Trainer for a Day.

The contest, sponsored by Red River Mutual, allows a child the opportunity to come down to Bell MTS Place for a home game, sit on the bench during warm-up, and interact face to face with some of their favourite hockey heroes.

That Sunday, Ryder

attended the game with his mother, Meg. She had entered him into the contest back in October when she'd seen the contest advertised at the local BSI Insurance office.

"They let me know about a week in advance of the game that he had won," Meg says. "When Ryder found out, he was completely speechless, then jumped up and down. He was so excited, it's all he could talk about for the days leading up to it."

As part of the experience, Ryder was given a Jets jersey along with two tickets to the game. Meg and her husband then purchased two additional tickets so the whole

family could attend. The team even allowed him to keep one of the pucks used that day.

"It was an amazing opportunity for him to meet and chat with some of his idols," adds Meg. "Matthieu Perreault squirted him with water and goofed around with him. Blake Wheeler chatted with him about hockey... He got to toss the pucks out onto the ice and chat with players."

It certainly helps that the Jets won the hotly contested game by a score of 3-2.

"It was an overall amazing day, topped off with a Jets win," she says. "Definitely a day he will always remember."

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New Year, New Jets

By Dan Hoepfner

The calendar has officially changed over to 2020. It's the start of a new year and a new decade. It's the time when a lot of people throw around the phrase "New Year, New Me" when talking about their resolutions. Resolutions range from eating healthier and being more active to getting that promotion at work.

And in the case of the Jets, it should include improving defensively.

General manager Kevin Cheveldayoff and head coach Paul Maurice have been around the league long enough to understand when a team is overachieving and producing unsustainable results. They must realize that the Jets are overachieving this season.

They took a defensive group that used to be ripe with talent and replaced most of it with inexperienced, undersized, and cheaper defenders. Jets goalie Connor Hellebuyck has bailed out the team countless times this season.

The size and experience of this year's Jets don't resemble a team ready to make a deep playoff run. So where does the team go from here?

The first option has no short-term or long-term impact. The organization



The Jets defend against the Philadelphia Flyers.

by HOLLY RADCLIFFE

could simply decide that the 2019–2020 season is a rebuilding year, do nothing to improve, and accept the high likelihood of a first-round exit from the playoffs, if the Jets are able to make it that far.

This option seems most plausible.

A second option has high short-term impact, and minimal long-term impact. Adam Lowry has earned a reputation for shutting down other teams' top lines. He has earned more ice-time and would benefit from moving to defence. Lowry is a big, strong man with above-average defensive awareness.

He shouldn't have an issue protecting high-danger areas in front of his net and throwing his weight around in the corners. I would suggest that the Jets could move him to defence for the remainder of the season as a test. And who knows? Maybe he would thrive in that role.

Chalk this idea up as one so crazy it just might work.

The third option, and my least favourite, has the highest impact both short-term and long-term: trading Jack Roslovic. This may make sense, given his contract situation. Roslovic is a restricted free agent at the end of the

year and will be asking for a significant salary increase. Roslovic has done an excellent job playing on several different lines, in all roles on the team, and he's demonstrated that he can be a top-six forward in this league.

Cheveldayoff needs to determine if the Jets can afford Roslovic long-term. If they cannot, Cheveldayoff should be looking to move Roslovic for an experienced top-four defender, such as Calgary Flames defenceman Travis Hamonic or Philadelphia Flyers defenceman Shayne Gostisbehere. Such a trade would require more than Roslovic, but he would be a good conversation-starter. Roslovic plus a prospect or draft pick should be able to get it done.

The Jets have worked hard to give their team a chance to compete for a playoff spot and the new defenders deserve a lot of the credit, but the management team will have to make some big decisions in the next couple of months. They need to decide whether they're viewing this season as a chance to rebuild, a chance to get the new defenders some experience, or expecting a deep playoff run. Only time will tell which direction they take.

IDC Elks Continue Undefeated Season

By Dan Hoepfner

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

The Île-des-Chênes Elks' Novice A Boys defeated Beauséjour 9–1 on Saturday, December 14 to continue their undefeated season.

The lopsided win raises their regular season record of 7–0–0.

The team of seven- and eight-year-old boys, coached by Paul Gaudet (head coach), Eric Beaudette (assistant coach), Joey Fontaine (assistant coach), and Paul Moreau (assistant coach), has had phenomenal success. The squad plays with speed, structure and skill.

"We have a group of kids that are not only competitive but eager to learn and are

always having fun on the ice," says head coach Paul Gaudet. "This, combined with a cohort of parents that are always willing to help, bring their kid to shinny or an extra skate, has over the past couple of years provided these kids with a solid foundation, one we have been building on since October 1."

Three players in particular have stood out so far this season.

First, Nixon Gaudet is having an outstanding year. This fast player excels on his edges and constantly dangles around defenders in the offensive zone. His hockey style closely resembles a young version of Winnipeg Jets' forward Nikolaj Ehlers.

The second player who

stands out is Mason Moreau, whose dedication to teamwork show in his crisp passes to assist teammates in scoring goals. Mason resembles a young version of Jets captain Blake Wheeler.

Finally, goaltender Nicolas Fontaine is standing tall in net. While the team continues to play well defensively, Nicolas has been tested on numerous occasions, coming up with multiple big saves.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

"Not only have we started the league 7–0, we have also won the two tournaments that we have entered this year," says Gaudet. "The first being the Rob/West A1 Novice tournament and the second being the Stonewall Novice tourna-

ment."

Eleven Novice teams from around the province competed at the Rob/West A1 Novice Tournament, held October 19–29 at Roblin Park Community Centre in Winnipeg.

In total, the Île-des-Chênes Elks won four games to advance to the finals, where they defeated the APHA Winter Hawks 8–2, earning first place in the tournament.

Eight Novice teams competed November 30–December 1 in Stonewall, Manitoba. There, the Elks won five straight games, outscoring their opponents 65–24. They earned first place after beating the Stonewall Blues 13–2 in the finals.

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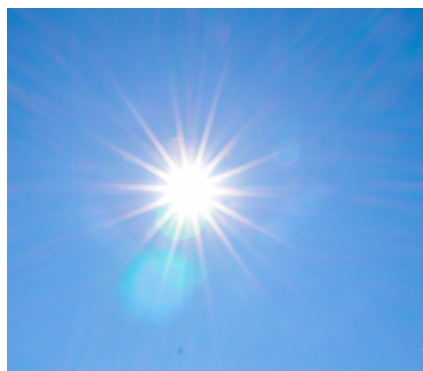
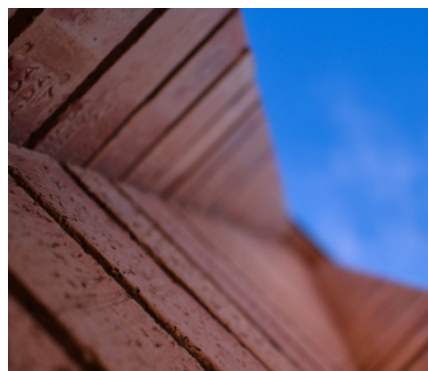
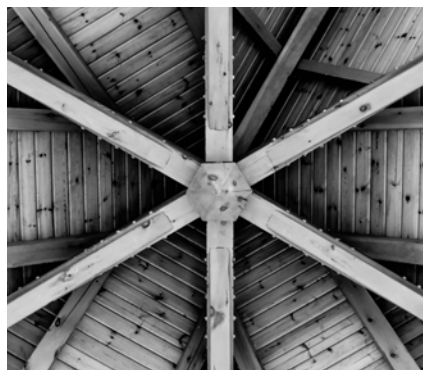
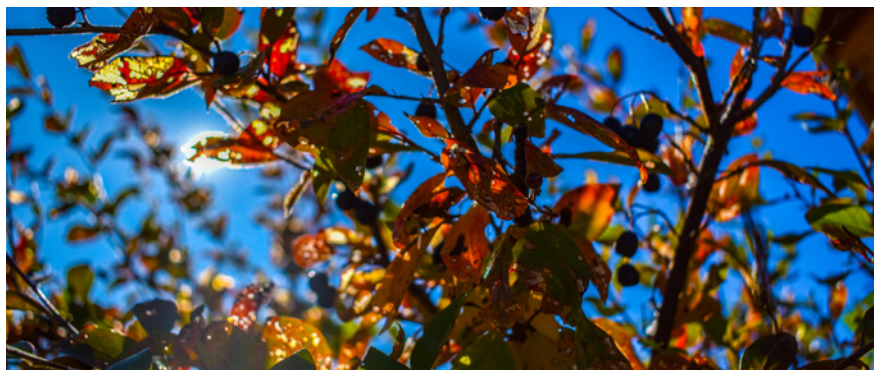
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Arts & Entertainment



Middle School Students See the Arts Through New Lens

By Gabrielle Taylor

A new program at Niverville Middle School is highlighting the importance of the arts using a previously untaught medium.

Since the beginning of the school year, Robin Marchadour has been teaching students in Grades Seven and Eight the art of photography, using DSLR cameras.

"The students were really excited about it because they have the opportunity to try," said Marchadour. "A lot of them had never really used a DSLR camera before."

The ten students in the program have spent ten weeks learning how to use the cameras. Marchadour says that students appear to be more interested in photography nowadays because of the widespread influence of Instagram.

"They're just really excited to learn about how we can take more artistic photos just by adjusting settings," she says. "They have ideas for photos, but [at first] they had no idea how to take them."

This has been a pilot year for a new arts program at Niverville Middle School, which previously only offered a band

program. Since September, the school has been testing four new programs, including guitar and digital art. The new offerings have so far proven to be a success.

"The biggest thing I've noticed about it is the students are highly engaged," Marchadour says. "They've been doing the basic subjects for years. This is something new and interesting. It's out of the ordinary."

Marchadour has also been impressed with the variety of photographs the students have produced.

"I have learned they all notice and see things

differently. The funny thing is that we all go and photograph in the exact location. But when they submit their photos to me, they're all completely different."

Marchadour is uniquely qualified to teach this type of class. Not only does she teach traditional subjects such as math and health, she also has a history in the photographic arts, having previously run a photography business out of her home.

"I would like to see the program grow," she adds. "I am looking forward it."

IN BRIEF



The choir belts out tunes at this year's Niverville Elementary holiday show.

TRACY BEAUDIN

Elementary Students Come Alive for Holiday Production

By Evan Braun

editor@nivervillecitizen.com

Grades One and Two students at Niverville Elementary lit up the stage last month with their rendition of *Toys! The Night They Come Alive!* The show, written by John Jacobson and John Higgins, was performed the nights of December 17-18 at the Niverville Community Fellowship.

"As you can imagine, the toys wrapped under the tree in fact do come alive," says music teacher Susan Simcoe. "There is glee under the tree! The rag dolls rock, the teddy bears tango, soldiers don't know where they're going or what they're doing, princesses come to the rescue, and puppets are off their strings. Jack in the Box is totally mixed up and can't quite remember what holiday we are celebrating, and Santa arrives just in time to see beautiful ribbon dancers and singers gather together to sing of wonderful Christmas dreams."

Simcoe says that she began practicing in the music room with the students the first week of November. The speaking roles, which were assigned just last week, were worked on

in separate rooms with the help of classroom teachers.

"It is a team effort to put on a small musical like this," she says. "We had costumes come in from staff members, props made by our amazing secretary Aimee Bergmann, and the gym is a stage for four days, so [gym teacher] Mrs. Doell graciously adapted her classes to accommodate us."

It all came together in two rehearsals a few days before the show in which all one hundred students performed the singing, dancing, and speaking parts for the first time.

Simcoe describes the experience as a whirlwind. "Watching the students learn the music and choreography is really spectacular. They keep trying and working hard, and eventually they all put it together. This kind of program is new for this age and watching them during the performance and how magical and exciting it is to be in stage with the lights and all their costumes and of course the show is priceless. Preparing, practicing, and performing develops so many skills that kids will see beneficial in other areas of their life."

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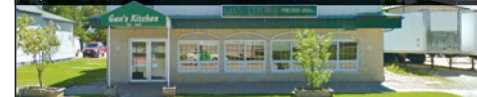
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