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Facing off with COVID

EXPRESS PHOTO BY FELICIA MILLER

Eriksdale Hospital staff were outfitted with new headbands and head pieces made by local seamstresses Dorene Peterson and Heather Blue. Pictured back, left to right: Joji John, Sherry Thorgillson, Sheryl McLeod, Charlene Thorkelson, Becky Desjarlais. Front row: Bonnie Lussier, Brindy Bishop and Leah Hordal.

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Former frontline worker; teacher helping health care

By Evan Matthews

A few residents along Highway 6 are trying to keep frontline workers safe as COVID-19 in Canada has hit the three-month mark.

Dorene Petersen of Lundar and Heather Blue of Eriksdale have been spearheading efforts to create medical skullcaps, headbands and facemasks for frontline workers in the region.

"I started by making masks for the Lundar Personal Care Home, where my daughter works. She asked me to make some," said Petersen, who started the facemasks near the end of March.

"I did that for a couple of weeks, but I'm out of elastic for masks now. But the masks are washable and I don't think they need any more (at the Lundar PCH)."

Because the masks are made of cotton, Petersen said the facemasks don't meet medical standards, meaning the hospital couldn't use the masks.

However, the masks are fine for the care home, she said.

"The girls feel better wearing them," said Petersen. "I'm just happy to do something useful for them."

After creating the masks, Petersen and her good friend Lillian Halldorson received a request to make medical skullcaps for E.M. Crowe Memorial Hospital workers in Eriksdale, starting the project on April 7. Petersen used to work at the Eriksdale Hospital, she said.

"We've done about skull 30 caps for workers at in Eriksdale."

Medical skullcaps are worn by frontline workers over all of the hair, scalp and ears to minimize skin and hair shedding, which protects patients from bacteria. By adding buttons to them, Petersen said it offers professionals a place to attach their face masks too, saving stress on the ears.

"I looked up to see if I could find a pattern on YouTube, and I did. I just started making them," said Petersen.



EXPRESS PHOTO BY HEATHER BLUE
Heather Blue is seen working in her home, creating masks for the general population at request.

"When you're in a small town, whatever materials you have is what you have to sew. Some of the caps may not be the prettiest in the world, but they do the job."

Though not working together directly, Blue said she also recognized a need for accessories to alleviate physical stress on health-care workers.

In order to prevent people from hoarding facemasks that meet medical standards — leaving those masks available to frontline workers — Blue began creating facemasks for the general population at the end of March.

"I had my family in mind, mostly. ... While I was doing that, I had a request from one of the nurses in Eriksdale if I could make something to alleviate some of the ear issues they were having, associated with wearing masks all the time," said Blue.

Similar to Petersen's skullcaps, Blue created headbands that have buttons on the side for workers to hook their masks on. After learning of Petersen's project, Blue said there was no need to double up.

"They're doing a great job; they're making awesome head coverings. ... It's amazing how things just fall into place sometimes," said Blue.

"I did the headbands when I was asked, and once I got those done, I decided to focus on facemasks. I'm just working on that now, for people who request them."

Blue added thanks to Connie Fingland, who has been helping her, as Blue said she has sent masks to personal care homes in Eriksdale, Lundar and even Pilot Mound, where her mother resides.

Fisher Branch RCMP investigating serious off-road vehicle collision

Submitted by RCMP

On April 18 at approximately 11:05 p.m., Fisher Branch RCMP received a report of an off-road vehicle collision on East Road on the Peguis First Nation.

Officers attended and have determined that a 62-year-old male from Peguis was riding an ATV when it entered the ditch and rolled onto its

side. The operator, who was wearing a helmet, was thrown from the ATV.

The 62-year-old male was transported to hospital with life-threatening injuries and remains in critical condition.

Visibility is believed to be a factor in the collision.

Fisher Branch RCMP continue to investigate.

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FOR INFORMATION ON COVID-19:

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Applying pandemic principles elsewhere

By Evan Matthews

Whether you agree or disagree with worldwide government response to COVID-19, there is no denying the impact of the virus. The closures, our social lives, the way COVID has changed our lives is significant.

We've seen what can change globally — and how quickly the change can happen — when world leaders focus on a serious issue.

What could be possible if the world applied this concept to other serious issues; if we all pulled the symbolic rope in the same direction?

What if we applied the same principles we've applied to COVID-19, the same global change, to issues like world poverty, world hunger or even climate change?

Each one of the aforementioned issues — poverty, hunger, climate change — has the potential to do what COVID-19 has done: kill a lot of people globally and destroy the world's economy.

Yet, for some reason, world leaders have responded to the global pandemic with unprecedented aggression; measures (much of) society has not seen in this lifetime.

Why have we allowed other issues to fall by the wayside?

Through this pandemic, people from many differing walks of life and professions — including technological experts, cultural critics and even world leaders — talk about how this pandemic could change the future world we live in.

We have been presented with a never-before-seen opportunity: the slowing — if not complete halt — of almost everything we've come to know.

We have seen firsthand how quickly things can change, if needed, if deemed mandatory.

With that being said, how can the world resume as it was pre-COVID-19 and not acknowledge the implementation of potential solutions to global issues as mandatory?

How does re-distributing the world's wealth to those who need it the most — ensuring a roof over people's heads and clothes on their backs — not be deemed an essential priority, or mandatory, now that we've seen what can happen when we are unified?

How does ensuring food to those who have none not be deemed as possible, plausible and/or probable;

mandatory, now that we've seen how quickly change can happen in times of crises?

How does investing in solar and wind power, making a switch to electric vehicles, mandating more efficient buildings now seem more invasive than a complete shutdown of the economy — a more difficult adjustment than that of the public health orders requiring us to stay at home every single day?

With the novel coronavirus, we have seen government implement sweeping powers to health care and wage subsidy, nearly guaranteeing a healthy well-being to most everyone affected by this crisis.

How can that notion not extend to those living in crises every day, both at home and abroad?

The more genuine reality is that it is unlikely that the coronavirus pandemic will lead to solving issues brought up in this editorial. But as a society, we now know what that change can look like and that it is possible. It may be naive to believe the issues discussed here will change overnight, but at this point, it's just as naive to believe they can't.

letter to the editor

Letters to the Editor:
letters@expressweeklynews.ca

Disappointed

I live just three miles east of Arborg. With the support of my family, I have been sheltering at home since March 17, having made only one trip to town in that time until yesterday. I had unavoidable errands to perform.

Imagine my surprise when I had difficulty parking due to the many vehicles already on the street. The

Co-op car park was also crowded. There were many people out and about. I did not see anyone wearing a mask.

I was informed by reliable sources that people are not staying at home as recommended. Staff at the grocery store see the same customers daily and, generally, it is business as usual.

It worries me that since the incidents of infection are slowing, peo-

ple may think that the worst is over and we are going to be all right. But now is the time for us all to be especially vigilant and follow the protocols developed by health experts. Stay at home!

It will take only one careless person to start an outbreak in our community with disastrous consequences.

Georgina Ball,
disappointed and angry at home

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Visiting elephant retirement park a highlight for Myskiw

By Bryan Myskiw

Warren's Bryan Myskiw ventured out on a backpacking journey to Southeast Asia on March 8. He is sharing his photos and weekly adventures with readers.

The rushing city of Bangkok ceased to exist in the city centre upon my arrival. The shoulder-to-shoulder crowds on streets and traffic jams throughout the night were absent. I was told by my driver that the day after my arrival over 100,000 people left Bangkok to return to their native homes outside of the city.

I arrived on the last day foreign travellers were being welcomed into Bangkok without needing to quarantine. Pubs, restaurants and some tourist sites timely announced their closure upon my arrival of March 22. The iconic Grand Palace of Bangkok closed on March 21 just an hour after my arrival to the city. While sites like Wat Arun and Wat Pho (known for its large reclining Buddha) remained open, both had limited visitors of only two to five couples when I visited. The kilometre-long Khao San Road saw only a handful of restaurants open, offering only takeout options and limited selections. Domestic travel had even become limited.

My daily temperature checks average three to four a day, with required facemasks and sanitizing stations at any spot where people gather.

While I await my flight home from Bangkok, (a re-re-re-re-scheduled flight), I decided to take a 13-hour sleeper train up to the city of Chiang Mai, which is known for its elephant sanctuaries and jungle tours.

The train station that I arrived at for an overnight trip up to Chiang Mai was eerily silent and still. Waiting areas were halved. Notices attached to every set of middle seats warning not to sit in them to protect against COVID-19 transmission.

With talk of case levels rising in Bangkok, I figured it would be best to stay somewhere a bit more secluded in the more northern part of Thailand.

However, as many have discovered timing is everything in the current



Bryan with one of the elephants at the Elephant Retirement Park.

state of the world and what is fine one hour will completely change in the next.

I arrived to Chiang Mai at 9 a.m. on March 24 to find that the elephant sanctuaries and jungle zip line that I had checked to confirm with only the night before had closed and would remain closed through to the end of April. Many temples had also taken precaution by closing high traffic sites.

Travellers here, most from European countries, have found themselves stranded in the country either unable to book flights back or fearful of returning home to cases in Spain, Italy and United Kingdom. Some have sought to extend their visa stays by 30 days and live in isolation here for the foreseeable future.

My arrival into Chiang Mai was met with high levels of smog — some reporting levels 12 times the “safe” level. This, combined with the 39-degree temperatures and requirements of wearing masks, has naturally made it difficult to breathe, in turn putting my hypochondriacal senses on high alert.

Leaving behind the consistent high alerts of the current state of the world for a moment, I was grateful to have found one elephant sanctuary that had managed to remain open for the time being. Elephant Retirement Park is a not-for-profit foundation set to



PHOTOS BY BRYAN MYSKIW

Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, Thailand.

rescue elephants from circuses and elephant riding camps in Thailand. The price of these elephants range from \$75,000 to over \$110,000 CAD, more for the younger elephants.

One elephant that I met here was Bella, who is 27 years old and used to be involved with a circus performance. Sadly, some time before her arrival to the park Bella fell from one of the drums that she was forced to stand on and broke her front leg. For the last seven years, she has spent her time at the elephant sanctuary becoming a “second mother” to some of the younger elephants.

The park cares for seven elephants on 4.5 acres of land, one hour outside of Chiang Mai.

Elephants typically eat 10 per cent of their body weight, which means they enjoy eating most of the day. Here they are fed bananas and other fruits root vegetables, shoots, grasses and banana trees.

My day was upgraded when I was picked up and discovered that I would be the only visitor for the day and last visitor for a month. Alex, my guide for the day, wasted no time putting me to

work with a machete to cut down the banana trees from a local farm that had harvested the bananas.

One of the highlights for me were the bathing exercises that involved me in a mud pit and dugout with these massive animals.

A truly surreal experience to be so close to two elephants, one flopping around in the mud while you scratch her side and the other inches away from you spraying themselves down.

On March 26, the Thai government began restricting traffic and curfews between 8 p.m. to 5 a.m., with high penalties for those who do not abide to anything deemed “non-essential.” This is their first attempt to limit the number of causes, which by March 26 totalled over 1,000 local cases in Bangkok. If this approach does not improve the spread, the government has warned further restrictions will be in place in the coming days.

With talk of interprovincial travel being locked down within the next week, I decided to return to Bangkok, where my flight is as of this moment still scheduled to depart next week.

Annual Winnipeg Folk Festival cancelled for 2020

By Jennifer McFee

The old saying insists the show must go on, but that won't be the case for the Winnipeg Folk Festival this year.

The 47th edition of the Folk Fest, scheduled from July 9 to 12, has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Local musicians Cory Sulyma and

Erin Corbin of Two Crows for Comfort have been involved with the much-anticipated festival for many years.

“We were not surprised that the Folk Fest was cancelled of course, but we were definitely still disappointed to hear the news,” Sulyma said.

“We’ve been going to the Folk Fest for years, whether it’s been to play on

stage or just to hang out and enjoy, so it’s going to be a strange summer without the festivities. But we’re already counting down until 2021.”

Refunds are available for anybody who has already purchased a ticket. However, Folk Fest organizers are also encouraging patrons to consider donating their tickets as a tax-deductible

contribution to the organization.

More information about donations and refunds will be announced soon, and ticket holders will also receive an email with instructions.

For more information, visit www.winnipegfolkfestival.ca. Anyone with questions can email info@winnipegfolkfestival.ca.

Interlake well represented at provincial Good Roads competition

By Evan Matthews

Despite its annual general meeting and awards ceremony being cancelled due to COVID-19, the Interlake has been well represented by the 2019 Manitoba Good Roads Association Awards.

The MGRA acknowledged several Interlake communities over a number of categories, with winners coming from the RMs of Rosser, Rockwood, Woodlands, as well as the City of Selkirk, the towns of Stonewall and Teulon, and the Village of Dunnottar.

But two individual winners, specifically, stood out. Brian and Lois Borkowsky of Teulon, as well as Suzanne and Gavin Jones of the RM of Woodlands, were recognized for efforts on their properties.

The MGRA gifts winners a plaque inscribed with the details of their victory, but the AGM and awards ceremony — originally scheduled on April 13 — has since been postponed due to the pandemic.

The Joneses won the Lewis Instruments Shield for District 1, the Best Farm Home Grounds award.

Originally, the Joneses were in Florida for the winter when they had been notified of the win.

"This is something I've wanted to win for many, many years but never put our names in," said Suzanne.

"God really blessed us with the win. I was really happy about it. We've done so much work to our yard."

The couple has a number of (raised) flower beds and pergolas across the property, Suzanne said, having added trees over the years as well as two greenhouses, a water fountain and a pond.

Visitors frequent the property often, she said.

"They tell us it's just like a park," said Suzanne. "It's a nice thing to have been awarded something



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY BRIAN BORKOWSKY
Brian and Lois Borkowsky's yard won the Best Urban Home Grounds Award.

for the work."

The Borkowskys won the Jeffries Nurseries Ltd. Shield, the Best Urban Home Grounds award, in the population of 1,001 to 2,000 category.

This is the Borkowskys' third win, but as an ex-farmer who is now retired, Brian said it means just as much as it did the first time.

"Our property has always been a work in progress. We moved to Teulon in 1976 and started developing the yard in 1981," said Brian.

"Each year we try and work on different perennial beds, adding different statues or interesting works of art. ... Both Lois and I enjoy designing parts of the yard to make it interesting."

Coming from a farming background, Lois said the yard is her husband's chance to farm at home.

The couple has a vegetable garden, many different flower beds, as well as areas of stone and bark with shrubbery.

Other Interlake winners

The RM of Rosser won the AMM Shield for District 1, the Best Maintained System of Rural Municipal Roads award.

The RM of Rockwood won the Brandt Tractor Shield for District 1, the Most Improved System of Municipal Roads award. The RM of Rockwood also won the Canada Culvert Shield, the Highest Standard of New or Rebuilt Road award.

In the Urban Beautification Competition, the City of Selkirk won the Brandon Clarion Hotel and Suites Shield for the population of 7,501 plus category. The Town of Stonewall won the CAA Manitoba Shield for the population of 2,001 to 7,500 category. The Town of Teulon won the Western Financial Group Shield for the population of 1,001 to 2,000 category. The Village of Dunnottar won the Handy Hitch Manufacturing Shield for the population of up to 1,000 category.

The Manitoba Good Roads Association was formed in 1909 to promote the development of roads in Manitoba, according to the organization.

True to the founders' aim of promoting better roads in Manitoba, the organization said it presents awards to recognize achievement in road construction and maintenance, as well as awards for community and individual home grounds beautification.

Prairie Dog Central Railway 2020 season postponed

By Evan Matthews

With many industries and businesses coming off the tracks amidst COVID-19 concerns, the Prairie Dog Central finds itself in a similar position.

When the train doesn't operate, general manager Paul Newsome said there is zero revenue from ticket sales. But given the situation, the PDC will postpone its scheduled opening.

"During the pandemic, we are demonstrating our responsibility to both the public as well as our volunteer members by delaying the opening of our season," said Newsome.

"We do not want to contribute to spreading COVID-19 to anyone, and we will take whatever steps are needed to reduce the risk of contributing to the

spread of this virus."

The PDC's original opening date was scheduled for Sunday, May 10, Mother's Day.

Newsome said the organization had three operating trips scheduled for May but have cancelled all operations for the time being. Management will reassess in mid-May to decide whether or not operations will take place in June, he said.

"We are hopeful," said Newsome. "But everything depends on how, and if, this virus is contained."

The Prairie Dog Central Railway is a heritage railway with regular trips scheduled throughout the summer almost every Saturday, Sunday and holiday Monday from May through September.

Each trip typically lasts roughly four hours, with a

stop in Grosse Isle.

The PDC often does seasonal trips, too, including Howlin' Halloween Express Trains, as well as a Santa Train.

Starting in 1970, The Vintage Locomotive Society Inc. opened the PDC out of Charleswood on the now-abandoned Canadian National Cabot Subdivision, according to the organization.

From 1975 to 1996, the train operated out of St. James, immediately west of Polo Park on a now-abandoned Canadian National Railways line, according to the organization.

In 1999, the station, now a federal heritage site, moved to its present location at Inkster Junction in Rosser.

Scammers continue to threaten Manitoba Hydro customers with disconnection

Submitted by Manitoba Hydro

Aggressive scammers continue to target Manitoba Hydro customers throughout the province, threatening to shut off their power unless immediate payment is made.

Scammers contact customers by phone or email claiming they have an outstanding bill. They then demand payments of up to \$1,500. The scammers say failure to pay within 30 minutes will result in their electrical service being disconnected.

Chris McColm, Manitoba Hydro's security and in-

vestigations supervisor, said the scammers appear to be taking advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're all under a lot of stress and these scammers are trying to take advantage of that," he said. "These scammers are extremely convincing. With so many people at home, they're preying on our anxiety and hope we let our guard down."

McColm said Manitoba Hydro has suspended all service disconnections indefinitely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We will never phone you and demand immedi-

ate payment by a prepaid card or a money order," he said.

McColm also said scammers falsify their caller ID information to make it appear they're calling from Manitoba Hydro. Customers should call Manitoba Hydro at 204-480-5900 or 1-888-624- 9376 if they get a call or email and are unsure if it's authentic. Customers can also send a message to the utility's Facebook or Twitter pages @manitobahydro.

Interlake food banks contemplate collaboration

By Evan Matthews

The Riverton and District Friendship Centre's food bank is in dire financial need and the organization is looking to local government for help.

Having approached the RM of Bifrost-Riverton with a \$5,000 request in February, the RDFC food bank has since approached the Town of Arborg with the same request. Neither municipality has yet to make a decision — tabling discussions each month since February — as both are looking to finalize 2020 budgets in the near future.

"All we're looking for is answers," said RDFC executive director Tanis Grimolfson.

"We're not asking for food donations; we're asking for money to help operate the building."

In 39 years of operation, Grimolfson said 2019 was the first year RDFC had requested funds from both the Town of Arborg and the RM of Bifrost-Riverton.

The RM of Bifrost-Riverton provided \$1,000 to the food bank.

Reeve Brian Johnson and council sent a statement to the *Express* via email.

"The RM of Bifrost-Riverton recognizes having an active food bank and friendship centre benefits our community in many ways, and appreciates the hard work and determination of everyone involved with the RDFC," the statement reads.

"The RDFC is the only food bank that has submitted a 2020 municipal grant request (to us). Their request, as well as the requests from other organizations, have been referred to municipal budget discussions. These discussions are in the preliminary stages and no decisions have been made," it reads.

Before making any funding decision, Arborg Mayor Peter Dueck said council had asked the RDFC food bank for information pertaining to its Arborg numbers and how many Arborg families access the RDFC food bank.

On average, the RDFC food bank services 111 families in total (176 adults and 92 children) bi-weekly, according to Grimolfson, with 73 adults

and 44 children coming from Arborg.

"This is about feeding vulnerable populations in our region. We drive hampers to Arborg for people who cannot access vehicles or cannot make arrangements," said Grimolfson.

"It is now time for (councils) to step up and help us make a difference in the lives of many people in this region," she said, also noting that food banks are there for everyone, including people experiencing temporary layoffs or transition periods.

The Bridge Food Bank

In an effort to ensure the region's vulnerable populations are fed, another Arborg food bank has opened up, called The Bridge. The Bridge is an extension of the Winnipeg organization Youth for Christ, according to The Bridge's program co-ordinator Krista Klassen.

The plan was not originally to open a food bank, but after offering cooking classes as part of the drop-in centre's programming roughly two years ago, Klassen said a need within the community emerged.

"We ended up getting more donations for the cooking class than we knew what to do with, so we started sending home care packages with the kids," said Klassen.

"We didn't have any intention of starting a food bank, but donations kept growing, and kids and families were expressing a need. ... Finally, we just decided to call ourselves a food bank," she said, adding The Bridge has been operating as such for about a year.

Prior to COVID-19, The Bridge was serving, on average, 15 to 20 families (50 individuals) bi-weekly, but Klassen said the numbers have grown since the pandemic. Now, on average, The Bridge is servicing 33 families (90 individuals).

People accessing The Bridge come from as far as Fisher Branch and Arnes, according to Klassen.

The Town of Arborg is considering becoming a sponsor of The Bridge, according to Klassen, which she said sounded very promising. However,

Mayor Peter Dueck slowed any guarantees.

"The town acknowledges the need for food banks in the region and has never chosen one food bank over another. We celebrate citizen initiative," said Dueck.

"The town has not finished its 2020 budget, so nothing is committed and/or established for food banks whether it be for (RDFC or The Bridge). These discussions are not complete."

Potential collaboration?

The theme from all involved parties has been ensuring vulnerable populations are fed.

With that theme in mind, all parties were agreeable to potential collaboration if it resulted in maximized service to region and subsequently maximized funding from the RM and the town.

"The potential for collaboration is something we want to be very aware of. We definitely aren't looking to step on anyone's toes. ... I feel like if we can better take care of Arborg, then RDFC is likely to be able to take better care of Riverton and the surrounding area," said Klassen.

"If we could collaborate versus step on toes, we have an opportunity to really expand the region's service, so that nobody is being left behind or falling through the cracks."

When asked about potential collaboration, RDFC's Grimolfson said, "It would be fantastic. We just want to have vulnerable populations fed."

While Arborg Mayor Peter Dueck

said the town does not have any control over how the food banks collaborate or work together or organize, he said unity is in everyone's best interest.

"We're in this together, and we certainly would hope and want the food banks to work collaboratively," said Dueck. "The focus should be about feeding the hungry."

RDFC financial background

Grimolfson said if the RM of Bifrost-Riverton and the Town of Arborg were to both grant the requests, RDFC would still have to do fundraising to cover operating costs.

The RDFC food bank's building has operating costs including taxes, utilities and insurance totalling in the neighbourhood of \$14,000.

In June 2019, the RDFC food bank moved out of the main RDFC building when the organization purchased the Riverton Supply Building. The purchase was made possible through \$199,000 via the Government of Canada's Homelessness Partnering Strategy program.

Grimolfson added the RDFC food bank receives donations from local organizations including ECBVerdyol (Erosion Control) and the Riverton Elks.

Adding to the RDFC's difficulties, was a cut from the province that resulted in a "Partners for Careers" position being cut from the centre, which totalled \$53,000 annually.

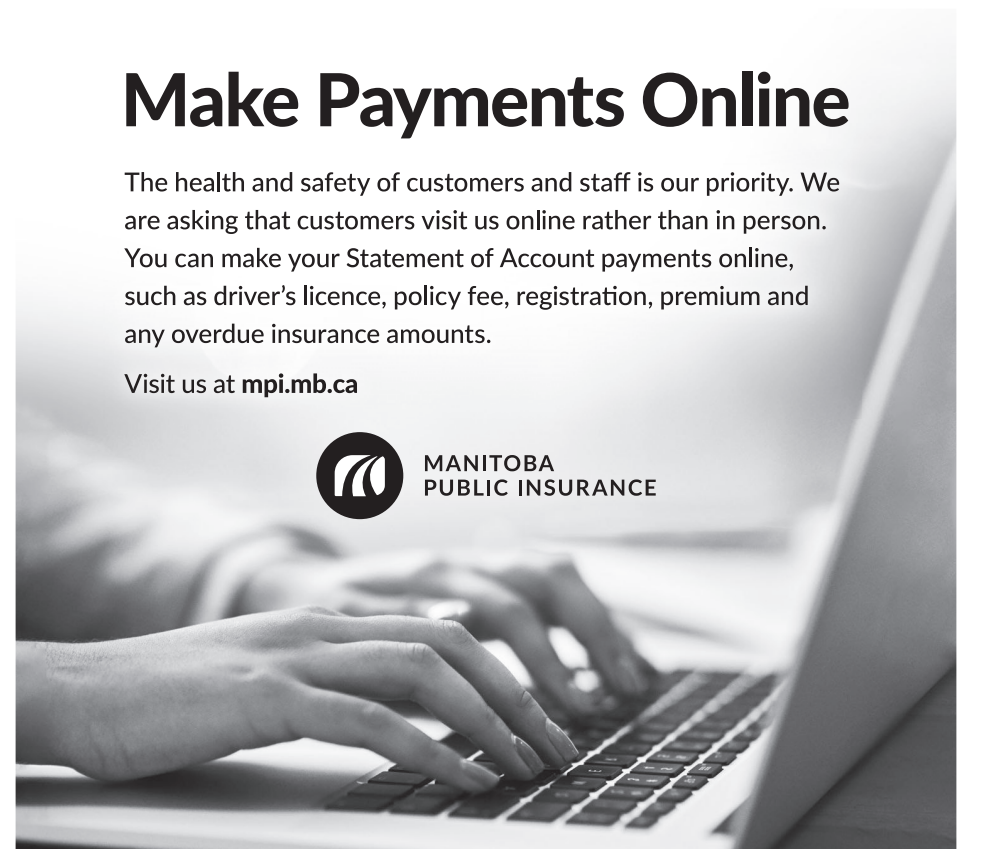
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Lake Winnipeg fishers go under as COVID shuts down markets; governments walk away

By Patricia Barrett

With COVID-19 drawing the shutters across businesses and industries worldwide, Lake Winnipeg commercial fishers have been left with no market into which to sell pickerel (walleye), their primary species.

Fisher Bill Buckels said he and his fellow fishers will take a hit as they won't be able to sell millions of pounds of fish they expect to catch this year to "vanished" local, domestic and international markets.

"There's no market for pickerel," he said. "This is a lake of almost 800 commercial fishers and we have no place to go with our fish except for a few restaurants that are only doing takeout."

Fishers learned last week that there'll be no help coming from the provincial government or from the federal government and its Crown corporation, the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation (FFMC), which had shut down Lake Winnipeg's winter fishery a week early last month after it stopped buying, he said.

FFMC buys the majority of Manitoba's fish and sells it mainly to the U.S. and to European and Asian countries. It had bought the catch from the winter season, but it won't be able to sell it until 2021, said Buckels. It's sitting in freezers at the moment and the corporation won't buy any more – apart from whitefish – until those freezers empty.

The spring commercial fishing season is slated to open in fewer than six weeks, after spawning tests have been completed, but it's uncertain whether there'll be much of a season at all.

"If we can fish safely with this virus going around,



EXPRESS FILE PHOTO BY PATRICIA BARRETT
Lake Winnipeg walleye (pickerel).

we'll be fishing with no place to send our pickerel. And we'll be competing with other fishers across Canada in the same predicament," said Buckels. "The value of our quota represents a huge investment tied to the success of the fishery, so fishers expect to take a double hit this year in both their investment and their income."

Over the past few weeks, Buckels said fishers have been speaking with provincial and federal representatives and came up with an idea to help them get through the economic crisis. But talks ground to a halt last week. By Friday, FFMC added to their stress by refusing to buy any more fish other than whitefish.

"We want to be paid not to fish because we don't have a market. We would take a year off and let things recover. Almost every fisher agreed that we should be paid out at \$2 a pound to take the entire year off," he said. "That would save the government money in the long run. They didn't like our idea."

FFMC competes for the same markets that buy-

ers from Lake Erie and the rest of Canada do, and everyone is facing the same dilemma as restaurant and hospitality job losses "continue to pile up," said Buckels, referring to a recent study that estimates up to 60 per cent of all hotel and restaurant jobs are at risk as a result of the highly infectious COVID-19.

Despite market losses, it's unacceptable to have two levels of government "walk away from us," he said. FFMC has a mandate to increase returns to fishers and to accept all legally caught fish offered for sale. For its part, the province could loosen regulations to allow inter-provincial retail sales during this time. It helps farmers with crop losses, but has done "nothing" for us.

The federal government has blamed trade agreements as a reason to not support fishers through past economic shortfalls, he added, "now in our hour of need they'll be citing Covid-19" and an "unavoidable market collapse when they've done absolutely nothing to provide a domestic retail market for Canadian fish."

FFMC should have been "leading the charge to retail" to support Manitoba's commercial fishing industry and to create domestic food security, he said. Lake Winnipeg fish could be sold and promoted in supermarkets across Canada where foreign competitors have been allowed to sell their fish.

"Why couldn't our governments have secured the retail market? Why couldn't quick adjustments have been made months ago? They could have done a hot-fix on the fly," said Buckels. "They knew COVID was coming. It made its way into Japan on Jan. 14, and at the same time the freezers were filling up at Freshwater. Any fool could see what was coming."

Province gives a thumbs up to greenhouses as of April 16

By Evan Matthews

Despite some confusion last week, the Province of Manitoba has OK'd farmer's markets and greenhouses for operation, providing they follow public health orders and social distancing measures.

Last week, CTV reported Schriemers Market Garden Centre in Winnipeg was open to the public. Owner Scott Schriemer told CTV the province told him he was able to be open, though public health orders at the time had not listed greenhouses as an essential business.

"As a business owner, I'm forced to listen to and operate based on what the province is saying," said Lori Schellekens, owner of Whispering Oaks Greenhouse in the RM of Woodlands. Schellekens is also the municipality's reeve.

"Originally, we were planning to operate solely as an online store for the summer because we were not allowed to have people in our establishment."

Other Interlake greenhouses including Jasperson's Greenhouse and Nursery in Stonewall, Sabados Greenhouse near Lundar, Friendly Flowers just outside of Ar-

borg and Country Blessings in Gimli. All said they found their businesses in similar situations: originally limited to online sales.

With Schriemers operating before the change to the public health orders, many Interlake greenhouses were left to wonder about fairness and whether or not they, too, would be able to open up.

"We were concerned because we weren't allowed to open and we weren't sure about selling our product online," said Charlie Loewen, owner of Friendly Flowers.

"Online sales can sometimes be impractical in this industry."

But as of April 16, the public health orders had changed, citing a provision to allow farmer's markets, garden centres and greenhouses to operate, providing social distancing measures are in place.

Sabados is now open, with the others getting set to open. Jasperson's is aiming for April 25; Friendly Flowers is eyeing up May 5; Country Blessings, May 7; while Whispering Oaks is scheduled to open by Mother's Day at the latest.

"It's a huge relief," said Bruce Jasperson, owner of Jasperson's. "This year could have been lost; it would have been a massive shake up."

Despite the fact that greenhouses are now (either already or scheduled to) open to the public, Whispering Oaks, Sabados and Jasperson's all have launched online websites.

Challenges still remain, according to Karen



FILE PHOTO

Interlake greenhouses deemed essential services by the province as of April 16.

Sabados, owner of Sabados Greenhouse. In her store, for example, some of the buildings are 20 feet wide but have four-foot alleyways.

Social distancing will be challenging in that building, she said, so employees may have to monitor how many customers enter that specific building at once.

Owners of each greenhouse are still encouraging customers to look at products online to expedite shopping experiences, as curbside pickup and delivery is available.

"We want our customers to stay healthy," said Sabados. "We're hoping people will use the website to minimize traffic and arrange pickups."

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Teddy Bear Hunt keeps children active during COVID

By Evan Matthews

The Interlake continues to come up with creative ways to engage youth during COVID-19, as Fisher Branch hosted a Teddy Bear Hunt this past weekend.

Fisher Branch children walked around their community — socially distanced — and found over 200 bears on Saturday, April 18.

The event was organized by Fisher Branch teachers Shauna Smith and Amber Semenek.

"We posted our plan on the community Facebook page with some information as to how we saw it going. We asked people to hide teddy bears around the community," said Smith, who has been a teacher for over 20 years. Smith is also one of the two kindergarten teachers who created the Early Years remote learning website.

In order to engage more youth, Smith said they also posted the hunt on the Early Years remote learning website for the kids "as a challenge."

"We had people replying to our Facebook post saying, 'Yep, I'll put out and/or hide a couple bears.' Then businesses started jumping on board,



Elana Papio is seen counting bears around Fisher Branch.

too, and it spiralled with word of mouth," she said.

Over 50 property owners participated in hiding bears, according to Smith, as people got very creative in where they hid the bears.



Masterson and Cyrus Abas pose with a bear outside the Fisher Branch Health Centre. Messages of support for essential workers can be seen in the window.

There were bears in wheel barrows, on top of semi-trailers, on steps, on fences, in graters, windows or even bushes; some of the bears even had umbrellas.

Youth walked around the community, spotting the bears and kept a running total of how many bears they found, according to Smith. The teachers instructed the kids to never touch



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY SHAUNA SMITH Peyton Vandersteen, right, and her brothers saw a grand total of 263 bears on Saturday.

the bears.

"All the kids had an amazing time," said Smith.

"We don't have plans or dates yet, but we've had community members say we should do something similar again. We are definitely going to come up with something."

Mask-makers help protect residents and raise money for EBN food bank

By Patricia Barrett

A Loch Woods-based resident and her sister are providing free homemade cloth masks to all the people living in the subdivision to help protect them from COVID-19, and at the same time are raising money for the Evergreen Food Bank.

Jane Serr and her sister Laurie Lloyd, who works at the Gimli Co-op, have turned out scores of masks for Loch Woods residents, mainly older adults who'd be more susceptible to health complications from the highly infectious virus.

"This is not a time to lay off the pedal," said Serr, in the midst of making about 80 masks. "And because flu season will come around again, we can take the pressure off the hospital and our essential workers by making them feel a little more protected."

Serr said her sister Laurie used to work in an Alberta seniors' lodge that experienced an outbreak of the H1N1 virus, and their 96-year-old grandmother, who lived in another nursing home, died after contracting it.

"There was a real sense of urgency for Laurie and I to make masks," said Serr. "It really hits home when things like this happen."

Serr said she began making the masks for her sister's co-workers in a bid to save medical-grade masks for medical frontliners. After she heard Canadian health authorities say it was a good idea to wear face masks, she switched gears and started making them for her Loch



The homemade masks come in a variety of colours, patterns and sizes.

Woods' neighbours.

The two sisters are not charging residents for the masks but are "suggesting" they might wish to make a donation to the Evergreen Food Bank (EBN) in order to help the less fortunate obtain

food during the COVID crisis.

"We don't want to make any money off people, but if they want

Continued on page 13

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Pandemic parade in Fisher Branch

By Evan Matthews

Over 20 vehicles lined the streets in Fisher Branch, thanking frontline and essential workers for their dedication and bravery last Thursday.

Bob and Karen Schreyer organized a "parade" of sorts in which vehicles drove around Fisher Branch carrying messages of support for health-care workers and hospital staff, RCMP, and people working at the local Co-op.

"Many times, they're tired and overworked. Now we're dealing with COVID-19, and if it weren't for them, we'd be in a situation far worse than we ac-

tually are," said Bob, who added he and his wife both worked in the health-care industry for a number of years.

"We just wanted to show them that the community is behind them and supports them."

Karen had actually retired from the Fisher Branch Personal Care Home (PCH) two weeks ago, and her mother lives in the Fisher Branch PCH.

The couple said they see on a daily-basis how hard health-care staff works and how dedicated they are to their clients.

"I know how I'd feel if I had little ones at home and had to go out there into an environment



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY KAREN ABAS

Six-year-old Bentley Stranger-Abas holds a sign up just before the parade started in Fisher Branch, saying, "I miss my teacher."

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Vehicles involved carried messages of support, including this one which read, "Thank you frontline community workers."

that is extremely uncertain," said Bob.

"While we're all seemingly safe right now, you never know when you could come across the virus and be infected. These people have put their lives on hold to take care of our community.

"We're extremely grateful for what they're doing and what they continue to do, for who knows how long?" he said.

Roughly 20 vehicles participated in the parade, which started at the community hall west of town and proceeded down Main Street, turning down Chalet Drive to the PCH, and circled the parking lot.

Residents and staff were outside to take in the gratitude, Bob said.

Then the parade proceeded further east to the RCMP detachment office, through the parking lot the Co-op, and northeast to Hodgson, Man., to the Percy E Moore Hospital.

"We want them to know they aren't alone in this," said Bob. "We're all in this together."

Even when we're apart, we stand together.

While physical distancing is the right thing to do to defeat the COVID-19 virus, coming together to support one another is the most important thing we can do to keep our country strong. In these uncertain times, we need each other more than ever before.

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RBC has been serving Canadians for more than 150 years and we've seen a lot during that time. The challenges may differ, but the resolve of our employees never wavers. I want to thank all our employees for their compassion and extraordinary dedication during this time.

The situation today is very fluid, and as events evolve so will our approach.

We stand together with you.

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Group Head Personal and Commercial Banking
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For information on the **RBC Client Relief Program**, go to rbc.com/covid19 or book a call with an advisor at rbc.com/appointment.



EBN suffering revenue loss, but holding its own for now during COVID crisis

By Patricia Barrett

Gimli-based Evergreen Basic Needs (EBN) has suffered a drastic decline in revenue after it was forced to close its thrift store and café in order to keep customers safe from COVID-19. But its food bank is still operating and accepting monetary donations.

The Respun Threads store (clothing and household goods) and café, which have been closed for about a month, are major revenue generators for the food bank. Last year the thrift store generated over \$250,000 worth of revenue, said co-director Elaine Gibbs.

The numbers of established clients haven't increased thus far, and the food bank is able to meet demand.

"The need for food has stayed the same as it has been in the past," said Gibbs, who oversees EBN programs. "What we certainly are expecting is if [COVID] continues on for much longer, we are going to get a lot of new clients, people who have probably never used food banks before."

Gibbs, who spoke with the *Express* last week, said they're operating with a "skeleton staff" right now after having had to lay off people, some of whom were in their 60s and 70s, an age group that's susceptible to adverse health outcomes should they become infected with the virus.

EBN is a distribution hub that works closely with city-based food bank Winnipeg Harvest. EBN distributes 4,000 kilograms (10,000 pounds) of food each month to clients in Gimli, surrounding towns and First Nation communities in the east Interlake region.

Up until March, Harvest had been sending a truck to Gimli with about 10 pallets of food that Evergreen shared equally with the Selkirk, Riverton and Brokenhead food banks, said Gibbs. But Harvest stopped doing that because it's now "struggling with food."

"EBN really doesn't want [food] donations. We're asking people to donate money instead and when we need food, we'll go to the store and buy it," said Gibbs.

The reason EBN prefers money is that it doesn't have adequate staffing numbers at present to wipe down all the cans and packages of food with disinfectant. The fewer hands on the food, the safer it is for everybody.

EBN co-director Karen Bowman,

who oversees administration, said in addition to losing its revenue stream for the food bank's operation, EBN still has bills such as Hydro to pay.

"Generally, the store at this time of the year is bringing in about \$20,000 a month, and the café brings in between \$2,000 and \$2,500 a month," said Bowman. "That's gone."

Summer operations typically see revenues of \$25,000-\$30,000 a month from store sales and \$3,000-\$3,500 from the café. If COVID continues, EBN will lose those expected revenues as well.

Bowman said the federal government committed \$100 million to food banks this month. Food Banks Canada, an umbrella organization, is slated to receive \$50 million of that.

"We haven't heard anything from Food Banks Canada about how it's filtering down to us. At some point it will," said Bowman. "My best guess, at this point, is that it will go to Winnipeg Harvest because it supports us."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's April 3 announcement states that 1.1 million people used food banks each month in 2019, and it's anticipated that "visits to food banks will increase significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic."

The emergency funding can be used for food purchases, transportation and food distribution, the hiring of temporary help to fill volunteer shortages and personal protective equipment purchases to help reduce the spread of COVID among staff and food bank clients.

EBN has had to make some changes to the way it provides food. Before COVID, clients could come in the building for their hamper and rummage though give-way items. Now they have to come to the back door and pick up a pre-packed hamper, maintaining a safe distance away from staff.

EBN can also no longer obtain fresh food extras from Winnipeg Harvest.

"We can only give out hampers that have non-perishable food whereas before we would go to Winnipeg Harvest and pick up surplus things like bagged salads and vegetables," said Gibbs.

To help clients make the best use of non-perishables, EBN is throwing some recipe ideas into hampers.

"Right now, we're holding our own as far as providing food. We haven't turned anybody away. I'm not going



EXPRESS PHOTOS BY KAREN BOWMAN

Co-director Elaine Gibbs with pre-packaged food hampers.



EBN staff with a Winnipeg Harvest delivery.

to say it's not a stressful time. It is. It's a trying time. Our regular clients make minimum wage, they're single parents or they're seniors trying to live on pensions," said Gibbs. "It was

tough before COVID."

For information about how to make a monetary donation to the charity, call EBN at 204-642-9736.

Clarification for April 23 edition

Staff

In the story "Arborg to host licensed practical nursing program in 2021" in the April 16 edition of the *Express Weekly News*, we wrote that the Town of Arborg and the RM of Bifrost pledged support for two buildings in which the program will be held. Chamber president Susan

Bauernhuber had met with both councils which expressed their support but had not made a formal decision at that point as to whether or not to provide some funding.

We should have written that both councils have yet to approve any funding. We apologize for the oversight.

Gimli residents fundraising for local women's shelter and Siloam Mission

By Patricia Barrett

A Gimli couple is turning the negative effects of the COVID-19 crisis into a positive by launching a fundraiser for the Gimli-based Interlake Women's Resource Centre and Winnipeg's Siloam Mission.

David Podolchuk and Sherry Benson-Podolchuk designed COVID-19 buttons to thank people for doing their part to keep the community safe — by staying home — and will be donating sale proceeds to the two organizations that are experiencing some pressure to deliver services.

"Two weeks after [COVID-19] started, I thought we're stuck at home, feeling left out of the loop, and may think we're not doing anything to help," said Podolchuk, who serves in the air force. "They may not think they're doing anything, but they're doing a lot by staying home and playing their part."

By staying home, the public is helping protect elderly people who can experience adverse health effects from the highly contagious virus, as well as helping protect frontline health-care staff, he said.

The couple got some promotional assistance from Samantha Hampton of Creative Community Promotions, which provides communications and promotional advice to businesses. Hampton created a poster to help the Podolchuks get the word out about their fundraiser.

With people not working or having



I beat COVID-19 buttons

been laid off, Podolchuk said charitable donations have slacked off. And charities have lost many of their volunteers because of the need to maintain social distancing.

"I know donations are down for our local women's shelter. They're going to be down everywhere for charities," he said. "There was a great fear a couple of weeks ago that with people shut in and not working, it could cause a lot of stress at home."

Calls to a crisis line for women in Vancouver spiked 300 per cent at the beginning of April, according to media reports, as they're stuck at home with abusive partners and unable to escape. And on its website, Siloam Mission, which provides meals, housing placements and job readiness programs, is calling for donations to "help us survive COVID-19."

Other charities are also experienc-



EXPRESS PHOTO SUBMITTED

David Podolchuk and Sherry Benson-Podolchuk created the buttons to raise funds for the Gimli women's shelter and Siloam Mission.

ing shortfalls. Podolchuk said he was lined up to be a canvasser for the Canadian Cancer Society this month, but that's "not going to happen and they'll be down all that money."

He said he knows it's a "sacrifice" to stay home but it's the best way of preventing the accidental transmission of the virus to other people, especially society's most vulnerable.

"This is a huge social experiment. It's never been done before in modern

times," he said. "I thought this button would be a good way of letting people know they're playing their part, as well as helping the two charities."

The COVID buttons cost \$5 and can be ordered through Benson-Podolchuk's Star Agassi Consulting webpage. The buttons can be mailed, picked up (on the Podolchuk's doorstep with no contact) or delivered locally to people's doorsteps.



EXPRESS PHOTO COURTESY OF JANE SERR AND LAURRIE LLOYD

Jane Serr and Laurrie Lloyd have put the pedal down to make cloth face masks for Loch Woods residents.

> MASK-MAKERS, FROM PG. 9

to give to the food bank in Gimli that's a win-win for our efforts," said Serr. "The neighbours have been very responsive and we've raised a nice sum of money."

As of last Thursday, Serr said residents have donated almost \$400 to EBN. And they've also generously donated fabric to them to help keep the operation humming.

Serr and Lloyd have had their feet glued to the sewing machine pedal, judging by the variety of masks they've already made. They come in different colours and patterns and are washable.

"The ones I'm making form around your nose and go under your chin," said Serr. "I make them in three different sizes: small, medium and large for women and men — predominantly for seniors."

Serr said it feels somewhat strange wearing a mask in public, but it's had

an effect on other people.

"I noticed a big difference the first time I wore my mask. People were a little more apprehensive, thinking, 'Oh yeah, I've got to stay six feet away from you.' So it serves as a visual trigger when you're in a grocery store or in Rona or wherever," she said.

During a time of crisis, Serr said people naturally want to help others but don't always know what to do.

"This is a win-win endeavour. People feel good about giving to the food bank, and it makes me feel

good knowing they're somewhat protected," said Serr. "I know cloth masks aren't going to protect any of us from possibly contracting COVID-19, but they can help protect others."

To contact Serr or to donate fabric, send her a message via her public Facebook page.

"I NOTICED A BIG DIFFERENCE THE FIRST TIME I WORE MY MASK."

Invisible and forgotten in the COVID-19: Canadians with intellectual disabilities

Submitted by CACL

While Canadians are well informed of seniors' vulnerability to COVID-19 and all too aware of its devastating and life-threatening impact, the same cannot be said for individuals with intellectual disabilities, leaving them in harm's way.

The Canadian Association for Community Living (CACL) and its provincial and territorial associations have been raising the alarm and pleading for governments to act and protect the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities, just as they have for other vulnerable populations. Governments have rightly committed to protecting those who are homeless, people experiencing domestic violence, and seniors yet remain unmoved by the comparable needs and risks of people with intellectual disabilities.

However, to the virus, individuals with disabilities are neither invisible nor forgotten. As families and those who provide support to people with

intellectual disabilities, we are forced to conclude that individuals with intellectual disabilities are not equally valued and their lives are expendable.

"The blatant disregard of the value of my daughter's life and others with intellectual disabilities is unconscionable and should never have been possible in this country," stated Robin Acton, CACL president and parent of an adult daughter with intellectual disabilities. "Every day across this land, politicians and health authorities attempt to reassure us. With each passing day, my daughter and others with intellectual disabilities remain invisible and forgotten. My anxiety and fear mounts."

Whether they live in their own homes, with their families, group homes or residential facilities, the vast majority of individuals with intellectual disabilities require personal support workers. Without these supports, their very lives are at risk at the best of times, so it should not be dif-

ficult to understand their vulnerability to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many cannot fully isolate from others due to their disabilities or living arrangements and therefore have a higher risk of contracting the virus.

The personal support workers who continue to provide support are among the many unsung Canadian heroes yet remain unrecognized and unsupported. They are deserving of additional wages as they risk their lives in the support of vulnerable Canadians. They continue day after day in their commitment to be in the homes of individuals with disabilities, without essential guidance from health professionals, access to needed protective personal equipment (PPE), or measures to address COVID-19's impact when it strikes an individual they support and/or themselves. These resources and measures, which need to be available to families as well, must be brought to bear today, not tomorrow.

Although proposals have been made to government by CACL and its member associations, plans still do not exist to ensure a trained workforce is available when individuals or staff become ill or to provide alternative living arrangements for those who require isolation. Government is only taking action when there is a COVID-19 crisis in a residential facility. As a result, lives will be lost which might otherwise have been saved.

Recently, Minister Carla Qualtrough announced the COVID-19 Disability Advisory Group to which Krista Carr, CACL executive vice-president, was appointed.

"I will be seeking a nationally co-ordinated approach with the provinces and territories that is immediately responsive to individuals with disabilities, their families and those who support them to ensure they are no longer invisible, forgotten or treated as if their lives do not matter," Carr stated.

Manitoba RCMP seize multiple firearms in Rockwood

Submitted by the RCMP

On April 10 at 3:25 p.m., officers were conducting a patrol on Highway 7 in the RM of Rockwood when they performed a traffic stop on a pickup truck towing a utility trailer.

In speaking with the 32-year-old male driver from the RM of Rockwood, the officers observed a firearm which led to his arrest. A further search of the truck led to the seizure of two additional firearms, one of which was prohibited. The utility trailer was also discovered to have been reported stolen from Winnipeg back in October of 2017.

Further investigation led to a search warrant being executed on April 11 at a residence located in the RM of Rockwood. The search resulted in the recovery of additional stolen property as well as a large quantity of firearms, ammunition and other firearm related material.

The 32-year-old has been released



for court scheduled July 20 in Stonewall Provincial Court and will face numerous property and firearm related charges.

The investigation — being completed by the newly formed East District Crime Reduction/Enforcement Support Team (CREST), the National Weapons Enforcement Support Team (NWEST), The Roving Traffic Unit and Stonewall RCMP — continues.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Stonewall RCMP recovered a large quantity of firearms, ammunition and other firearm-related material during a search on April 11.

Manitoba RCMP release statistics on COVID-19 enforcement

Submitted by the RCMP

Between April 8 and April 13, the Manitoba RCMP received 64 calls related to COVID-19. The majority of the calls were reports of 10 or more people gathering at a location and not respecting the orders in place

under The Public Health Act.

Enforcement was not required for 46 of the calls as they either did not fall under the purview of the RCMP or were resolved through education and/or guidance given by responding officers.

In 18 instances, officers attended the location of the complaint and issued a verbal warning.

There were no fines issued or arrests made during this time period.

The RCMP would like to thank all Manitobans for their continued sup-

port and cooperation.

Manitobans living outside of Winnipeg are reminded not to call 911 for COVID-19 related issues. Reports of non-compliance can be made to the Manitoba Government Inquiry line at 204-945-3744.

sports & recreation

INSIDE > OUTSIDE > UPSIDE DOWN

Humeniuk's baseball season ends early in Louisiana

By Brian Bowman

Ryan Humeniuk's baseball season at the University of Louisiana Monroe devastatingly ended early last month due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Then, on Easter Sunday, the city of Monroe suffered more devastation as a tornado savagely ripped through their area and destroyed multiple homes and buildings.

"I heard about it (Sunday) morning after getting notifications on my phone about severe weather in the Monroe area," said Humeniuk from his family's Stonewall home last week. "I was talking to a couple of my teammates from west Monroe and they said, 'That it was getting pretty dicey and the wind was starting to howl pretty good.' I talked to all of my coaches soon after it hit and the Monroe Regional Airport got destroyed. They closed that airport until further notice now and you just send prayers to the people of Monroe and Louisiana."

"The world is going through a tough enough time as it is and this certainly is not going to help them. I've reached out to all of the people that I know of and, as far as I know, everyone has been OK."

Humeniuk has been at home for the past month. He made the lengthy drive home with his girlfriend as panic soon spread in the south regarding COVID-19.

"We were planning on staying down there as long as we could but they closed down campus and I had no ac-

cess to the weight room or access to the field," Humeniuk explained. "Obviously, school was shut down with the classrooms so I wasn't going to class. Then they started talking about closing the borders and we didn't know when that would be so we figured it would be the safest with all the insurance type of stuff."

Humeniuk and his Warhawks' teammates had gotten off to a tremendous start to their season, posting a 12-5 record.

"It was either the best or second-best start in ULM history and that was an incredible feat and a testament to how hard our guys were working in the offseason and how hard the coaches worked to get us ready for the season," Humeniuk said. "I felt we were firing on almost all cylinders early in the year, which was exciting. The other part that was exciting was we felt we were getting better and playing better baseball against top competition with schools like Ole Miss."

The Warhawks' offence was a very potent one. Louisiana Monroe had already scored 26 runs in one game and 23 in two others.

"A big thing was having all of that speed on the bases," Humeniuk said. "We stole a ton of bases and that really makes a pitcher's life tough when he doesn't know what's going on because we're moving around all of the time."

Humeniuk had four of those stolen bases to go along with a team-leading .410 batting average with three home runs and 14 RBI in 61 at bats.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Ryan Humeniuk was having a fantastic season at the University of Louisiana Monroe when their season was forced to shut down due to the coronavirus pandemic. The Stonewall product was hitting a team-leading .410 with three home runs and 14 RBI in 61 at bats.

He was off to a red-hot start.

"I was seeing the ball well and I did a lot of work in the summer and fall on pitch recognition and making sure I had better pitches to hit in my at bats and pitches I could really do damage on," Humeniuk said.

"I really have to tip my hat to the guys hitting around me. It's tough to pitch to a guy when you have so many good hitters to face."

Humeniuk, a senior, still has one more year of eligibility due to the

season being shut down early. But scholarship money has yet to be determined for next season.

"We don't have all of the details yet with the school still figuring it out," Humeniuk said. "It's new to everyone how that's all going to get lined up. As far as right now, my plan is to return to ULM or if I get some kind of opportunity to play professionally."

Sholdice selected as a Basketball Manitoba Graduating All-Star

By Brian Bowman

Hunter Sholdice was selected to two graduating all-star games this season.

He had an opportunity to play in the volleyball one earlier this year but last Saturday's basketball game was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Warren Collegiate student-athlete was proud to have been chosen as a Basketball Manitoba Graduating All-Star.

"It's great but I actually didn't even know I was nominated," said Sholdice last Sunday. "My coach just texted me one day and I was, 'Oh sweet.'"

"There were quite a few (great players selected). Just from the Interlake, (Gimli's) Blake Magnusson is a great player and he probably deserves it a lot more than me but, even though we won't be playing the game, it feels cool to be honoured to play with lots of those good guys. It would have been neat."

Besides excelling in basketball, Sholdice is also a very good volleyball player. He also plays badminton, curls, runs cross-country, and competes in track and field at the high school level.

He wasn't able to compete in a cou-

ple of those events this year due to Manitoba school's shutting down.

"I'm not overly disappointed but I'm more disappointed about our basketball season being cancelled," Sholdice said. "The thing with basketball and volleyball, it's a team (sport) whereas track I was on my own. I like the whole team aspect of it."

Sholdice has a lot to be proud of during his time at Warren Collegiate. He really enjoyed many different experiences at the school.

"It's an amazing school," he stressed. "The athletic program is great and all of the coaches and the people that

get behind you is just amazing. My volleyball coach Mark Hnatiuk and Cathy Pleskach, my basketball coach, they are probably the two best coaches that you could ever ask for."

The camaraderie among students was really good, too.

"The whole environment is just great," Sholdice said. "I have a few close friends and pretty much since Grade 9, we've all played (sports) with each other because we're a bit of a smaller school."

Magnusson recognized by Basketball Manitoba

By Brian Bowman

Blake Magnusson had a tremendous senior season with the Gimli Lakers' varsity boys' basketball team.

And on Saturday he was rewarded for that excellence.

Magnusson was named a Manitoba first-team A-AAA all star and was also named a Basketball Manitoba Graduating All-Star.

"It's something I've worked for in all of high school and before to get those honours," said Magnusson on Monday afternoon. "It's nice to have it happen but it would have been nicer to have played in the game this past weekend but circumstances have made everything different."

Magnusson was really looking forward to playing in that all-star game against the province's elite players

"It sucks to not get a chance to play with the best basketball players in Manitoba," he said. "But hopefully with university I'll still be able to play again against high-level players."

The Lakers were playing at a very high level before their season was abruptly ended due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Gimli, the No. 4 seed in Manitoba among "AA" schools, had a very good shot at doing some serious damage at provincials.

"This was our one chance in the past four years to put a run together," Magnusson said, noting the Lakers lost just three games this past season. "But it came to a close two weeks early."

Gimli had a very strong team that got better and better over the years while playing together. They also had good size and some very talented younger players.

"Our three younger Grade 11s all improved dramatically over the past three years to the point that we could contend with the best in Manitoba," said the 6-foot-6, 255-pound power forward. "Through all five positions, we had no weaknesses and I think that was one of the biggest things from

playing with that group in Grade 10 when we got second in provincials to now where we all improved dramatically."

The Lakers had a ton of fun while winning a lot of games.

"We had a goal in mind of winning provincials so there were quite a few games where we took it for granted," he said. "They were easier-type games for us and now you look back when you're done and you wish you didn't take them for granted."

"But it was the most fun year of basketball I've ever had."

Magnusson, a dominant player inside and a good shooter, will be playing at the university level next season. He said an official announcement as to where he will be playing would be released soon.

"My goal has always been college basketball and hopefully get some education paid for along the way," he said.



Blake Magnusson

Local athletes named MHSAA graduating basketball all stars

By Brian Bowman

Four local athletes were selected as MHSAA Graduating basketball all stars last Saturday.

Teulon Collegiate's Jacey Ledochowski and Mackenzie Garand were both selected to the all-star teams Saturday.

"Very proud of both girls being selected as all stars by the other coaches we have played against this year," said Saints' coach Jason Darragh in an email. "Our team was made up of girls from grades 9 to 12. We had five Grade 12s that usually were asked to play most of the time in close games and were a big reason we were ranked No. 1 heading into (the varsity girls') provincials this year before they were cancelled. Jacey and Mackenzie usually played the entire 40 minutes of



Jacey Ledochowski



Mackenzie Garand



Hunter Sholdice



Joy McCutchen

games this year."

Garand was also selected as a first-team female A-AAA all star. She was the only "AA" player selected to the first team with the rest being "AAA" players.

"I have coached her now for five

years since Grade 8," Darragh noted. "She was a great player for us over the years and especially this year. She was our leading scorer and usually our top rebounder and was a big reason why we had a 15-3 record this season. I really think if she is willing to keep

working hard she could go play at the next level if she wants."

Warren Collegiate's Hunter Sholdice and Joy McCutchen were also named graduating all stars.

MJHL announces 2020 Auto-Protect list

Staff

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League announced the 2020 Auto-Protect list on Monday.

The Selkirk Steelers chose St. Andrews' forward Dawson Zeller and Lockport defenceman Andrew Hladun.

Both players were with the Winni-

peg Hawks this past season.

Each 11-member club was given the opportunity to list two players born in 2005 from their respective home zone. The 2020 Auto-Protect list features 17 players who will no longer be eligible for the upcoming 2020 MJHL draft.

New to this year's draft procedures, teams had the option to decline an

Auto-Protect selection and defer that pick to round seven or eight of the draft.

"The auto-protect selections are an important process for our clubs leading up to the draft every season that can be challenging but very rewarding towards their future success," said MJHL director of operations Kevin

Saurette. "Many players who are protected during this process each season go on to become solid pillars of each club and standout players in the MJHL."

The 2020 MJHL draft will commence this Sunday at 9 a.m.

We're not out of this yet: IERHA bracing for potential COVID increase

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 the highly infectious coronavirus, COVID-19, and what measures the RHA is taking to help contain and manage it. There was no conference call on Good Friday. The following updates are from April 17.

- Although provincial health officials reported low numbers of new COVID infections last week, Manitoba could see a spike in case numbers if people failed to stay home during Easter (COVID symptoms generally emerge within a 14-day period), and begin to break their isolation as the weather warms up.

As of Sunday evening, Manitoba had 253 COVID cases, with 143 recoveries, 105 still active and five deaths, according to provincial data. Seventeen cases are in the Interlake-Eastern region.

"Even though we're seeing small numbers, we're getting into warmer weather and people are getting tired of [staying home], so it's possible we could see a reversal in the numbers and it could hit in a big way," said Van Denakker. "Those numbers can increase exponentially and quickly get out of control. We are still very much planning for the worst. We're not out of this yet."

That's the reason why some medical tests and surgeries have been cancelled, he said. The RHA is, however, providing virtual care and monitoring patients who had been scheduled for procedures. If a patient's condition requires attention, they'll get medical care.

- The IERHA has 27 beds at the Selkirk hospital set aside exclusively for COVID-infected patients who don't require acute care or intensive care. Those beds are part of a provincial-wide "bed map" and are ready to go at a moment's notice.

- The IERHA has health-care workers moving between multiple care homes, but they're being screened before starting a shift to help protect residents from a potential COVID outbreak.

"There's a self-screening process and there's also screening at the door," said Van Denakker. "We'll soon have infrared thermometers and we'll be do-

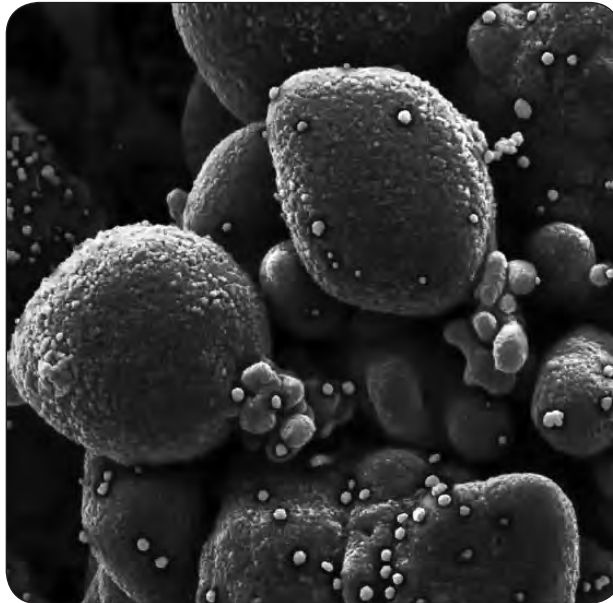


IMAGE COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ALLERGY AND INFECTIOUS DISEASES, AND REUTERS. Image of a cell infected with COVID-19.

ing temperature checks."

Long-term care homes in other provinces have experienced severe COVID outbreaks and dozens and dozens of residents have died. Public health authorities recognize that health-care workers taking shifts at multiple homes have contributed to infections. Low wages are the reason workers need to work at more than one facility.

In Quebec alone, about 55 per cent of COVID deaths have occurred in care homes. Premier Francois Legault was quoted a few weeks ago as saying the deaths "look a lot like major negligence" and has asked police to investigate.

Van Denakker said the health authority is "keenly aware of the tragic situations" in other provinces. And if there is a move towards the need to prevent staff from moving between multiple care homes, the RHA will consider it.

In the meantime, "we've rolled out universal precautions, including personal protective equipment (PPE), in our long-term care centres," he said. "Those are mechanisms to prevent any potential transmis-

sion between staff and between staff and patients. If full PPE is required ... it's deployed."

N95 masks, designed to prevent small viral particles from penetrating the material, are available in the IERHA's long-term care homes should a COVID-positive case arise, he said. N95s are typically used only for specialized procedures requiring nebulization or intubation.

"If there were a resident experiencing respiratory issues, staff would go in wearing the appropriate equipment to make sure they're safe and to keep the client safe," he said.

There is enough PPE in areas where staff are "most likely going to end up dealing with people who have COVID," but there is a worldwide shortage, he noted. The province is working on bringing more equipment in. Very soon, the IERHA is going to be receiving sterilization machines for "gently used" N95 masks that haven't been soiled or broken.

"We're distributing PPE very cautiously and monitoring it closely. We're trying to preserve PPE for high-need areas," said Van Denakker.

- If a situation arises where a long-term care resident is suspected of having COVID, they would be immediately isolated — as had been done when a Betel Home staffer in Gimli was thought to be COVID-positive — and monitored on site.

"The last thing we want to do is move a COVID case from one location to the next. You want to keep it isolated. That's the whole idea," said Van Denakker. "So we're monitoring people and should their condition deteriorate to the point where they'd need an acute care hospital, they'd be transferred to one. It's important to know that ... they would absolutely be transported to the hospital."

- To help prevent the transmission of the highly infectious virus, the IERHA had, early on, restricted family members from visiting long-term care facilities, apart from "compassionate" visits in which a resident is close to death from a non-COVID-related condition.

- Worldwide, COVID has infected 2.4 million people and killed over 165,000, according to Johns Hopkins University data as of Sunday evening. Almost 36,000 Canadians have been infected with over 1,500 deaths.

Web portal created to supplement home learning resources for parents and caregivers

By the Manitoba government

The province is providing a supplemental online resource for Manitoba families whose children are learning at home during the suspension of in-school classes because of COVID-19, Education Minister Kelvin Goertzen announced last Thursday.

"This web portal, My Learning at Home/Mon Apprentissage Chez Moi, is a comprehensive resource that will be continually updated for families and caregivers as they support students who are carrying on with their school year and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Goertzen. "This is a tool to supplement learning, but not to replace the impressive, quality work that teachers are continuing to do remotely for students across the province during this public health emergency."

The My Learning at Home portal went live online last Thursday, providing a resource designed to assist families in supporting the work of teachers as they continue to educate students. Available in

English and French as well as for families in French immersion, My Learning at Home will grow over time as more resources are developed for kindergarten through grade 12. In addition, supporting materials for adult learners and for early childhood years will be updated regularly.

"Learning can be done at home using computers and tablets, allowing parents and caregivers to enhance the education of students with family-centred resources," said Goertzen. "However, teachers remain the primary guide in helping students learn and meet curriculum expectations. This online portal is another important tool for teaching and learning."

Goertzen noted that parents, caregivers and students are encouraged to be curious and to continue seeking out learning resources.

The My Learning at Home/Mon Apprentissage Chez Moi portal can be found at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/mylearning/index.html.

The provincial Department of Education appreciates the continued assistance and collaboration of school division administrators and trustees, principals, teachers and support staff as they all work with families for the benefit of students across Manitoba during the suspension of in-school classes. Together, they are helping develop ways for Manitoba students to learn at home to complete the 2019-20 school year.

Meanwhile, the province continues to rely on the recommendations of the chief provincial public health officer during the pandemic, and encourages all Manitobans to engage in social distancing protocols and the three Ps — protect yourself, protect your loved ones and protect your community. For more information visit www.manitoba.ca/covid19.

A comprehensive list of Manitoba government COVID-19 measures can be found at <https://manitoba.ca/bg/2020/04/covid19.html>.

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The Express Weekly News Classified booking deadline is Monday at 4 p.m. prior to Thursday's publication
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TOWN OF WINNIPEG BEACH INVITATION TO TENDER - GRASS CUTTING

The Town of Winnipeg Beach invites interested parties to submit sealed tenders for the provision of GRASS CUTTING services on PRIVATE PROPERTIES.

This involves grass cutting of privately owned properties which are deemed unsightly under By-Law # 9/2009. Contract is for a two-year term beginning June 1st, 2020.

For Grass Cutting on Private Property; interested parties are to submit detailed fees for various lot sizes (ex. 50x100, 100x200, 200x200). Note: depending on the length of the grass, larger equipment may be required.

Tenders must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "Grass Cutting Tender" no later than 4:30 p.m. on Friday, May 8, 2020. Please submit sealed tenders to:

Doreen Steg, CAO
Town of Winnipeg Beach
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The Town of Winnipeg Beach reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive irregularities and informalities therein, and to award the tender in the best interest of the town. Lowest bid may not be accepted. Contractors must comply with the town's requirements for liability insurance, WCB coverage and business licensing to be eligible to be awarded the contract.



RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF GRAHAMDALE PUBLIC NOTICE REGARDING THE RESCHEDULED 2020 FINANCIAL PLAN

Public Notice is hereby given pursuant to Subsection 162(2) of *The Municipal Act*, that the Council of the R.M. of Grahamdale intends to present its Financial Plan for the fiscal year 2020 at a Public Hearing at the Moosehorn Community Hall, 21 Railway Avenue, in Moosehorn, MB on Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

The purpose of this Public Hearing is to allow any interested person to make representation, ask questions or register an objection to the Financial Plan as provided.

Copies of the Financial Plan are available for review and may be examined by any person during regular office hours at the Municipal Office or on our website at www.grahamdale.ca.

There are new Public Hearing Guidelines in place. These are temporary measures to fight the spread of Covid-19. Please call our office or visit our website to view these new guidelines.

Dated this 31st day of March, 2020.

Shelly Schwitek, CMMA
Chief Administrative Officer
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OBITUARY

Scot Sveinie Valgardson
July 5th 1960 – March 18th 2020

Scot will be forever remembered by his parents Norm and Dodie; sisters Michelle (Tyler), Mandi (Dave); brothers Jeff (Marilyn), Shane and Quinn. Also remembering Scot are his nephews Andrew (Kerry), Luke (Shannon), Colby (Janine), Nik (Amey), Tyson, Theo and Johannes; nieces Recene (Jason), Raven, Cassandra (Eri), Sadie and Destiny along with numerous aunts, uncles and cousins. Scot was predeceased by his mother Gloria; brother Brad; grandparents Rose and Jack Dixon, Katherine and Joe Syczilo and Gordon Stark.

Scot was a very private person but stayed well connected to family. He was always looking for a new challenge and was happiest when he was outdoors. He used his natural woodworking talents to make treasure chests for his nieces, wood carvings for his siblings and even building a 25,000 sq. ft. warehouse with roof top parking for Summerhill Winery.

In his youth he learned to fly a glider, raced his Chevy Nova and rail car at the Gimli racetrack and helped his Dad race horses at the Assiniboia Downs winning a stakes race with his beloved horse Viking Debut. Scot loved to ski and in his 20's moved to Kelowna to be closer to the mountains and fell in love with the city and lived there until his passing.

Scot's most recent employment was working for Steven at the Summerhill Winery which hoped to have a memorial for Scot but Covid-19 has interfered.

We would like to thank Neil Bardal Funeral Home (Winnipeg) and Springfield Funeral Home (Kelowna) for all their assistance in bringing Scot home. We are forever grateful to Todd and Val Valgardson for all their help in Kelowna and for being our spokesman.

Cremation has taken place and we hope to celebrate Scot's life on his birthday July 5th, 2020, details to follow closer to that date.

**Classified booking deadline is Monday at 4 p.m. prior to Thursday's publication.
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