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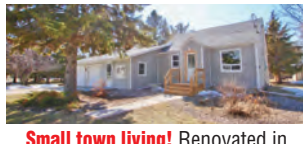
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Provincial accolades

EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

Arborg's Creative Cocoon received an official commendation from Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson last month in recognition of all the work the local arts organization does for the community. Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson, left, with Creative Cocoon's vice-chair Lisa Klym, middle, and chair Jenna Stansell. See story on pg. 2.

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IERHA, Selkirk physicians provide COVID update

By Patricia Barrett

Ron Van Denakker, CEO of the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority, has been holding conference calls with media once a week to provide updates on the continuing spread of COVID-19 and what measures the RHA is taking to help contain and manage it.

Selkirk-based physicians Dr. Ian Burron, emergency medicine lead and physician co-ordinator for COVID, and Dr. Ian Alexander, physician at Selkirk Medical Associates and president of the Manitoba College of Family Physicians, joined the call on April 24.

-The 27 beds in Selkirk reserved for COVID patients are located in the old decommissioned hospital, not the "new" hospital (i.e., the Selkirk Regional Health Centre) as reported last week. The 27 beds are "transitional care beds." COVID patients who are "very sick" are housed in the new hospital.

"The old hospital that hasn't been demolished has been retrofitted to the degree that we've been able to have 27 beds, without staffing because we don't need them yet," said Van Denakker. "But when we do need them, we'll staff it."

Dr. Burron said the "new" hospital

has one dedicated ward, colloquially called the "COVID ward," to which patients suspected of having COVID and who need hospitalization are admitted.

"The vast majority of patients with COVID don't require admission to the hospital," said Dr. Burron. "We don't admit a patient just because they're positive for COVID. And we don't admit a patient just because they're suspect."

Staff on the COVID ward "are not working anywhere else in the hospital," he said.

- The provincial department of Shared Health recently issued a new set of guidelines for the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and created colour-coded zones — green (not COVID suspected), orange (COVID suspected) and red (COVID positive) — which determine what types of PPE are required.

Van Denakker said there isn't a need for all staff to be using universal precautions (avoiding contact with patients' bodily fluids by wearing items such as gloves, goggles and face shields to prevent transmission of infection) based on what zone patients fall under.

"It's very clear what types of PPE you require when you're in the orange

zone, for example," he said. "[If] we have a positive COVID patient, they would be in the red zone and there's a slight modification to the type of PPE you'd require."

"Meticulous hand-washing" by staff is the primary means of ensuring COVID is not passed between them and patients, he added.

- For the public, Dr. Burron said there's no difference between washing with antibacterial or ordinary soap. The time spent washing your hands is what counts, and it should be done for at least 20 seconds.

- Ambulance attendants have access to all PPE, including respirator masks, said Van Denakker.

- Dr. Alexander said family physicians have access to PPE, and they're — at least at Selkirk Medical Associates — trying to avoid seeing patients (in person) with influenza-like symptoms.

"We're not necessarily wearing gowns or gloves, in accordance with Shared Health guidelines, because we aren't seeing patients with respiratory symptoms in the office," said Dr. Alexander.

- The province continues to do everything it can to get the PPE supplies it needs, said Van Denakker. The IERHA is educating staff about what PPE to wear and is auditing its use.

"We absolutely need to ensure that not only nurses have PPE but also health-care aides and maintenance people who are working in orange and red zones," he said.

- Drs. Burron and Alexander said people shouldn't avoid seeing their doctor or attending an ER because they're afraid of catching COVID (see story this edition).

Van Denakker said the chances of dying from COVID is less than one per cent based on current statistics, but the chances of dying from a heart attack is closer to about 30 per cent.

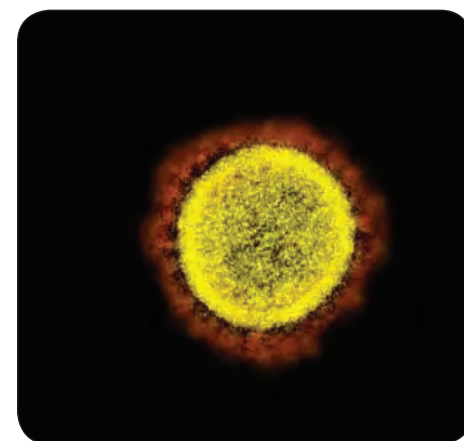


IMAGE BY REUTERS

COVID-19 has infected almost 3 million people worldwide and killed over 207,000 (Data: Johns Hopkins University, April 27). The Interlake-Eastern region has 18 confirmed cases and two probable (Data: Manitoba government, April 27).

- COVID symptoms have been expanded to include cough, fever, difficulty breathing, sore throat, runny nose, headache, hoarse voice, fatigue, loss of taste and smell, and nausea, vomiting or diarrhea for more than 24 hours.

- The virus is still circulating in the community, meaning residents of personal care homes are "still very much at risk," said Van Denakker. "We know extended absences are incredibly difficult for families, but we have to continue to enforce it until we're told to loosen that up."

- The community has donated a lot of non-medical-grade PPE to IERHA staff, and it will be used appropriately.

"A shout-out to community members donating PPE," said Van Denakker. "We'll be using the non-medical PPE in appropriate [ways]. The donations are being co-ordinated through Pamela McCallum, executive director of the Interlake-Eastern Health Foundation."

Arborg's Creative Cocoon lauded by Interlake-Gimli MLA

By Patricia Barrett

Arborg's Creative Cocoon received an official commendation from Interlake-Gimli MLA Derek Johnson last month in recognition of all the work the local arts organization does for the community.

The not-for-profit organization was founded in 2016 after recognizing the need for a local arts and wellness centre and is advised by the Arborg Arts Committee.

The Cocoon offers a number of classes and workshops, including yoga, guitar and beginner voice lessons, scrapbooking and card-making,

adult and children's theatre training in conjunction with Theatre Projects Manitoba and a musical concert series called Home Routes that features musicians from across Canada and the U.S.

Johnson, who acknowledged the organization March 9 in the legislature, said arts can have a beneficial impact on mental and physical health problems, helping sustain well-being and reducing juvenile delinquency.

"Research has shown that performance arts, such as theatre, dance

Continued on page 3



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Gimli's crafters come together to make masks and caps for hospital staff

By Patricia Barrett

A group of crafters from the Gimli area have been hunkering down over their sewing machines to make cloth masks, scrub caps and elastic bands for the Gimli hospital staff.

The crafters, who advertise their creations on the Handmade Gimli Facebook page, received a call for masks and caps after COVID-19 infections began to rise in the province, including in the Interlake.

"We're doing what we can from our homes to help our frontline people," said Cindy, who co-administers Handmade Gimli but prefers her last name not be used. "This is my way of giving back to all those people that have to be on that frontline. I'm more than grateful to them."

Cindy said they know the cloth items are not "proper" medical-grade equipment, but they've been requested so the crafters have stepped up.

Cindy and her Handmade Gimli co-administrator, Pat, have not only been helping make the gear but are also acting as central command, co-ordinating the pick-up of fabric and the drop-off of finished items, said Cindy. She has a contact person who looks after the distribution of the items within the hospital.

"Instead of multiple people going into our health-care facilities, I take items to that person's front doorstep and leave them there so there's no actual physical contact," said Cindy. "And that person takes them into the hospital and distributes them to whatever department needs them."

All the material, every elastic and the buttons (for headbands) have been generously donated by members of the crafting site, said Cindy. She and Pat have donated materials, as well as time and muscle to help the cause.

"Everyone has come together to help. I've got people asking me, 'What can I do to help?'" said Cindy. "And Pat has a lot of people asking her for elastics. I'm sewing myself because I'm unemployed right now."

As of last week, Cindy said she's made about 25-30 scrub caps and 25 masks. Another crafter has made over a dozen caps.

The need for elastic has probably never been greater since federal health officials said at the beginning of the month it's OK for people to wear homemade masks — as long as they continue to practise rigid hand hygiene before and after using a mask, don't touch their masks while wearing them, which can potentially contaminate them, and peel them away from their face when removing them.

Handmade Gimli's co-administrator, Pat, who also prefers her last name not be used, has been supplying elastic to the other eight or so crafters involved in the endeavour, as well as to other people who want to make masks for personal or family use but don't have elastic.

"I have extra elastic and I told people I'll donate it to anybody who's donating items, not selling them," said Pat. "I ask people to do that on their honour."

She said she's donated elastic to a group called Manitoba Masks in Winnipeg. She herself has been making what she calls "button bands," pieces of elastic with buttons attached. The elastic is placed behind the head and the face mask is attached to the buttons.

Pat said she's been temporarily looking after her 11-year-old granddaughter, while her daughter finishes medical training, and has got her helping mark and cut elastic.

"People are also giving me fabric that I'll cut it into rectangles [for masks] and donate, or I'll donate fabric I'm given," she said. "I have a huge piece of fabric and I was supposed to make aprons for Kiwanis but they're not cooking in their food trucks right now, so I donated that for scrub caps."

She's been making masks for family and friends, but said she'll also make



EXPRESS PHOTOS COURTESY OF HANDMADE GIMLI

Handmade Gimli's crafters have made scrubs, masks and button bands.

them free of charge for anybody who says they need one.

Handmade Gimli is currently looking for donations of 100 per cent flannelette or 100 per cent quilting cotton, she said. People can in touch with her or Cindy via the Facebook page.

Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority CEO Ron Van Denakker said there's no shortage of personal protective equipment in Gimli health facilities and that "our staff wear the necessary medical-grade equipment that required for the patients they're seeing."

The provincial incident command unit overseeing the COVID crisis — of which the IERHA is part — noted

last week how thoughtful people have been in their support of frontline staff.

"It's absolutely overwhelming how kind and thoughtful people in the community have been in terms of bringing coffee, gifts, food, and masks and hats to staff at the hospitals," Van Denakker said.

Staff at the Interlake Eastern Health Foundation can help place donations with community organizations that have expressed a need for the items.

People can contact IEHF executive director Pamela McCallum by email at pmccallum@ierha.ca or by phone at 204-785-7044 and she'll help co-ordinate donations.

> CREATIVE COCOON, FROM PG. 2

and music, can reduce illness related to stress and anxiety, relieve pain, provide a means of self-expression and communication, improve self-esteem and social skills, lower symptoms of trauma, enhance treatment for addiction and boost mental skills and mood," said Johnson.

Although COVID-19 postponed some Cocoon courses in March and April, vice-chair Lisa Klym said the organization is moving forward with plans to expand course offerings.

"Our future endeavors would in-

clude more exposure to our programming, offering a bigger variety of courses, opportunities to make it more accessible to seniors with age-appropriate programming, assisting other organizations in our community to help them grow and expanding our space," said Creative Cocoon's vice-chair Lisa Klym.

For a full list of courses, visit www.thecreativecocoon.net or the Cocoon's Facebook page. Classes are held at the ConneXion on First Avenue in Arborg.



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Arborg grads could be honoured with street banners

By Evan Matthews

Nothing is certain about the future due to the coronavirus pandemic — and graduations are no exception.

But an Arborg mother is working to ensure Arborg grads are honoured, no matter how untraditional it may be.

Melanie Pearce, mom of Arborg Collegiate Institute graduate, valedictorian and co-chair of the graduation committee Hannah Pearce, said she wants to hang two-foot by three-foot banners from the town's street lights with a portrait of each graduating student.

"If grads are postponed due to the pandemic, our 2020 graduating class will have been robbed. We want to celebrate our community's grads and would encourage all communities to do this," said Pearce, adding that the number of graduates would dictate

whether the project is realistic in each community.

"We're just so proud of our kids and our grads, and despite the pandemic and not being able to (potentially) celebrate the way we want to, they deserve to be honoured for their hard work," she said.

For graduates who aren't comfortable having their portrait hanging in town, Pearce said a banner with just their name and the ACI grad logo could be put in place of the portrait.

Pearce said she has contacted local printing companies about pricing but has yet to hear back and is assuming many have closed because of the pandemic. After exploring Vistaprint, an online print shop, she said the estimate for each banner is \$50, with the town offering to have municipal staff hang the banners.

The Town of Arborg has approved the concept, according to Mayor Peter Dueck, but it will be up to

the graduating class to bring forward the banners and materials to complete the concept.

With 28 graduates at \$50 per banner, the estimated cost is \$1,400. Pearce said the grads have done a phenomenal job fundraising, and there are excess funds available.

There is a chance, Pearce said, a bit of additional fundraising may have to be completed.

"Cost includes the eyeholes and the hardware, and the banners are weatherproof, so we don't have to worry about damage," said Pearce.

"If there are any additional funds left over, we'd look at donating the rest to local charities."

Pearce said she hopes to have the banners ready by the beginning of June at the latest and has asked the town to have the banners up well into July.

Anyone looking to help the cause with donations may contact Pearce directly at 204-641-3813.

Sprinkler system installation begins at Eriksdale hospital and PCH

By Patricia Barrett

The Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority will be installing a sprinkler system in the E.M. Crowe Memorial Hospital and attached personal care home in Eriksdale to enhance staff and resident safety and to protect infrastructure.

Work on the \$2.8-million project is scheduled to start this week, but only on external areas of the facility as COVID-19 access restrictions are currently in place.

"Contractors will not access patient and resident areas until Manitoba's chief medical officer identifies it is safe to lift these restrictions," said public relations and communications manager Lauralou Cicierski in a media release. "The work crew will be maintaining physical distancing as they work on this stage of the project."

The IERHA's senior project manager Tom Still, who's overseeing the Eriksdale project, told the *Express* the work will start at the entrance to the PCH and the hospital's service entrance, both of which

front a looped driveway. A nearby staircase that provides access to the laundry and maintenance departments in the basement will be rebuilt.

"The staircase goes by the driveway and that's not really safe," said Still, "so we're going to demolish it and re-build the staircase so that it runs parallel to the road instead of going straight at it."

Once that's completed, Still said the contractor will move to the attic and start installing the piping required for the sprinkler system.

"There's quite a lot of sprinkler piping that has to go up in the attic," said Still. "Even though it's inside the building, there's will be no access through the building. They'll access the attic from outside."

The sprinkler's water supply will run off its own well, which has yet to be drilled. A test well was drilled last year, said Still. Then the contractor will be excavating an area for the burying of "a rather large water tank."

"There will be enough storage water buried for the sprinkler system," he said.

Still said some IERHA facilities in the region are fully sprinklered while others are partially sprinklered. And there are "a couple of facilities that are not sprinklered at all," which the RHA is working on.

"A sprinkler system is pretty important to protect all our properties," he said. "They'll contain a fire or slow it down rather than letting it spread or hopefully put it out altogether."

During the course of the work, the IERHA will be monitoring infection prevention and control measures, maintaining air quality, reducing noise and maintaining on-site safety with the "least amount of disturbance," states the release.

"There may be minor inconveniences to those entering and exiting the hospital and personal care home, but our project planning team will ensure safeguards are in place," said Cicierski in the release. "The safety and comfort of patients and residents will be top of mind as this necessary work begins."

Small businesses struggling; chambers encourage local shopping

By Evan Matthews

With Saskatchewan announcing its plan to gradually re-open businesses on May 4, Manitoba echoed the sentiment, and Interlake business owners are saying it can't come soon enough.

Last week, the *Globe and Mail* reported many small businesses are closing for good as opposed to out-waiting the provincially imposed shutdowns.

While this hasn't been the case in many Interlake communities, local chambers of commerce say businesses are

struggling nonetheless, and local support is more important than ever.

Eriksdale Chamber of Commerce

Things in Eriksdale aren't too bad, president of the chamber Keith Lundale said, but there is certainly an affected demographic.

Two of the main businesses in Eriksdale — the grocery store and lumber yard — remain operational with social distancing measures in place. However, local farmers are in dire straits.

"We haven't seen too much of a negative impact on the economy," said Lundale.

"But our farmers are struggling. There is simply no market for their cows. Then they've got to worry about feed to hold the cattle over until things change."

The Cargill (cattle) processing plant in Alberta has closed down due to COVID-19, he added. Cargill is one of the largest cattle processing plants in Canada, and its closure has severely impacted the cattle market.

Aside from the cattle farmers, Lundale said it's the hospitality industry and community groups that cannot hold events (Eriksdale Hospital Guild's spring tea, The 200 Club fundraiser, CancerCare fundraisers, etc.) that are struggling the most.

"We need to support local. All those community groups raising money for services or anything like that within the community could be lost," said Lundale.

"We don't know when any events can happen. Some can be rescheduled, but for others it might not be until the following year."

Gimli Chamber of Commerce

Melanie Specula, co-president of the Gimli Chamber of Commerce, said while essential services remain open, most other businesses in Gimli are seasonal.

However, many businesses in the hospitality section have altered operations and/or closed

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Manitoba Public Insurance to issue rebate cheques to policyholders

Submitted by Manitoba government

Manitoba Public Insurance (MPI) is returning up to \$110 million to provide financial relief to its policyholders, Crown Services Minister Jeff Wharton announced.

"Many Manitobans have been financially impacted by this crisis," said Wharton. "MPI is proactively providing relief when it is needed most by issuing rebates to its customers as an alternative to future reduced premiums."

Rebates will be based on what policyholders paid last year and expected to be around 11 per cent, or between \$140 to \$160 per average policyholder, the minister noted, adding policyholders can expect a rebate cheque at the end of May to early June.

This surplus is the result of fewer claims during this COVID period,

coupled with strong year-end financial results. As a public insurance model, MPI operates on a break-even basis and is required to maintain its reserves at a level set by legislation. Today's rebate is possible because MPI's reserves are exceptionally strong, allowing excess capital to be returned to ratepayers while ensuring its reserves are fully funded.

"This money is expected to provide financial assistance to Manitobans during this unprecedented crisis," said Ben Graham, president and CEO of MPI. "We have made significant improvements in our operations to deliver value to Manitobans resulting in stronger financial results."

"With a healthy reserve fund, MPI is in a strong financial situation to move forward with these rebate cheques to support our customers. This rebate to

our customers will not adversely impact the corporation's financial outcomes moving forward. It feels right to give back to our customers when they need it the most."

Details of the rebates will be made in the coming weeks and further details will be available at www.mpi.mb.ca/Pages/Home.aspx.

In addition to rebating excess capital from the last financial year, MPI notes that as of mid-April, collision claims are down 48 per cent compared to the same month a year ago. MPI estimates that public health orders directing the public to stay at home and for non-essential businesses to cease direct interaction with the public have resulted in approximately \$29 million in fewer basic claims being incurred between March 15 and April 15, 2020.

Under existing legislation, MPI is

able to return approximately \$50 million to its ratepayers and will require the approval of the Public Utilities Board (PUB) for the additional \$60 million. MPI will apply to the PUB in the coming days in respect of the incremental \$60 million in order to be able to return these amounts to Manitoba ratepayers. If PUB approval is obtained in the next few weeks, the entire \$110 million will be returned as part of the rebate cheques mailed to Manitobans.

Based on current projections, MPI is confident that due to the extension of public health orders and the provincial state of emergency extending until May 18, related savings to the corporation will continue into the foreseeable future.

Province to provide \$120 million of support to small- and medium-sized businesses

Submitted by Manitoba government

The Manitoba government is providing up to \$120 million to support Manitoba's small- and medium-sized businesses that are facing significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Premier Brian Pallister announced on April 21.

"Manitoba's small and medium-sized businesses are the backbone of our economy. They are struggling right now and we want to support them," said Pallister. "Our government has been listening and working diligently with chambers of commerce across the province, business and retail councils, industry and trade associations and various stakeholders to identify where the greatest need is and to maximize the recovery oppor-

tunities for Manitoba's business sector."

The Manitoba Gap Protection Program (MGPP) is available to any of the approximately 120,000 businesses in Manitoba who have fallen into a gap in failing to qualify for the various federal government assistance programs and wage subsidies created because of COVID-19. If one in six businesses have fallen into that gap that would mean approximately 20,000 Manitoba businesses would be entitled to this support, the premier noted.

The province will advance each eligible business the non-interest bearing forgivable MGPP loan of \$6,000, for a total of up to \$120 million. The loan will be forgiven on Dec. 31, 2020,

if the recipient attests at that time the business has not received any major non-repayable COVID-19 federal supports such as the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and the Canada Emergency Business Account, as well as sector-specific grant federal programs specifically developed in response to the pandemic. If the applicant has received benefits under a federal COVID program, then the loan will be added to the recipient's 2020 tax bill.

"We are acting on the advice from industry and are committed to working in partnership with our municipal and federal governments and various associations that are impacted by this pandemic so we'll make the right decisions, in the right way, at the right

time to maximize our recovery efforts for the benefit of all Manitobans," said Pallister.

To be eligible for the MGPP funding, a business must:

- have been operational on March 20, 2020, the date the Manitoba government declared a provincewide state of emergency under The Emergency Measures Act because of COVID-19;
- have temporarily ceased or curtailed operations as a result of a COVID-19 public health order and have been harmed by the health order;
- be registered and in good standing with the Manitoba Business and Corporate Registry;
- have not qualified for federal government COVID-19 grant support; and
- have an email address and a bank account.

WCB of Manitoba returns \$37-million surplus to provide financial relief to employers

Submitted by Manitoba government

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba is returning a \$37-million surplus to provide financial relief to eligible employers in the province, Premier Brian Pallister announced today.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is having a dramatic impact on employers across the province, with businesses especially hurting right now, and we're working across government and with our partners to find ways to provide relief to employers that need it," said Pallister.

The Workers Compensation Board

(WCB) board of directors has approved and authorized further relief for employers who fund the WCB by returning approximately \$37 million in surplus funds.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the majority of our customers and we have actively explored how we can help mitigate the financial impact to employers," said Michael Werier, chairperson of the WCB. "With a healthy reserve fund, we are pleased to provide a refund of approximately 20 per cent to employers to help bolster their bottom line. It's incumbent upon busi-

nesses like ourselves to do our part to actively help support financial recovery efforts over the next several months."

This is the second year the WCB has returned surplus funds to eligible employers while still maintaining the lowest assessment rate in Canada. In making this decision, the WCB's board of directors considered the long-term financial projections in conjunction with maintaining rate stability and still protecting the workers compensation system against risk,

Continued on page 6

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Manitoba and Saskatchewan prepare to re-open

By Evan Matthews

Prairie provinces are preparing to re-open.

Though nobody is saying we're out of the woods — out of the germs? — just yet, it appears as though the chief medical officers in both Saskatchewan and Manitoba are ready to start easing restrictions.

On April 23, Saskatchewan's chief medical health officer Dr. Saqib Shahab announced the province's "Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan."

A couple of days later in Manitoba, top medical officer Dr. Brent Roussin said Manitoba's plan would be soon to follow and quite similar.

Saskatchewan's five-phase plan, at least, is said to be built on a methodical and phased approach to slowly lift restrictions so more businesses can open and more employees can go back to work.

Social distancing measures and restrictions will remain in place throughout the plan's phases, and the plan provides a number of different

factors regarding the lifting of long-term restrictions. Nothing, at this point, is definite or confirmed.

This brings us to a question on the minds of many: If the world came to a halt over public health, is it fair to resume somewhat normal practices for economic reasons so that more businesses can open and employees can go back to work?

Just weeks ago, the Prime Minister said normalcy would not return until a vaccine had been created and circulated.

As society has progressed through this, only one thing is definite and confirmed: nothing is definite or confirmed.

It has been the World Health Organization: "COVID-19 cannot be transferred from person to person... Actually COVID-19 can be transferred from person to person," and then, "Wear a mask... Don't wear a mask... Wearing a mask is good... Wearing a mask is bad."

It has been our Prime Minister and

our provinces: "Normalcy will not return until a vaccine is developed. ... Actually, we are going to re-open the provincial economies, but slowly."

As a society, we cannot live in fear, and the restrictions over the last two and a half months simply cannot last forever.

But one thing that has not changed relating to this virus is the uncertainty surrounding it.

One would not suggest prolonging re-opening the economy. Unless you've experienced the hardship that so many have, it's impossible to understand or weigh in on the debate accurately.

But with nothing known for certain, it's within our rights to ask, is now the right time?

One way or another, we're going to find out.

Disclaimer: These are the views of the writer Evan Matthews and may or may not be the views of the newspaper.

> WCB, FROM PG. 5

uncertainty and market volatility.

In May, eligible employers will receive a credit to their account based on 20 per cent of their 2019 premium. To be eligible to receive the surplus, employers must have fulfilled their payroll reporting responsibilities for 2019 and paid a WCB premium in 2019. Employers can still report their 2019 payroll to receive the surplus distribution.

For the health-care sector, which includes regional health authorities and several other agencies such as CancerCare Manitoba, Riverview Health Centre and personal care homes, this

equals an approximate \$6.2-million refund.

Of the \$37 million, WCB expects \$29 million will be returned to the private sector, with approximately \$7 million going to small businesses in Manitoba.

"We are proud the work we've done over the years to increase our system efficiency allows us to have the lowest WCB rate in Canada and we can now offer some measure of relief to employers suffering the financial hardships COVID-19 has created," said Winston Maharaj, president and CEO of WCB. "We applaud all of the employers and front-line workers who continue to serve the public in these

extremely challenging times."

Earlier this month, WCB announced it would defer premium payments until the end of May, not charge business interest and/or penalties for non-payment until October, extend the payroll-reporting deadline until the end of May and ensure that coverage remains active for accounts that choose to defer payments until the end of October. Clearances will remain in good standing.

The WCB is a mutual workplace injury and disability statutory corporation funded by employer premiums. It insures more than 34,000 employers and 76 per cent of the Manitoba workforce.

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Bifrost-Riverton hires Willner as CAO

By Evan Matthews

The RM of Bifrost-Riverton's search for a new chief administrative officer is over.

The RM hired Jordan Willner, who started in the role on April 6. Willner replaces former CAO Cindy Stansell, who was hired by the Town of Arborg in February.

"With past experience in both rural and urban municipalities, the amalgamated municipality of Bifrost-Riverton was attractive to me," said Willner, adding the role provided him the opportunity to return to Manitoba.

Willner originally hails from Rorke-ton, north of St. Rose du Lac.

"I identified the Manitoba's Inter-lake region as my desired location after previously residing in the North, Parkland and Westman regions," he said.

Willner has previous CAO experience including time with the Village of Winnipegosis, the, the Town of Snow

Lake, and the RM of Ste. Rose. Most recently, Willner spent time with the Village of Marwayne (Alberta).

Opting to live in a community that the RM presides over, Willner said he opted to rent an apartment in Riverton.

"I was missing 'small town Manitoba' after leaving to develop my career in Alberta," said Willner.

"Though social distancing has hampered my ability to meet many local people, the residents I have met have already assured me that ... Riverton is the right place for me to live."

In addition to his previous experience, and with certificates in Manitoba Municipal Administration, Local Authority Administration, and an Assiniboine Community College diploma in Business Administration, Willner believes he's the perfect fit for the RM.

He said his strengths as an administrator are his innovation, network-

ing abilities and hunger to constantly adapt corporations to the ever-changing municipal administration and operations environment.

"I hope the RM can maintain the high level of ratepayer satisfaction, and collaboration with neighbouring municipalities," said Willner, "while at the same time identifying and implementing programs to increase value-added to the amalgamated RM."

Throughout his career, Willner said he has administered numerous capital preplacement projects, and hopes to continue the RM of Bifrost-Riverton's success relating to securing and implementing similar grant-funded initiatives.



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED
Jordan Willner was hired as CAO by the RM of Bifrost-Riverton and started on April 6.

Province launches virtual therapy program

By Ligia Braidotti

It's been more than 45 days that Manitoba has established social distancing and quarantine measures, and it may start to feel daunting at this point.

Thinking about the impacts that social distancing and isolation have on people's mental health, the province launched a new program to help those who are feeling the symptoms due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mental Health Virtual Therapy Program is now available to all residents of Manitoba who are 16 years old and older. The program is designed to help those with mild to moderate anxiety.

AbilitiCBT is a digital program from Morneau Shepell, a provider of technology-enabled human resources services that deliver an integrated approach to employee well-being.

It is a free and confidential virtual program that has proven to be one of the most effective and efficient therapy methods available, the premier added.

As of April 16, close to 600 individuals have registered for the program and are now using the virtual-therapy platform with more signing up daily.

"We recognize many Manitobans are living with anxiety and stress posed by this pandemic," said Premier Brian Pallister.

"Our government is committed to helping Manitobans navigate this challenging and unprecedented time. You are not alone. We will get through this together."

Patients do not need to be referred by their doctors to access AbilitiCBT. Users will be able to connect with a trained professional therapist who will help deal with pandemic challenges; the state of uncertainty; physical isolation; care for family and community members; informa-

tion overload; and stress management.

The therapy aims to help users learn what anxiety is and how it affects your emotions, mind, body and behaviour; reduce anxiety by learning cognitive behavioral therapy skills and using them to change responses to triggers; and develop coping strategies to track and reduce anxiety and better manage daily activities. These goals are achieved through a cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) method and the platform is accessible through the computer, smartphone and tablet.

AbilitiCBT starts by assessing the patient's needs through an online questionnaire and consultation with a professional therapist, either by phone or video chat. Then, the patient will work on 10 modules, at their own pace, and the therapist will track their progress through check-ins.

To learn more about AbilitiCBT, go to www.manitoba.ca/covid19/bewell/virtualtherapy.html.

There are many other resources available for those suffering from mental health issues.

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health stated that a big challenge to dealing with mental health and reducing stress is that "the response to pandemics can disrupt routines; people may stop the activities they use to keep well (e.g., exercise) and engage in activities that can make things worse (e.g., drink more alcohol)."

They recommend people accept that some anxiety and fear is normal in this situation, seek credible information, assess their personal risk, limit checking sources to once a day or less, set aside time for unplugging from electronics and social media, seek support, and more.

They have a wide variety of information on mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic. Access the information at www.camh.ca/en/health-info/mental-health-and-covid-19/coping,

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Cannabis plant in Gimli will not be proceeding

By Patricia Barrett

A cannabis plant that was to be built on 80 acres of municipally owned farmland beside the Gimli Airport is not going ahead.

The RM issued a payment March 25 in the amount of \$5,000 to Alberta-based company Alta Greens Ally Ltd., which had obtained prior approval from the majority of council to proceed with the operation.

"The payment represents the return of a deposit paid by Alta Greens Ally on the purported purchase of an 80-acre parcel of land from the municipality," said acting CAO Kelly Cosgrove by email. "Alta Greens Ally will not be proceeding with the cannabis plant as proposed."

Other council briefs:

- Passed Bylaw No. 20-0005, which amends Bylaw No. 16-0013, to borrow \$2,586,574.93 at an interest rate of 3.29 per cent, effective May 1, 2020 to 2040, to cover the costs of upgrading the water treatment plant and distribution system in Gimli, Pelican Beach, Aspen Park and the Gimli Industrial Park.

- Passed Bylaw No. 19-0014 to es-

tablish a levy for dust control on a portion of Willow Island Road for a five-year period. The yearly estimated costs are as follows: 2020 = \$3,000.12; 2021 = \$3,074.64; 2022 = \$3,151.92; 2023 = \$3,231.04; and 2024 = \$3,312.00.

"The annual cost of dust control treatment will be recovered from all benefitting properties along Willow Island Road on a per parcel basis," states the RM's Schedule A to the bylaw.

The bylaw's Schedule B provides a cost breakdown by roll/plan number. Residents can expect to pay \$32.61 in 2020, \$33.42 in 2021, \$34.26 in 2022, \$35.12 in 2023 and \$36.00 in 2024.

The Municipal Board of Manitoba noted in its March 12 Decision and Order (No. E-20-028) that it was "satisfied" the dust control service is needed.

- Approved council's monthly indemnities and expenses for the period ending March 31, 2020, in the amount of \$15,014.53.

- Approved a final payment in the amount of \$9,875.04 to Wired owner Corey Thordarson for the installation of a new camera system at the Gimli



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT

Alta Greens Ally is interested in this RM-owned parcel of land beside the airport.

Recreation Centre.

- Approved a progress payment (No. 26) in the amount of \$118,762.64 plus applicable taxes to Kingdom Construction Ltd. for work on the wastewater treatment plant upgrade.

- Approved a project to paint a mural on the exterior of Gimli's library building.

- Approved a request from Ron and Janice Gulay to place a fifth wheel trailer on their property in Spruce Sands while they clear the property.

- Authorized the refund of recreation centre gym memberships and rental deposits due to the COVID-19 shutdown of the centre on March 17.

- The East Interlake Watershed District board's meeting minutes from March 16 (posted under council agendas) noted that the environmental organization People for the Preservation of the Willow Island Coastal Wetlands emailed a letter of concern to EIWD

regarding a 15,000-plus commercial chicken operation in the RMs of Armstrong and Gimli.

The EIWD noted that the "letter was discussed and the EIWD Board is not implemented [sic] to enforce laws and regulations."

- Municipal councillors, including newly elected councillors, will have to take mandatory code-of-conduct training after the Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members) comes into force.

"The provincially developed training is being modelled after the mandatory respectful workplace training for all Manitoba government employees and will have a municipal government lens," states a communique from the province.

The training will be available on the province's website and will take about an hour to complete.

Here to Help

For the latest updates on Covid-19 support efforts, please visit my website at www.jamesbezan.com

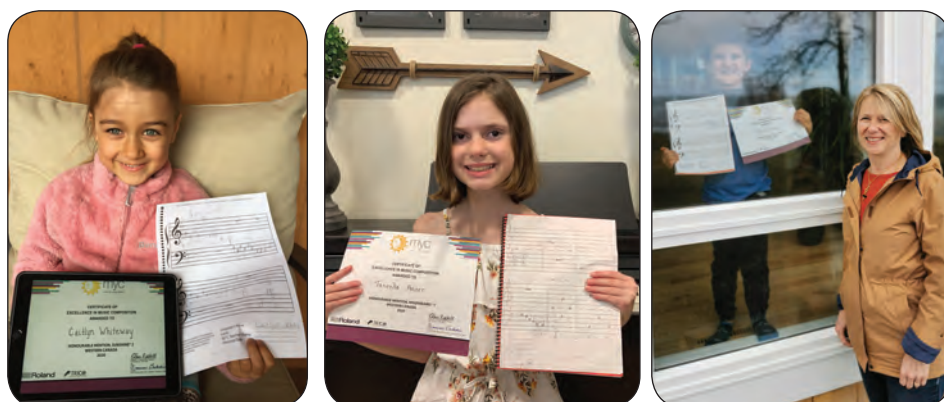
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Musical honour roll



EXPRESS PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Music teacher Brenda Gulay of Arborg is ensuring her students are not skipping a beat. Gulay has continued to host music lessons through the COVID-19 pandemic online via Skype, Zoom and Google Hangout. Her Music for Young Children students recently received Honorable Mention certificates of merit in recognition of their composition achievements. Pictured left to right: Arborg Grade 1 student Caitlyn Whiteway, Morweena Grade 5 student Tamesha Penner and five-year-old Nate Borkowsky of Gimli with Gulay.

IERHA patients advised to not put off health needs because COVID

By Patricia Barrett

Family physicians and emergency room doctors in the Interlake-Eastern Regional Health Authority (IERHA) have experienced a significant drop in patient numbers because of COVID-19 fears.

The fear of contracting the virus in a health-care setting has resulted in three serious incidents where people waited too long before seeking help.

"We don't want a situation where people are avoiding serious health problems like chest discomfort, trouble breathing or abdominal pain because of a fear of getting exposed to COVID-19," said Dr. Ian Burron, the IERHA's emergency medicine lead and physician co-ordinator for COVID, during a conference call last Friday with media. "We're still here to help people."

There were two "late presentations" of heart attacks. Both patients survived and both had expressed reluctance about coming to the Selkirk Regional Health Centre's ER because of a potential for being exposed to COVID, said Dr. Burron. And at another facility he didn't name, a patient presented in the late stages of appendicitis.

The ER is taking steps to try to make things as safe as possible, he said. Patients are screened at the door and those deemed "low" and "high" risk are placed in corresponding zones to try to "mitigate any potential for spread should anybody with COVID show up."

The Selkirk ER did have a health-care worker test positive for COVID in March, and that person continued to work shifts for three days, but there were no additional cases of the disease as a result.

Dr. Burron said the public has done a "great job" following public health authorities' advice to practise social distancing. That's helped the health-care system avoid what could have been a "nightmare scenario," with sick patients overrunning hospitals. But people shouldn't avoid seeking care when they need it.

"Emergency rooms are open and are safe. When you have an emergency, we want to help you," said Dr. Burron. "If you're not sure about your health concern, reach out to your family physician. If it can be dealt with outside of the emergency room, that's preferred. But if it can't be or if you're unsure, we want people to attend an emergency department to get care."

In addition to ERs, people have also been putting off seeing their primary care provider.

IERHA CEO Ron Van Denakker said volumes are down by 50 per cent. Of



FILE PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT
Family physician Dr. Ian Alexander of Selkirk Medical Associates.

the 50 per cent family doctors still see, 90 per cent of the care is being delivered over the phone.

Dr. Ian Alexander, a family physician with Selkirk Medical Associates and president of the Manitoba College of Family Physicians, said doctors are still available for their patients even though they're also assisting in hospitals and other facilities.

"Family physicians are always there for our patients, and our offices remain open to provide comprehensive, continuous care to patients that is appropriate for them at this time," said Dr. Alexander, who took part in the media briefing.

The way family medicine is practised has changed "quite dramatically" as a result of COVID, he said, but doctors are still available by phone, virtually and in person should a situation warrant it.

Although he can't speak for everyone, Dr. Alexander said his clinic is taking several steps to ensure patients are as safe as possible from COVID. Those include following recommendations set out by the provincial department of Shared Health and wearing goggles and masks for all interactions with patients attending in person regardless of what the health care need is.

If gowns and gloves are required, they're available in the clinic, he added. Before patients are booked for an appointment, they're screened and clinic staff prepare in advance by wearing the appropriate level of personal protective equipment.

"We are working very hard to avoid seeing patients with influenza-like symptoms that may represent a CO-

VID infection," said Dr. Alexander.

Family doctors, who bill on a fee-for-service basis, and surgeons, who are unable to perform surgery in Selkirk at this time, may be suffering from a drop in earnings like many other Manitobans, said Dr. Alexander.

"We are happy to do our part in this pandemic," he said. "And we recognize that many people in our region and across the province do not have any source of income at this time, including many of our patients. We rec-

ognize there is a decrease in physician billing, but I don't feel we are the only people that are suffering."

With no vaccine for COVID as yet, virtual medicine may become a mainstay for family doctors.

"We are hopeful some form of virtual medicine will be covered by the provincial government after the COVID-19 pandemic," said Dr. Alexander, "but we can't tell what that will look like until we get closer to that time."

Home & yard

Double Zahara Raspberry Ripple Zinnia

MAINTENANCE AND CARE

This annual flower requires a minimum of six hours of sun each day and performs particularly well in hot, dry environments. The more light it gets, the more blooms it produces — and the brighter those raspberry pink blooms become. This zinnia is highly resistant to disease, but you should still take care to prevent excess moisture from forming on both the plant and its foliage. Pay attention to signs of grey mould as well.

INTERESTING FACTS

This zinnia varies in colour according to climate conditions. In cooler environments, its petals are pink, while heat and humidity cause more white to appear. Furthermore, this superb flower attracts bees and butterflies. It's well suited to both flowerbeds and containers.

The Double Zahara Raspberry Ripple is resistant to disease and attracts butterflies.

NAME: Double Zahara Raspberry Ripple Zinnia
SCIENTIFIC NAME: *Zinnia marylandica*
FAMILY: Asteraceae
COLOURS: Pink and white
HEIGHT: 40 to 50 cm (16 to 20 inches)
EXPOSURE: Sun
PLANTING: Dry soil
BLOOMING SEASON: June to September



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Community members engaging and connecting with elders

By Evan Matthews

Interlake communities continue to engage with elders throughout the coronavirus pandemic to let residents know we are all in this together and you are not alone.

Most recently, the communities of Fisher River Cree Nation and Arborg held parades, which ended up visiting hospitals and personal care homes, ensuring the community's elders know they are on the forefront of everyone's mind.

Melody Pierone, director of the Fisher River Cree Nation Personal Care Home, said she and Donna Clark organized a community drive-by on April 21 for residents in the care home.

"We felt after being under lockdown for 37 days, we wanted that sense of community, and to get others involved in letting the elders know that the community is thinking of them," said Pierone, who credited the community of Peguis First Nation for having done a similar initiative in the week previous.

"Everyone was welcome, and we asked everyone to make signs for the residents."

Once staff had the 22 PCH residents outside, Pierone said family, friends and Fisher River Cree Nation's Chief and council proceeded to drive by, smiling and waving to the residents.

Residents, too, had signs pointed back at the parade, thanking everyone for thinking of them and respecting social distancing.

"It was fantastic to see everyone out and together," said Pierone. "It was so nice."

Pierone said making sure community members, seniors and PCH staff were safe and following social distancing measures was of the highest priority.

The Fisher Branch community also had a similar parade on April 16, including visits to the PCH, then to the RCMP detachment office, through the parking lot the Co-op, and finally northeast to Hodgson to the Percy E Moore Hospital.

Over the weekend, Sarrah Kirby — who owns a food truck business based in Arborg — organized a community elders parade, too.

On Sunday April 26, community members gathered at the arena and had the fire department lead roughly 15 vehicles through town. The parade visited the Assisted Living Centre, both lodges, the PCH, House of Hope and the Riverdale Place Homes, touching almost every street in Arborg with parade participants even playing accordion and guitar.

"Everyone in my family, mostly, are health-care workers. Frontline workers and the people living in many of these facilities are people very close to me," said Kirby, who added her Baba lived at the Arborg Assisted Living Centre and just passed away in January.

"I know how much these little things mean to the people who live there. This could be the highlight of their month. I'm thinking about them a lot. ... It's worth it to see their smiles."



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SARRAH KIRBY
The Arborg fire department and ambulance service led the parade through town visiting the Assisted Living Centre.



EXPRESS PHOTO BY MELODY PIERONE
Elders gathered outside the Fisher River Cree Nation Personal Care Home with signs and balloons greeting those who took part in a drive-by parade on April 21.

Seeing how much the elders appreciated the parade, Kirby said she's eager to do more for seniors in the community in the near future.

Interlake Tourism Association holds virtual AGM

By Evan Matthews

Another Interlake organization was forced to get creative due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Interlake Tourism Association had to host their AGM virtually using Zoom Video Communications last Thursday to abide by the provincially mandated social distancing six-foot rule and no more than 10 people at a

gathering.

ITA hosted 39 members who hailed from all across the Interlake.

"It's been an absolutely amazing year. Looking back, when I started my tenure as ITA president a little over three years ago, I had no idea that I would be stepping down in the middle of a global pandemic, but here we are," said Heather Hinam, Interlake Tourism Association president.

Hinam assured all in attendance that she would be staying on as past-president and would continue to work with the ITA executive board.

Hinam is stepping down as president due to term limits as outlined in the ITA's bylaws, with Oak Hammock Marsh's Jacques Bourgeois later being voted in to serve as president.

"The association itself is going through a period of transition. Gail, our amazing manager for the last 15 years, is retiring and has spent the last several months training her replacement," she said.

Hinam was referring to the hiring of ITA administrator Melissa Van Soelen as the successor to McDonald, the current ITA manager, who plans to scale back her role to part-time in June.

Van Soelen stepped into the role of administrator last fall, Hinam said, and has been learning the job, running the social media feeds and up-

dating the website.

"Gail is not leaving us completely, either. She will be staying on contract to work exclusively on our travel guide. She will still be responsible for the guide's ads and its content, so you will still be hearing from her regularly as we move forward," said Hinam.

"However, I would like to take this moment to thank her sincerely for all of the years of hard work, innovation, dedication and humour she has brought to her role for all of these years."

In 2020, the ITA has highlighted four goals it is working toward:

1. Developing a policy and procedures manual, which the organization has already started. The manual is intended to ensure continuity of ITA operations.
2. Developing a succession plan, which involves handing over McDonald's duties to Van Soelen.
3. Clarifying the manager's job description and contract deliverables to incorporate core skills and services, which involves identifying and taking advantage of the differing skill set from McDonald to Van Soelen, while ensuring members' needs are met in regards to marketing, product development and communication.
4. Developing tools to streamline meetings.

Guest speakers included greetings from Lakeside MLA Ralph Eichler, greetings from Selkirk-Interlake-Eastman MP James Bezan, and a message from Travel Manitoba CEO Colin Ferguson.

ITA industry members elected to the Board of Directors included Jacques Bourgeois (Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre), Sheri Crockatt (Rubber Ducky Resort and Campground), Heather Hinam (Second Nature – Adventures in Discovery), Marilyn Williams (Red River North Tourism), and Suzanne Otte (South Interlake ATV Club).

The ITA executive board has three spots remaining for industry members and will aim to recruit the final three in the coming months.

Bourgeois will serve as ITA president, while Colin Bjarnason was elected as 1st vice president and Anna Pazdzierski elected as second vice-president.

As ex-officios, the ITA appointed Tammy Dziadek (Community Futures East Interlake), Peter Mandryk (Community Futures North Red), and Lana Cowling-Mason (Community Futures West Interlake).

Ron Rogowsky (Town of Arborg) retained his role as ITA treasurer, Susan Smerchanski (RM of Armstrong) retained her role as ITA secretary.

RECYCLING NOTICE

Riverdale Workshop WILL NOT be picking up Recycling

- Tuesday, May 12, 2020 in Arborg
- Thursday, May 14 in Riverton
- Tuesday, May 26 in Arborg
- Thursday, May 28 in Riverton

This includes all the business places on the above mentioned dates on the Monday and Wednesdays due to the small group of workers available.

All business places please place the recycling outside on pickup day.

Please keep your recycling at home on the dates mentioned above.

The workshop will update if something changes.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Kill COVID: myths pile up as we wait for a vaccine

By Patricia Barrett

Here's a roundup of some COVID-19 myths that are spreading alongside the highly infectious virus as Manitobans (a) celebrate six weeks since the government declared a state of emergency and (b) look forward to who-knows-how-many-more months of staying home until scientists come up with a vaccine to kill COVID.

Myth: Mosquitoes can infect us with COVID

Mosquitoes are vectors for viral diseases such as West Nile, Zika and yellow fever, but the World Health Organization says there's no information or evidence "to date" that mosquitoes can transmit COVID.

If you venture out during mosquito season, take the same precautions you would normally, including wearing long-sleeved shirts and trousers, spraying insect repellent on the outside of your clothing and avoiding peak mosquito hours and habitats.

Myth: Hot weather will kill COVID

The WHO says you can catch COVID "no matter how sunny or hot the weather is."

Singapore is currently hot (27C). Brazil's right up there (28C). Saudi Arabia's sizzling (39C). They were hot when we were cold and it didn't make a blind bit of difference to COVID.

Here's the data: Singapore = 12,693 infected, 12 dead. Brazil = 57,961 infected, 3,963 dead. Saudi Arabia = 16,299 infected, 136 dead (Source: Johns Hopkins University, April 25).

Scientists have shown the virus has a half life, meaning it will decay on surfaces over a period of time, possibly faster under sunlight. But don't think COVID's a goner on the handles of supermarket trolleys parked in the sun.

Myth: Once you've had COVID, you're immune

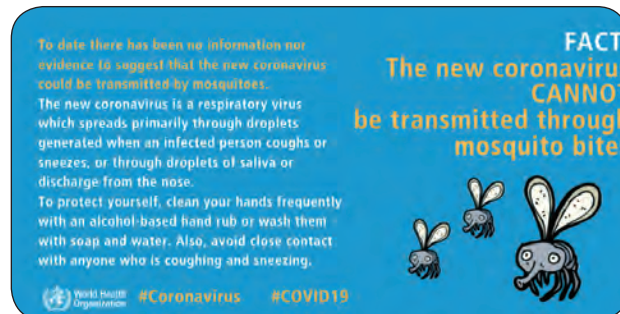
There's no scientific evidence to date, says the WHO, that people who've had COVID are protected, via antibodies, from being re-infected with the virus, which has picked off 202,455 people worldwide, including six Manitobans (Data: Johns Hopkins; Manitoba government, April 25).

Some governments have suggested the detection of antibodies "could serve as the basis for an 'immunity passport' or 'risk-free certificate,'" enabling people to travel or return to work.

Not so fast, says the WHO. Some lab tests have shown "very low levels of neutralizing antibodies" in people's blood, according to its April 24 scientific brief. More importantly, no study, thus far, has evaluated how effective those antibodies are in staving off another COVID infection or how long those antibodies last. Complicating the matter further is the unreliability of the lab tests, which may "falsely cat-



EXPRESS PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT
Garlic keeps for months on the door of your fridge, but it can't kill COVID.



WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
There's no evidence, as yet, that shows mosquitoes can infect humans with COVID.

egorise" people.

Myth: Garlic kills COVID

Garlic, like sunny days, is yours to enjoy but it won't kill COVID.

"Garlic is a healthy food that may have some antimicrobial properties," states the WHO. "However, there is no evidence from the current outbreak that eating garlic has protected people."

But there's really no better time than now, when we're supposed to be at home rather than in supermarkets sweeping the shelves clean of yeast, flour and toilet roll to spice up our meals with garlic. No one will smell it oozing from your pores other than loved ones locked down with you.

It will last for months if you store it on the door of your fridge (don't put it in plastic bags or separate the bulbs from the stalk), and you won't have to join scores of others in endless queues at the grocery store. Simple.

Myth: Injecting, ingesting disinfectants and getting light "inside" the body might kill COVID

The president of the United States — once the most powerful country in the world until its government under Donald Trump set aside six weeks for denial while the viral invader came ashore,

marched inland and slaughtered thousands — suggested last Thursday that scientists should look into ways of rinsing human lungs with disinfectants and getting some light into them.

During an unprecedented time of fear and suffering, and at a moment when almost 50,000 Americans had died from COVID with over 866,000 infected, it can only be hoped that the president meant the lungs of deceased COVID victims who had signed away their bodies to medical science, not living human beings.

"And then I see the disinfectant where it knocks it [COVID] out in a minute," said Trump, referencing the Department of Homeland Security's "emerging" research. "One minute. And is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning?"

Clorox, which makes bleach, and Reckitt Benckiser, which makes Lysol, issued warnings posthaste on their respective websites: No, don't drink or inject our products. Ever. Under any circumstance. Full stop.

And scientists and university professors — all of them capable, like Trump, of pointing to their temporal lobes and saying, "I'm a person that has a good you-know-what," to indicate how clever they are — made a beeline for social media to implore people not to consume disinfectants because, and right they are, that can lead to death.

On getting light inside the body, particularly the lungs where COVID really makes a mess, Trump said: "So supposing we hit the body with a tremendous ... ultraviolet or just very powerful light ... and I said supposing you brought the light inside the body, which you can do either through the skin or in some other way."

UV burns skin, causes cancer. Or did America's top man mean making deep incisions in the skin and thrusting powerful lights through the gap? Some other way. Hmm. Yeah, that's a tough one.

"Supposing" we just do the following instead: (a) Stay home; (b) Maintain a physical distance of two metres (just over six feet) away from other people when in public; (c) Refrain from touching our faces; (d) Wash our hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water. Antibacterial or plain soap are equally effective as it all comes down to how much time we spend washing our hands (20 seconds is ideal).

Everyone with a "good you-know-what" understands these measures are effective in cutting down transmission until those armed with scientific weapons kill COVID.

> BUSINESSES STRUGGLING, FROM PG. 4

their doors due to government orders.

"It's hard to know what it's going to be like after the government gives everyone the green light to open up, depending on when that is," said Specula, who used Flatland Coffee Roasters as an example.

"It's one of my favourite places. I'm hoping that all of these places that are closed will re-open. If and when these places do open, they will need local support."

Central Interlake Chamber of Commerce

Susan Bauernhuber, president of the Central Interlake Chamber of Commerce, said in speaking with local business owners, the region is the same as every other.

"It's going to be really tough once we're all able to start up again. Let's face it: we're not going to be able to recoup anything that's been lost," said Bauernhuber, adding some businesses have even expressed concern over being able to afford staff.

"Some businesses are just going to have to bite the bullet, and say, 'Yes, we've lost this money.' My business is no different.

"It is what it is. ... I think most will be happy to get back and open up. But it's time to move on, and things will get better," she said.

However, even with government subsidies and loans, Bauernhuber said she wonders if it's possible to comprehend what long-term economic effects will result from the pandemic.

"It's more important than ever to shop local," said Bauernhuber. "Anything you can do to help these businesses. ... If you can support them, it's a big help."

More specifics are expected on Manitoba's plan to re-open businesses the week of April 27, but none were available by press time.

get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



RED RIVER CO-OP FOOD STORE

Sweet Potato Walnut Falafel Bowls

Falafel:
 1 raw sweet potato (12 ounces), peeled and cut into chunks
 1 cup cooked quinoa
 1/2 cup California walnuts
 1 teaspoon sea salt
 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
 1/2 teaspoon onion powder
 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
 1/2 cup flour
 1 egg
 vegetable oil
Tahini Dressing:
 1/4 cup tahini
 3 tablespoons lemon juice
 2 tablespoons water
 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
 sea salt, to taste
Bowls:
 4 cups loosely packed curly kale, coarsely chopped
 2 cups cooked quinoa
 1 cup julienned carrots
 1 avocado, sliced
 toasted, chopped California walnuts, for

garnish (optional)
 minced red onion, for garnish (optional)
 To make falafel: In food processor, pulse sweet potato until finely minced. Add quinoa, walnuts, ground cumin, onion powder and garlic powder; pulse until all pieces are uniform in size. Add flour and egg; pulse until well mixed, scraping down sides as needed. Using wet hands, shape mixture into 16 equal balls.
 In deep skillet or pot, heat oil. Cooking in batches, fry falafel balls 2-3 minutes on each side, or until golden brown and cooked through. Let drain on paper towel-lined tray.
 To make tahini dressing: In small bowl, whisk tahini, lemon juice, water, maple syrup, ground cumin, garlic powder and salt.
 To prepare bowls: Place equal amounts kale, quinoa, carrots and avocado in four large salad bowls. Place four falafel balls in each bowl and drizzle with dressing. Garnish with toasted walnuts and minced red onion, if desired.



Walnut "Chorizo" Tacos

lime wedges
 To make pickled vegetables: In small bowl, stir lime juice, sugar and sea salt. Stir in radishes, jalapenos and garlic slices; let stand 30 minutes to pickle.
 To make walnut "chorizo" crumble: In food processor, pulse beans and walnuts until coarsely chopped. Add 2 tablespoons oil, white vinegar, paprika, chili powder, oregano, salt, chipotle, cumin and coriander; pulse until mixture is finely chopped and resembles ground meat, stirring several times and moving mixture from bottom of food processor bowl to top to evenly mix. In large nonstick skillet over medium heat, heat remaining oil. Add "chorizo" mixture and cook 10 minutes, or until mixture is browned and resembles ground meat, stirring frequently.
 To prepare tacos: Brush each tortilla lightly with oil. On skillet over medium-high heat, cook briefly to brown on both sides, keeping warm in foil until all tortillas are cooked. Remove pickled vegetables from liquid and discard garlic slices. Fill each tortilla with equal amounts "chorizo" and pickled vegetables. Garnish with lettuce and cilantro; serve with lime wedges.

Pickled Vegetables:
 1/2 cup fresh lime juice
 1 1/2 teaspoons sugar
 3/4 teaspoon sea salt
 8 radishes, thinly sliced
 2 medium jalapeno peppers, thinly sliced
 1 large clove garlic, thinly sliced
Walnut Chorizo Crumble:
 1 1/2 cups black beans, rinsed and drained
 2 cups California walnuts
 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
 1 tablespoon white vinegar
 1 tablespoon smoked paprika
 1 tablespoon ancho chili powder
 1 teaspoon dried oregano
 1 teaspoon kosher or sea salt
 1 teaspoon ground chipotle
 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 1 teaspoon ground coriander
Tacos:
 16 whole wheat tortillas
 olive oil
 thinly sliced romaine lettuce
 fresh cilantro leaves

Dear Money Lady,
 I am going stir crazy being isolated at home and have had lots of time to review my finances. I read your book and have started using the Cash Tracker – it is a good way to budget, especially nowadays.

Marie Carmen
 Thank you so much Marie Carmen!

It is good to hear that you are budgeting your income and expenses. The Coronavirus pandemic has given us all time to think and provided a forced slow-down and a "pre-retirement" wakeup call. As we do our part in "social distancing," those of you who are child-free or no longer have young children in need of constant care; you've now had a glimpse of what it would be like to be home all the time. In other words, AKA: RETIRED! So what do you think?

This is the time to start thinking seriously about how you want to spend your time in retirement. How do you envision your retired life and what do you want to do? Do you have an advisor that is helping you get to where you want to go?

There are so many choices and personal opportunities out there and you need to begin budgeting and planning your future in a way that allows you to become engaged and purposeful.

It is important to remember that

AsktheMoneyLady.ca



happiness is not attained just when you retire. You need to be happy along the way to retirement and this is only achieved when you're doing the things that matter most. Continue to dream and to seek inspiration. Everyone knows what they

have come from, but many are not so sure what they are retiring to. Why not take this free time to make a plan, keep a journal, begin budgeting your finances, write down your goals and consider going in a different direction and trying new things. You will be surprised at how even making a few small changes will make you happier and more successful in every facet of your life, whether you are already retired or on your way to it.

Good Luck and Best Wishes,

Money Lady

Written by Christine Ibbotson, Author of two new books, *"Don't Panic – How to Manage your Finances and Financial Anxieties During and After the Coronavirus"* and *"How to Retire Debt Free & Wealthy"* available at all bookstores across Canada. If you have a money question, please email on website: www.askthemon-lady.ca



Recipe courtesy of Tiffany Edwards of Creme de la Crumb on behalf of Milk Life

Servings: 1

1/3 cup instant oats
 3/4 cup fat-free milk
 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
 1/4 teaspoon vanilla
 1 teaspoon brown sugar
 2/3 small banana
 2 fresh blueberries
 1/2 small strawberry
 chocolate syrup (optional)

Bunny Oatmeal

1 glass milk (8 ounces)
 In microwave-safe bowl, stir oats, milk, cinnamon, vanilla and brown sugar. Microwave on high 30-60 seconds and stir.
 Cut banana in half crosswise. Cut 1 1/8-inch thick coin slice from flat ends of each banana half. Place two banana slices in upper third of oatmeal bowl, side by side, to make eyes. Top each banana slice with one blueberry. Place remaining banana halves at top of bowl, hanging out, to create ears. Place strawberry in middle of bowl to make nose then drizzle chocolate, if desired, to make mouth and whiskers. Serve with 8-ounce glass of real milk for added nutrition.

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INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Interlake Lightning pair picked by Selkirk Steelers in MJHL draft

By Brian Bowman

A pair of Interlake Lightning forwards were selected in the annual Manitoba Junior Hockey League draft last Sunday.

And they were both picked by the Selkirk Steelers.

With their first pick, which was third overall, Selkirk chose Hayden Wheddon. Wheddon had a tremendous season, scoring 42 goals while producing 74 points.

The Stonewall product also played several games with the U17 Prep Lightning.

"He's a very high level, elite player who can score and he has a high level IQ," said Steelers' head coach Hudson Friesen. "He's a guy that can skate re-

ally well and we see him contributing in a big way at our level."

In the fifth round (52nd overall), the Steelers' selected Rylan Slatcher.

"He was a linemate with Hayden for at least the few games that I saw," Friesen noted. "He's another offensive player that can really bring it. He's a 200-foot player and his play in the (defensive) zone is very good. He takes care of both ends and plays the right way. He's a guy that we feel fits into our organization very well."

Selkirk's other picks included the Winnipeg Warriors' brother duo of forwards Aidan and Nolan Anderson, defencemen Ethan Alsip and Parker Lee, and Eastman Selects' forward Braden Berube.



Rylan Slatcher



Hayden Wheddon

Sport Manitoba postpones Manitoba Games to 2021

Submitted by Sport Manitoba

To keep Manitobans safe and reduce the spread of COVID-19, Sport Manitoba and the Dauphin Host Society announced Monday that the Manitoba Games powered by Manitoba Hydro that were set to take place from Aug. 9 to 15, 2020, have been postponed.

The Games will now take place in Dauphin from July 11 to 17, 2021.

Sport Manitoba and the Dauphin Host Society worked with the City of Dauphin and the Provincial Sport Or-

ganizations to reach the collective decision to postpone the event, and will work with all Games partners in the coming months to continue to prepare and plan for the new date.

"This was a difficult decision to make as we know thousands of Manitobans are affected, including athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, sponsors and people across the province who planned on attending and being a part of the Games," said Jeff Hnatiuk, president and CEO of Sport Manitoba.

"However, the conclusion to postpone was necessary as public health and safety is ultimately our top priority, and we have to do everything we can to keep our communities safe during this health crisis. We want to sincerely thank everyone for their patience and understanding throughout this whole process and we are looking forward to coming together with our sporting community in Dauphin in 2021."

The Manitoba Games powered by Manitoba Hydro are staged every two

years and alternate between summer and winter sporting events. It is the largest ongoing multi-sport event in the province. The Games involve upwards of 3,000 athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers, and represent an opportunity for young athletes to compete and prepare to reach national and international sporting stages.

The sports showcased at the 2021 Manitoba Games include athletics, baseball, basketball, cycling, golf, rugby, sailing, soccer, softball, swimming, triathlon and volleyball.

Baseball Manitoba suspends all sanctioned activities until May 30

Staff

Due to the current situation regarding COVID-19, Baseball Manitoba announced it has suspended all sanctioned activities until May 30.

The announcement was made on Baseball Manitoba's website on April 20.

This means that the season will not begin in May as it usually does. By mid-May, Baseball Manitoba will have new information and be able to update their membership before May 30.

"Manitoba health guidelines and the status of public parks are the major

factors affecting a baseball season," read a statement. "Baseball Manitoba will continue to monitor these factors with local baseball personnel across the province. At this time, we remain hopeful that baseball will be played this summer."

With a possible delayed start to the season, Baseball Manitoba and the championship hosts also remain hopeful that provincial championships will take place.

"This may mean that events are moved from July to August and happen one month later than usual," read the statement. "Baseball Manitoba

may decide, depending on the start date of the season, to cancel provincial championships in support of a longer playing season for all teams."

Last Thursday, Baseball Canada announced that it has cancelled all 2020 national championships due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision affects 11 national tournaments, including the Women's Invitational, Aug. 20-23, in Stonewall.

Baseball Canada said in a release that the health and safety of organizers, athletes and fans was the priority in arriving at the decision.

"After extensive discussions and

careful consideration among our executive committee and board of directors, we arrived at the decision to cancel all of our 2020 national championships," Baseball Canada president Jason Dickson said in a statement. "Although this decision will be disappointing to many across the Canadian baseball community, we felt it was the best decision to make given that the health and welfare of our members is paramount in these uncertain times."

Baseball Canada said individual provincial members will decide the course of their seasons and associated provincial tournaments on their own.

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Municipal Building Inspector/ Public Works Manager

The R.M. of Grahamdale is accepting applications for a combined position of Certified Building Inspector and Public Works Manager.

Summary of each position is as follows:

Municipal Building Inspector

Under the general direction of the Chief Administrative Officer the Municipal Building Inspector is responsible for enforcement and maintenance of the building code, building by-law and zoning by-law, plan examinations, on site building and plumbing inspections for all structures that fall under Part 9 of The Manitoba Building and Plumbing Code.

Public Works Manager

Under the general direction of the Chief Administrative Officer the Public Works Manager is responsible for the planning and management of activities and operations in the areas of Public Works, Transportation, Drainage and Landfill operations. Coordinates the resources, including personnel, contractors and equipment to ensure the efficient maintenance of the Municipality's infrastructure including streets, sidewalks, roads, trees, buildings, other public property, lagoons and waste disposal sites. Work to be performed under minimal supervision with considerable independent judgement and action required in matters which are within the framework of established procedure.

Please visit our website at www.grahamdale.ca to obtain the full job descriptions. Applicants must possess a valid Manitoba driver's license and must be familiar with Microsoft Office.

Please apply in writing to Building Inspector/ Public Works Manager Position, R.M. of Grahamdale, PO Box 160, 23 Government Road, Moosehorn, MB R0C 2E0 or email to rm606@grahamdale.ca giving full particulars as to education, experience and salary expectations and must include two references. Applications must be received by 12 Noon, Friday, May 8 2020.

We thank all applicants for their interest but only those considered for interviews will be contacted.

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 Rural Municipality of
FISHER

Box 280, Fisher Branch, MB R0C 0Z0
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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY SEASONAL TRACTOR OPERATOR/LABOURER

Tractor operator required to mow grass and/or brush. The applicant will assist Public Works with other duties as assigned. The position requires a self-motivated person who can work with little supervision and punctuality is a must. The successful applicant will be mechanically inclined with the ability to perform maintenance and light repairs. Hours of work are Monday to Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. with statutory holidays off.

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• Valid driver's licence (Class 3 an asset)
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The Rural Municipality of Fisher supports equitable employment practices and promotes representation of a designated group (woman, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, visible minorities)

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Kelly Marykuca, Chief Administrative Officer
Box 280, Fisher Branch, Manitoba R0C 0Z0
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For further information, or to arrange to view the property, please phone 204 768 2848.

Arborg Community Cemetery

Tenders are being taken for the lawn care and general maintenance of cemetery grounds for the 2020 cutting season. Tenders should include cost per cut. Fuel and machinery to be provided by successful tender. **Apply to:**
Kris Gudmundson
Box 713 Arborg, Manitoba, R0C 0A0
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CARD OF THANKS

Bardarson - We wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for the phone calls, text messages, cards, flowers, baking and food received following Sheldon's untimely passing. Thank you for the expressions of sympathy and heartwarming tributes to Sheldon on his memorial wall. Your thoughtfulness during this very difficult time will not be forgotten. Thank you to the Paramedics, RCMP and Neil Bardal Funeral Centre for their care and compassion.

-Leonard, Lorraine and family

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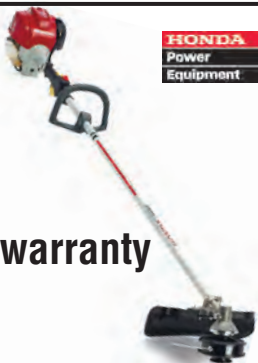


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