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Welcome

Welcome all local and international readers to the fourth issue of Lac du Bonnet Living.

Each year we try to focus on a different aspect of life that encompasses the 'four-season playground' of Lac du Bonnet while highlighting places of interest, recreational opportunities, events, culture and community.

This year, we pay homage to the history of Lac du Bonnet and area as the RM of Lac du Bonnet celebrates its 100th Birthday in conjunction with Canada's 150th Birthday. What better reason for a community-wide party!

With the full resources of the Lac du Bonnet and District Historical Society at our disposal, along with the unwavering support of local historians Marlene and Terry Tottle, this edition of Lac du Bonnet Living highlights the past, the people who built our community and those who continue to shape it.

Once again, we were very pleased with the number of story ideas, photos and write-ups passed our way by local citizens wanting to help create a publication that truly represents Lac du Bonnet Living.

Let the celebrations begin!

Kim MacAulay
Publisher

Mark T. Buss
Editor

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2017 Photo Contest Winners



3rd Place



1st Place

This year's winners of the Lac du Bonnet Living Photo Contest are
1st Place: Dominik Foks
2nd Place: Jaden Maki
3rd Place: Emma Curé

Congratulations and Thank You to everyone who submitted photos.

Watch for some of the Honourable Mentions in upcoming editions of the Lac du Bonnet Clipper.



2nd Place

LAC DU BONNET LIVING 2017

PROUDLY PRODUCED BY:
LAC DU BONNET CLIPPER
74 Second Street, P.O. Box 218
Lac du Bonnet, MB R0E 1A0
Phone: 204-345-8459
Fax: 204-345-0380
Email: ldbnews@clipper.mb.ca
Website: www.clipper.mb.ca

PUBLISHER: Kim MacAulay
EDITOR: Mark T. Buss
SALES: Marlene Hrysio
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Welcome to Lac du Bonnet Living!



Reeve
Loren Schinkel

RM of
Lac du Bonnet

Welcome to the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet.

We are situated a short scenic drive north east of Winnipeg and take great pride in our region for being a Four Season Playground.

We are a hidden gem with beautiful lakes, stunning sunsets and activities that appeal to first time visitors, seasonal and permanent residents, young and old alike.

Every season is a treasure chest of activities. In the summer you can navigate countless miles of waterways and golf our region's first class golf courses.

If fishing is your passion, book a fly in trip or fish our local waters, which host professional tournaments.

If you enjoy nature, walk a section of the newly completed Trans Canada Trail and view the abundant wildlife, or get a glimpse at our regions history by stopping at the Lac du Bonnet District Museum or the Old Pinawa Dam Provincial Heritage Park.

In the winter, you can enjoy countless miles

of the best groomed snowmobiles trails, cross country ski the region's scenic trails or simply enjoy a session of ice fishing at our stocked Lac du Bonnet Wildlife Association trout ponds. There's something for everyone to experience.

This year the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet is celebrating its 100th anniversary and we have many exciting festivities planned throughout the year.

Whether it's the July long weekend celebration and fireworks, the August long weekend Fire & Water Music Festival or the annual Saturday morning Farmers' Market, come enjoy the sights and sounds of our area and help us celebrate our heritage and history.

Please visit our new website at www.lacdubonnet.com and plan a day trip or spend the weekend, but do bring your friends, family and loved ones for a visit. It's our community spirit and people that will complete your adventure... you won't be disappointed!

On behalf of council and our committed staff, I extend everyone a warm welcome.



Mayor
Gordon Peters

Town of
Lac du Bonnet

On behalf of the council of the Town of Lac du Bonnet we want to welcome you to our community.

Lac du Bonnet is a wonderful community, located in the hub of activity in eastern Manitoba, along the beautiful Winnipeg River, a quick one hour drive from Winnipeg, our provincial capital.

2017 marks the 100th anniversary of our area. There are all kinds of special events happening through the course of the summer to celebrate this wonderful region's history. Don't miss it! Check the town's website or Facebook page for details.

Our town provides an environment where we promote the foundation of family. You will experience a balanced blend of town convenience and amenities, together with a peaceful, laid-back place to raise a family.

Our "four season playground" opens the door

to the Canada Day Fireworks; Fire & Water Festival; annual Polar Bear Dare; Ice Fishing Derby; bowling and curling at the Community Centre; public skating or local hockey at the arenas; cross country skiing, snowshoeing or snowmobiling and of course all the water sports on our river. What a great way to enjoy our community.

We are a town with a great mix of retail shops, businesses and residents. We are proud of the investment of people, business and the provision of leisure opportunities – that is what makes Lac du Bonnet a wonderful place to live, do business and then retire.

Lac du Bonnet is an age friendly community. It truly is a four season playground for the young and the young at heart. You really need to see it for yourself to appreciate all our community has to offer.

Come visit and then stay!

Photo by Stu Iverson



BECOME PART OF OUR STORY!

JOIN US IN LAC DU BONNET FOR OUR CENTENNIAL CELEBRATIONS!



VISIT MYLDB.CA

For more information about these events and more!

JANUARY	
5	Blood Donor Clinic
20-22	Ladies Curling Bonspiel in LdB Contact Connie 345-8859
FEBRUARY	
10-12	Men's Curling Bonspiel in LdB Contact Brian 345-8192
12	WRAC presents "Last Train to Nibroc"
25	Lee River Snow Riders Poker Derby Visit lrsr.ca
MARCH	
4	LdB Ice Fishing Derby Visit ldbice.ca
9	Blood Donor Clinic
12	Snow Golf hosted by the LdB Wildlife Association
14	LdB Senior Curling League Fall Windup Spiel & Supper
18	Polar Bear Dare, visit sportmanitoba.ca/polar-bear-dare
19	Family Fishing Derby at the Lac du Bonnet Pond
APRIL	
8	Wildlife Awards Night at the Lac du Bonnet Legion Hall
21	Quiz Night Fundraiser at the LdB Community Centre
MAY	
TBA	Trout Stocking at the Lac du Bonnet Pond
6	Big Rig Gig Fundraiser for Centennial School Playground
13	Lee River Snow Riders Winter Wind-up
19-20	BBQ for a Cure at Dancyt's
20	Lac du Bonnet District Museum Open House and Market
20	Agassiz Garden Club Plant Sale at the LdB Community Centre
23	Blood Donor Clinic
27	Chamber of Commerce Trade Fair at the Curling Club
28	Thru the Years: Fashion & Tea in LdB at the Legion
JUNE	
TBA	Reel Solution for Kids
2	RM BBQ and Birthday Party at the RM Office
4	Decoration Day Parade & Service - Lac du Bonnet Cenotaph
11	A history of LdB's oldest church at St. John's Anglican Church
18	Father's Day Car & Bike Show & Shine - Abundant Life Chapel
23	Graduation Day
23-24	Lac du Bonnet Lions Club Fireworks BBQ at Dancyt's
24	Grand Opening of Ridge Creek Ranch
30	Lion's Canada Day's in Lac du Bonnet

JULY	
1-2	Lion's Canada Day's in Lac du Bonnet
1	LdB District Museum Canada Day 150 Celebrations
3-7	Vacation Bible School at Abundant Life Chapel
6	RM of LdB 100th Anniversary Classic Golf Tournament
15	Canada's Parks Day at Old Pinawa Dam
15	Cultural Days at Old Pinawa Dam
16	That Dam Race Visit thatdamrace.wordpress.com
25	Blood Donor Clinic
AUGUST	
4-6	Fire & Water Music Festival Visit firewater.ca
14	Agassiz Garden Club Plant Sale at the LdB Community Centre
18-20	Dinner Theatre The Saga of JD McArthur
19-20	Boreal Shores Art Tour Visit borealshoresarttour.ca
24	Lac du Bonnet Community Centre Wine Tasting Event
26	Movie on the Beach in Lac du Bonnet
SEPTEMBER	
2	Lac du Bonnet District Museum Heritage Day
13	Rod Demoline Golf Tournament
16	Colour Run Fundraiser for Centennial School Playground
16	LdB Library Annual Fall Supper at the Legion
23	Annual Veterans' Dinner at the Legion
26	Blood Donor Clinic
OCTOBER	
8	Community Thanksgiving Dinner and Celebration
13	Bud, Spud & Steak Fundraiser for LDB Lions Club at Lakeview
31	Halloween Warm Up Tent at Memorial Park
NOVEMBER	
3-5	Mixed Curling Bonspiel at the LdB Community Centre
11	Annual Remembrance Day Service 10:30 a.m. Legion Hall
18	Chamber of Commerce Small Business Saturday
18	LdB Christmas Craft and Gift Sale at the Community Centre
24	Community Christmas Tree Lighting
25	Annual Lac du Bonnet Wildlife Association Banquet
28	Blood Donor Clinic
DECEMBER	
1	LdB and District Historical Society Annual Wine and Cheese
3	Community Christmas Celebration at the Community Centre
9	WRAC Presents "A Christmas Carol"
13	Lac du Bonnet Lions Club Seniors Supper
16	Pancakes with Santa at the Lac du Bonnet Community Centre
19	Lac du Bonnet Senior Curling League Fall Spiel & Supper

Lac du Bonnet Centennial celebrations taking shape

By Arlene Davidson

The RM of Lac du Bonnet is coordinating events to celebrate the municipality's centennial in 2017, and the list of groups and organizations that are joining in is growing daily.

"We all know that 2017 is going to be a huge year as we come together to celebrate Canada's 150 and the Rural Municipality's Centennial celebration," said Cyndie Mitchell, who was hired by the RM100 Committee to organize and coordinate the events. "There are so many events being planned this year, your social calendar is going to be full!"

In addition to all of the wonderful annual events that are hosted in Lac du Bonnet every year, several exciting new developments are taking shape. Some of these highlights include a Through the Years Fashion Show and Tea on May 28, a barbecue and birthday party at the RM office on June 2, Cultural Days at the Old Pinawa Dam July 15 and 16 and the introduction of the Eureka Players and Puppeteers in a historical dinner theatre Aug. 18 to 20.

"With so many wonderful things being planned for 2017, there are tons of opportunities for residents, cottagers, businesses and local organizations to get involved with us," said Mitchell, who has set up a website dedicated to the festivities. The community is invited to make regular visits to www.mylldb.ca to view the online events calendar and keep up to date.

"We have released our first compilation of the 2017 community events guide and as new events pop up weekly, we'll



Clipper photo

Cyndie Mitchell is busy these days keeping up with the numerous events and celebrations being planned for the RM of Lac du Bonnet's Centennial.

be sure to keep adding to our list," said Mitchell. "Of course, we have our online community events calendar up and running and we're just waiting for you to add your events."

Mitchell extends an invitation to community groups, businesses and organizations to plan a special event to help commemorate the RM's Centennial and to contact the RM100 organizing committee to make sure it is included. The website will provide information about who you are and will inform the public what you are doing to commemorate this very special occasion.



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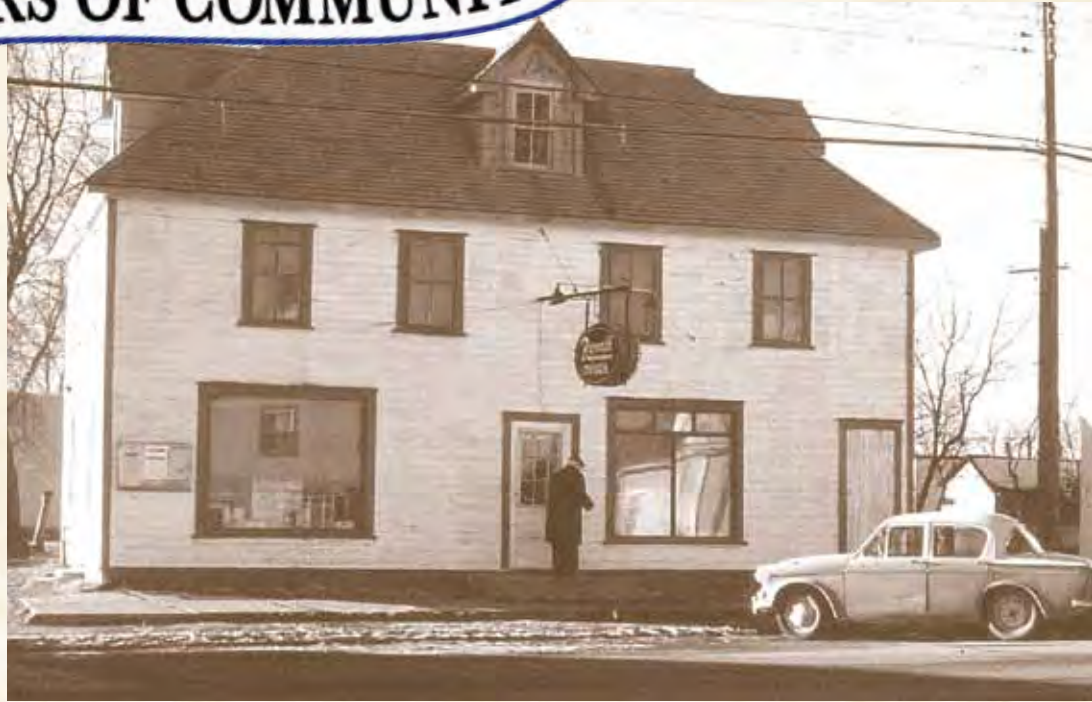


Photo courtesy Robert and Grace Kost

The Allard Building

RM of Lac du Bonnet's first council meeting held June 5, 1917

By Arlene Davidson

The Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet held its first meeting of council on June 5, 1917 in the one room school house on Park Avenue.

Frank Allard was the first Reeve of the RM of Lac du Bonnet. Allard left his employment as a planer at McArthur's Lumber Mill and in 1905 constructed the Allard Building at the northwest corner of 3rd Street and Park Avenue, which functioned as a grocery store, providing fresh meat, fruit and vegetables to the community.

The Allard Building remains as one of the towns' original structures, currently providing a retail space for the La Verendrye Trading Company.

It was not long after that first council meeting when they began holding municipal meetings at the Allard Building.

Serving along-side the reeve on the inaugural council were Couns. William Trouton, Omer Lavoie, John Ongman and Andy Kalnin.

Trouton, Councillor for Ward 1, was a member of a pioneer family from England who settled in the region and operated a business in Milner Ridge.

Omer Lavoie, representing Ward 2, was born in Chicoutimi, Que. in 1884. Following his marriage to Marie Verhegge in 1910 in Winnipeg, the couple settled on a farm in the Landerville district of Lac du Bonnet.

Lavoie was a politically active resident of Lac du Bonnet, serving as school trustee, RM councillor and reeve for many years.

John Ongman from Ward 3 immigrated to Winnipeg from Bolnas, Sweden with his family in 1903.

In the spring of 1912 they settled in the Riverland District across the river from the village of Lac du Bonnet. A carpenter by trade, Ongman was awarded the tender to construct the Lac du Bonnet town dock in 1920.

Andy Kalnin, Ward 4 Councillor was a Latvian immigrant who settled in Bird River around 1914 where he helped establish the community of Lettonia.

"The various ethnic groups that settled in Lac du Bonnet at that time were well represented by the first council," said Gus Wruck, president of the Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society.

During their first meeting, Reeve and Council attended to the business of appointing officers. An excerpt from the hand written minutes reads:

"Moved by Councillor Omer Lavoie and seconded by William Trouton that W.D. Halliday be appointed Secretary-Treasurer of the Municipality at a salary of \$1,000 per annum."

Realizing they had approved a princely sum for Halliday's services, council rescinded the resolution at their next meeting and replaced it with a more realistic sum.

Follow up actions included the purchase of 'necessary stationary to carry on the business of the municipality,' to 'look up a place to hold council meetings' and to 'write both local and federal governments and find out what land was held by each within the municipality.'

Other business that occurred at the first meeting of council included the appointment of J.G. Ellstrom as assessor for Wards 3 and 4 for the sum of \$400, and Samuel Smith as municipal constable and health inspector with "special duties, salary or fees to be fixed by bylaw."

Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet Bylaw No. 1 was passed by council at the June 5 meeting and ordered they 'organize the School District of Landerville within the Municipality.'

*Clockwise from top left:
Reeve Frank Allard
Coun. Omer Lavoie
Coun. Andy Kalnin
Coun. William Trouton
Coun. John Ongman*

Photos courtesy the Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society





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The evolution of a name

By Arlene Davidson

How did Lac du Bonnet get its name? Well, that seems to differ depending on who you ask.

The most commonly heard story gives credit to Pierre Gaultier de Verennes Sieur de La Verendrye, who led an expedition from 1732 and 1749 through what is now known as Manitoba in search of an overland and water route to the sea leading to the Orient. He was accompanied by his four sons and nephew.

It is said that La Verendrye supposedly believed that the wide portion of the Winnipeg River where the town now stands, resembled a hat. 'Hat Lake,' translated into his native French, converts to 'Lac du Bonnet.'

La Verendrye recorded detailed information of his observations and produced maps of the areas he explored.

However, Terry Tottle of the Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society said that translations of La Verendrye's journals and maps by the Champlain Society in 1928 made no mention of this widened portion of the river.

"The La Verendrye story about the lake resembling a bonnet is pure conjecture," said Tottle.

The name Bonnet, often paired with Lac du (Lake of) or Portage in reference to the Winnipeg River, first appears in the itinerary of voyageur Joseph Derouen around 1760. Scottish fur trader and explorer Sir Alexander MacKenzie said the name was originally applied to the portage 'from a custom the Indians have of crowning stones laid in a circle with wreaths of herbage and branches.'

Prior to the arrival of European settlers in the early 1800s, the indigenous people of the land provided furs and other trade goods to the voyageurs who used the Winnipeg River for their travels.

The wide waters and welcoming trade partners provided a perfect spot for the North West Company to establish a fur trade post around 1800. This post was referred to by several names, including Indian Cap Fort, Cap Fort and Lac du Bonnet House.

Information from the Hudson's Bay Company archives shows that they operated the Lac du Bonnet Post from 1807 to 1808.

Tottle noted that early cartographers including Harmon (1820), David Thompson (1812) and Bryce's HBC mapped the route from Lake of the Woods to Lake Winnipeg. On these



Photo courtesy the Wardrop Family

Walter Wardrop registered a post office in 1900 and can be attributed as the person responsible for designating Lac du Bonnet as the official name for the community.

maps, the widened portion of the Winnipeg River at the current site of the town is referred to as Cap Lake, Cat Lake, or Indian Cap Lake.

Paul Kane, an Irish-born Canadian painter, visited the area in 1846 and 1848, but made no mention of a trading post in his journals.

It is speculated that the operation had been abandoned by that time, encouraging trade at larger Hudson Bay trading posts that had since been established in the region.

Prior to the official formation of the RM of Lac du Bonnet in 1917, the region was classified as unorganized territory. The land south and west of the Winnipeg River was referred to as Powassin, named after an Ojibwe Chief from Creek and Indian Reserve at the Ontario Boundary. Powassin, translated into English means 'bend.'

The unorganized territory north of the Winnipeg River was called Nepahwin, meaning 'waiting place' or 'resting place.'

The developing land provided economic opportunity,

adventure, improved quality of life and escape from oppression and persecution. It was also rich in wildlife, timber and minerals and with the construction of a railway line the region diversified into successful forestry, hydroelectric, agricultural and mining industries.

In addition to the numerous natural resources, a small mining boom occurred in the spring of 1898 when many stakes were claimed. Gold miners flocked to the region in numbers resembling those of the Yukon gold rush, and the region earned the unofficial names of El Dorado and Eureka.

It was during

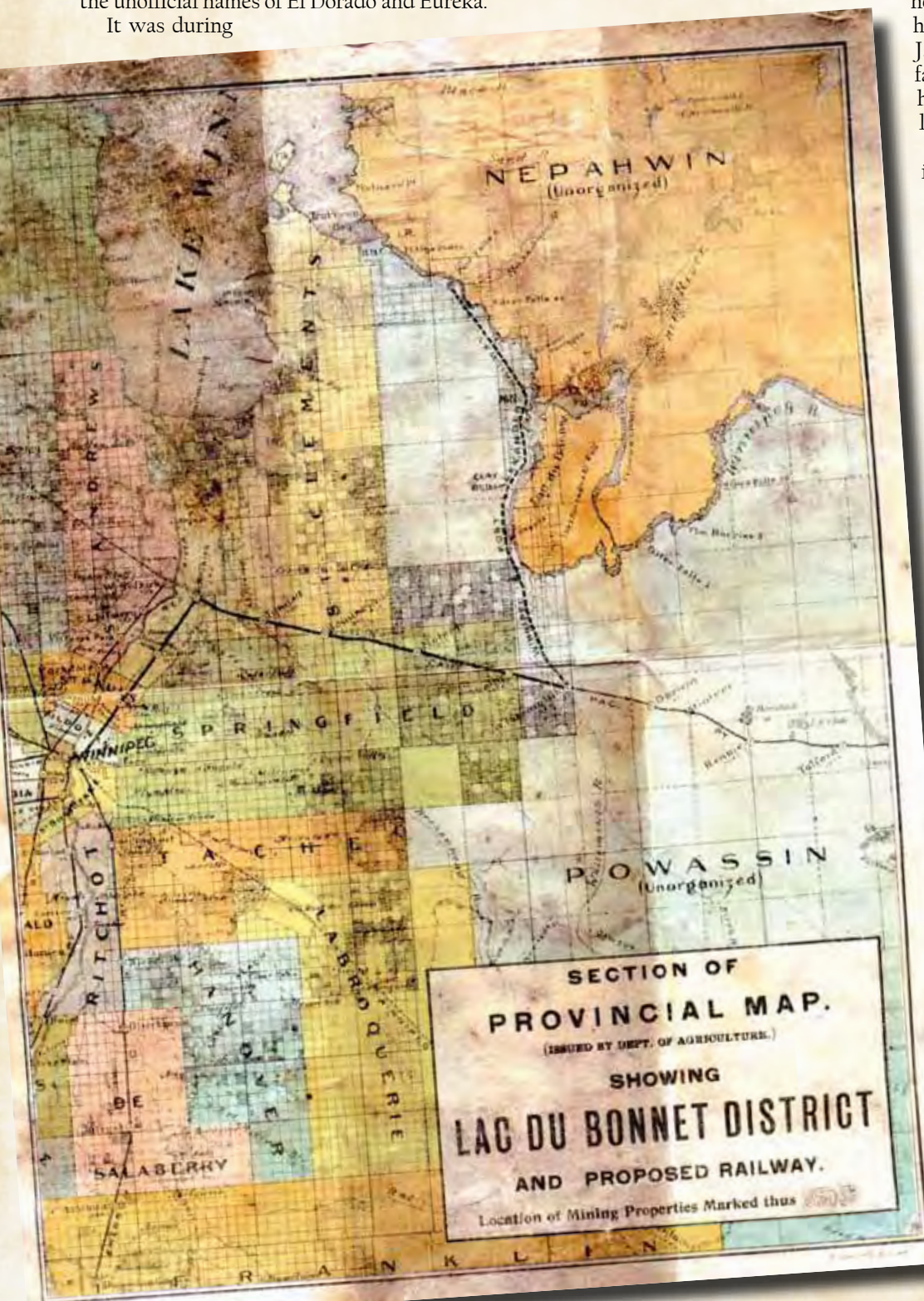
this boom when the first official use of the name Lac du Bonnet appeared. William Walter Wardrop of Whitemouth filed incorporation papers in 1898 for a business he called the Lac du Bonnet Mining, Developing and Manufacturing Company, Brick Plant and Saw Mill.

Wardrop established a post office for the growing settlement and applied to the government with the proposed name of Lac du Bonnet. He served the community as the first postmaster of Lac du Bonnet from Oct. 1, 1900 until Jan. 10, 1901 when he resigned from his duties, sold his company to industry baron J.D. McArthur, and relocated his family to Sparwood, B.C., where he established and operated a large lumber mill.

On April 6, 1912, the province added an amendment to Chapter 51 of the Municipal Boundaries Act, declaring Lac du Bonnet a Rural Municipality within the Eastern Judicial District of Manitoba.

Map of unorganized territory showing land currently in the RM of Lac du Bonnet was once referred to as Powassin and Nepahwin.

Map courtesy
the Wardrop Family



Background information provided by the Lac du Bonnet Historical Society with references from: Place Names in Manitoba, Geographic Board, Department of the Interior, Kings Printer 1933; # 277 Historic Forts and Trading Posts of the French Regime and of the English Fur Trading Companies compiled by Ernest Voorhis, A. M., PhD., 1930; Post Offices and Post Masters National Archives of Canada; Hudson's Bay Archives; Canadian Museum of Immigration Archives; The Canadian Encyclopedia; and Lac du Bonnet Municipal Advisory Council (MHAC) Archives.

Early settlers set their sights on Lac du Bonnet



Photo courtesy the Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society

An unidentified trapper from north of Lettonia.

The RM of Lac du Bonnet includes a heterogeneous population, both by ethnic origin and employment. Most prairie towns were established by people of only a few ethnic origins and one primary source of employment such as agriculture or mining.

It is because of this versatility that the municipality has remained prosperous over the years and continues to attract new residents.

FUR TRADE

The Winnipeg River has long been a main transportation route through prairie. First Nations people travelled by canoe along the river as they followed the herds of animals. They also harvested wild rice in the area.

La Verendrye was one of the early explorers who travelled along the Winnipeg River in 1732 and is often credited – rightly or wrongly – with naming the lake, Lac du Bonnet.

Trappers and voyageurs followed as the fur trade expanded from west to east travelling along the Winnipeg River. French, Metis and Scottish people all worked in the fur trade.

MINING

The Lac du Bonnet Mining, Developing and Manufacturing Company was incorporated in 1898 for prospecting minerals, gathering patent rights for water power and the transport of such power, and the manufacturing of clay bricks.

Walter Wardrop was appointment manager of the new company while the five original shareholders were Dr. John Sidney Gray (president), Robert Ross Scott (treasurer), Alexander Nugent McPherson (secretary), William A. Ducker

(vice president), and William Milne McLeod. The company had a market cap of two million dollars with shares available at \$1 each.

Due to the large number of mining claims staked on the north shore of Lake Lac du Bonnet, as well as along the mouth of the Bird and Lee Rivers, this area became known as 'Eureka.'

Considerable work was done on some of the claims such as sunk in pits and stripping. Traces of gold and copper were found, but not in sufficient quantity to mine.

The area around Bernic Lake, Shatford Lake and Bird Lake was found to be rich in a wide variety of minerals and metals. The mines located in that area have employed many residents of the municipality both directly and as service industries and contractors for the sites.

BRICKS

Bricks were made from clay found along the Winnipeg River. During the spring and summer of 1899, the bush was cleared away, a few acres cleared for the plant, and a sample of clay was sent to the U.S. for testing. A very favourable report, together with a fine sample of fire brick, was received by the Lac du Bonnet Mining, Developing and Manufacturing Company.

Among the men present at the time were W. Wardrop, manager for the company, J. Bouchie (Cook), Alex Lemaire, Alex Isbister and Thomas Houston.

The bush work was done by residents of Fort Alexander; approximately forty families including Dave Gagnon and Isadore Lecaille.

The machinery for the brickyard was set up by a gang

from the east. Mr. Carmichael, a brick expert, was in charge of operations. After a season's operation, they found that the clay was not suitable for fire brick. Mr. Talman, Carmichael's successor, did not make a good brick either.

In 1901 J.D. McArthur took control of the company and with his entrepreneurial spirit, built the first commercial high rise building in Winnipeg on Portage Avenue near Main Street using bricks from the Lac du Bonnet plant.

The brick plant continued to operate until 1920.

TIMBER

Much of the RM of Lac du Bonnet was covered with forests and swamps. To make use of the abundant natural resources, a small sawmill was erected and trees were cut for firewood, railroad ties and house construction in Winnipeg.

Horses and oxen were used to haul wood to the sawmill from camps in the area. Many very early homesteaders also sold the wood they cleared from their land to the sawmill.

In 1901, the CPR line was built to Lac du Bonnet. The J.D. McArthur Co. shipped a train load of fuel wood each train run day to their lumber and fuel yard on Higgins Avenue on the corner of Princess in Winnipeg. The wood was used as fuel wood for warehouses, apartment buildings and houses. Lumber was also shipped to Winnipeg for building.

Among the men employed by the mill were A. Weiss, sawyer; Hans Johnson, engineer; H. Park, millwright; and F. Allard, planer.

The sawmill operated until 1918. After 1923, Alex McIntosh operated a sawmill for five years. He also had a planing mill and lumber yard in Lac du Bonnet.

In the 1920s, work began on the Pine Falls pulp and paper operation. First called the Manitoba Pulp and Paper Company, the company would purchase pulpwood from contractors in the Lac du Bonnet area.

Many people were employed seasonally and full-time by these operations.

POWER

The Winnipeg River was viewed as a possible site for power production as early as the 1890s. The Winnipeg River had been surveyed for its potential and land was purchased in the seven portages (Seven Sisters) as early as 1897.

Construction on the Old Pinawa site began in April 1903. It was built for an investment of \$3,000,000. The railhead was at Lac du Bonnet and at that time there was no bridge across the Winnipeg River. Tons of heavy equipment were towed across the river during open water on barges by a steam tug called Little Bobs, operated by Harry Nystedt. In winter the equipment was

hauled over the ice and some 15 miles of corduroy road that was constructed over muskeg and rock.

The going wage for labourers was 10 cents an hour for a 10-hour day. The rock drillers received 15 cents an hour. At times as many as 1,500 men were employed. Among the employees were E. Kingston, W. Gilles, J. Erickson, F. Waters, Dr. Malcolm, A. Hunt, H. McDonald, H. Phillips and L. Lindsay.

The official opening ceremonies took place May 31, 1906.

Shortly after the Pinawa plant was completed, work was started on the Pointe du Bois site, furnishing work for a lot of the settlers of the district.

FISHERY

Although settlers and fisherman in the late 1800s scorned the sturgeon as nuisance fish with little food or commercial value, King Edward II of England decreed the sturgeon a royal fish. As a result, sturgeon eggs became a valued source of caviar, and for a time, the sturgeon was transformed from a worthless nuisance to the most valuable commercial freshwater fish in North America.

By the mid 1850s, sturgeon were used to fuel steamboats and a large quantity of sturgeon oil was made into machine oil in Manitoba. A 50-pound sturgeon could yield a gallon of oil.

In 1887, a large-scale commercial sturgeon fishery began operation when the railway linked Manitoba with eastern markets.

By 1900, the sturgeon fishery was in full production with intense indiscriminate fishing. It is estimated that during that time over 2.8 million kilograms of sturgeon had been removed from the waters, quickly depleting the population.

Commercial sturgeon fishing flourished in Lac du Bonnet for a short time. A June 8, 1910 *Winnipeg Tribune* article condemned the Ministry of Marine and Fisheries for doing nothing to check the inevitable extermination of the species by commercial fishermen.

The fish company was out of business by 1913.

In the 1930s people used hooks to catch sturgeon up until 1955 when they were banned. The new regulation was in place from 1955 to 1959 when only netting was allowed. Quite a few



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people were netting sturgeon in the 1950s as an individual only needed to apply for a domestic licence, which allowed people to net for sustenance with no restriction.

Many Latvian immigrants who settled in the Lettonia area supported their families by fishing sturgeon.

In 1960, the lake sturgeon was classified as a species at risk, and in 2006 it officially became an endangered species.

AGRICULTURE

Many people who came to work in the various industries stayed to farm land in the RM of Lac du Bonnet. Under the Homestead Act, people could claim a quarter section of land and keep it if they made certain improvements on it.

At this time, Canada was opening its doors to European immigrants. Thousands came west on the railroads and settled in isolated areas lured by the cry of free land.

In the early days, First Nations people, French from Quebec and Metis with French and Scottish names comprised the majority of Lac du Bonnet's population.

Times were changing and as immigration from Europe increased, the population became more diverse. There came the Ukrainians, Polish, Swedes, Norwegians, Finns and Latvians from Russia. Lac du Bonnet residents returned with war brides from Great Britain and sometimes their relatives followed.

Writing in 1926, R.W. Murchie and H.C. Grant noted that, "This land was considered good for mixed farming purposes... dairy, cattle, hogs and poultry and should rapidly become paying ventures."

This mixed farming was not terribly successful due to the isolation of the area. It was not until roads improved, that farming beyond the subsistence level developed.

Farmers specialized in areas such as pigs, cattle and poultry. A large processing plant was located in the area in later years for poultry and turkey farming flourished for a time.

Gradually, beginning in the 1940s, the number of farms became less but larger, as a result of an increase in machinery and new technology for farming which came as an aftermath of the Second World War.

The nature of the soil, topography and climate has had a limiting effect on agriculture since the earliest settlement. Situated as it is on the edge of the Canadian Shield, the area was settled only after the prime wheat lands of central and western Manitoba were taken.

As in most prairie communities, the settlers battled isolation, loneliness, disease, poverty, struggles to learn a new language, ignorance of Canadian farming methods, weather and fatigue. Their weapons were faith in God, new friends who learned to work together, reliance on their immediate families, courage, inner strength and hope for a better tomorrow.

During the very early days, farm wives found it especially difficult. Many had to come from cities and did not know how



Photo courtesy Joyce Alskene

Oscar Lagsdin loading hay.



Alfie Apsit with a 60-pound sturgeon circa 1957.

Photo courtesy the Apsit Family

to do all the farm chores. Their husbands were away for long periods of time, working off the farms. They were left to care for the children, animals, gardens, chop wood, pump water and contend with a harsh climate with inadequate shelter. Some women never left the farm for months at a time.

Occasionally, their nearest neighbours did not speak their language. Eventually, they learned to communicate and developed as friends from a different culture.

Major problems existed for many settlers. They had to clear land, drain swamps and build roads. Most of the early work was done by hard labour with hand tools and horse and ox driven equipment.

But for the most part, they were happy and provided a living for their families.

One of the first concerns of the municipal council was to construct roads. Since then the battle to find sufficient funds and expertise to create passable roads over impossible terrain has continued. Swamps, rocks, peat moss, trees and bogs are not the best foundation for good roads.

Some roads were constructed with municipal grants. In the old days, farmers could work for the municipality for part of their taxes called Statute Labor. Until the late 1960s, businessmen could haul gravel or build roads and have the costs deducted from their business taxes.

During the depression, some farmers could not pay their taxes so the council took animals, grain or land in payment.

WILD RICE

Wild rice is a special aspect of agriculture in the Lac du Bonnet area.

In Eleanor Stardom's graduate studies paper for Prof. G. Friesen of St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba 1978 entitled *Some Aspects of the Economic Development in the Lac du Bonnet Area*, some consideration is given to wild rice production.

"One little-known business that has operated on a relatively small scale in the Lac du Bonnet vicinity for many years is wild rice harvesting. The area east of Lake Winnipeg and the Winnipeg River, particularly the Whiteshell, provides the most suitable habitat in the province for wild rice which was prized as a food source by both Indian and Voyager. It is usually found in stands along the edge of lakes, marshes and slow moving streams and flourishes best in muddy soil where its dense masses keep out other competitive water plants as well as making access difficult for harvesters.

"Local native people are the main source of labour for harvesting as mechanical harvesters are not allowed on crown land. Usually there are two men in a canoe, one to propel it through the rice stands while the other books the stalks into the boat and taps off the heads with a picking stick. This process is repeated several times in the same stand during the two to three week ricing period until the entire crop is harvested. The average yield is 300 to 400 pounds a day, but it can fluctuate widely due to the sensitivity of wild rice to climatic changes, disease and water level variations.

"A second form of harvesting is the mechanical harvester, used by companies or individuals who have obtained a concession for a particular lake that allows them to manage its water levels and harvest the rice.

"Due to the high cost of processing, the crop is usually sold unhulled to modern processing plants where it is dried, toasted, dehulled, winnowed, cleaned and packaged.

"The largest market is the U.S. but it is also shipped to Europe and Asia. However, with a growing interest in gourmet cooking shown by the general public, it should have a greater marketability



Clipper photo

The Indianhead Wild Rice building housed Harry Arseniuk's operation.

at the local level.

"The Government of Manitoba views the wild rice business as a means of developing local initiative and economy as well as helping to spread Manitoba's name around the globe."

The United Grain Growers built a processing plant in Lac du Bonnet in 1950 and sold it to Jack Wade who operated it until the early 1960s. He then sold it to several Americans who operated it under the loyal direction of Mike Vandermeer.

In 1975, the processing plant was sold to Harry Arseniuk who operated it under Indian Head Wild Rice.

Due to health reasons, Arseniuk put Indian Head Wild Rice up for sale in 2011. It currently remains inactive.

Other wild rice producers in the area were August Osis, Alfie Apsit, Shorty Holden, Bill Williams (both father and son), Art and Don Gaffray, Jim McIntyre and Tom Johnston. ■

– The bulk of this article was written by Linda Dalglish and published in the Lac du Bonnet Leader in 1992 to coincide with the RM of Lac du Bonnet's 75th anniversary.

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Riding the Rails

CPR plays major role in development of Lac du Bonnet

By Mel Stefaniuk

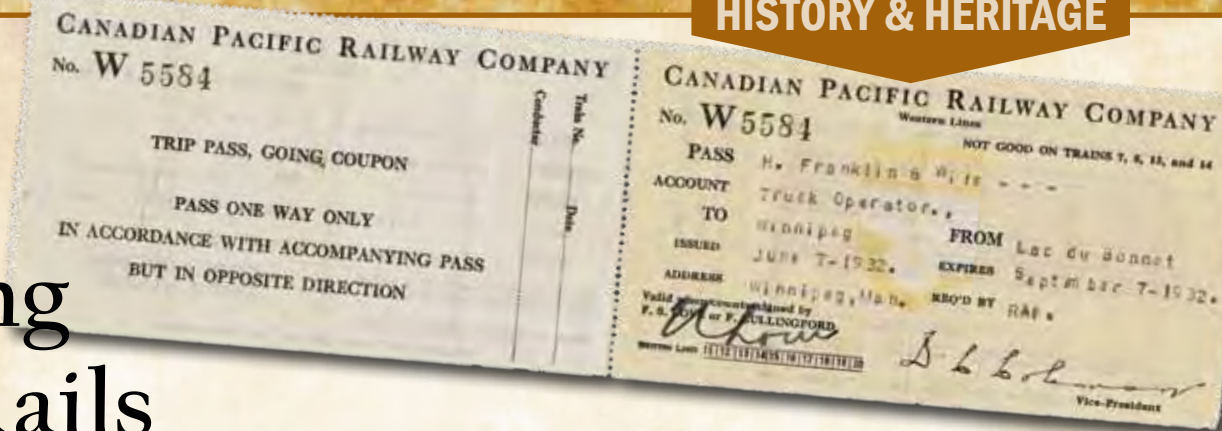
The trains may no longer run through Lac du Bonnet like they once did, but the development of the community would not have been the same without the Canadian Pacific Railway and the progress they delivered during the past century.

As the 19th Century ended, rumours of the CPR line coming through Lac du Bonnet became more and more frequent as the need for rail transport became apparent.

It was in 1901 that rumours came to fruition as a branch line from Molson was built and the first train arrived in June of that year.

The population of the Lac du Bonnet area at the time was estimated to be around 400 with a quarter of the population living at and maintaining the Pinawa Generating Station. Prior to the arrival of the train, the area was accessible mainly by river.

The introduction of the train would bring an influx of immigrants who would come to settle in the area.



Those arriving by train would stop at the Lac du Bonnet station located next to the Brickworks plant. The two-story wooden station had a clipped gable roof with two double gable dormers at right angles and a shingled awning which stretched out over the railway platform.

John B. Leitan was the first foreman for the CPR in Lac du Bonnet and would greet those arriving at the station and help them settle into their new home.

Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society director Terry Tottle explained that Leitan's assistance was a great benefit to those who were entering a very foreign land.

"Immigrants would often be coming to this new country with only Lac du Bonnet written on a piece of paper telling them where they were going," Tottle said. "Leitan would help them find where their piece of land was."

Leitan's family would get involved with welcoming those new to the area. His wife would serve meals to anyone who stepped off the train.

While communities from this period of time typically formed around the train station, Lac du Bonnet was unusual in that the town began to sprout up a distance away from the station. J.D. McArthur would build a general store and attached post office a good half-mile south of the station.



Photo courtesy Omer Lavallo/R.S. Ritchie collection

CPR Steam Engine 926 at Lac du Bonnet in July 1959. This was the tri-weekly mixed train No. 502 from Winnipeg to Lac du Bonnet. The train shown has an auxiliary tender, a Hart gondola of ballast for the road master, a box car and combination baggage passenger car.



The first Lac du Bonnet CPR Station, built in 1901 half a mile north of town. Photo circa 1924.



The second Lac du Bonnet Railway Station, built in 1925 on 1st Street. Photo circa 1969.

"In 1921, a reporter from the *Winnipeg Tribune* wrote about visiting the area and said it was beautiful except for the half-mile walk through mud you had to make to get there," Tottle said.

The RM began petitioning the CPR for the station to be moved closer to the centre of town.

In 1925, CPR decided to instead build a brand new station on First Street. It was located opposite of what is now Casey's Inn.

This second station was two stories with the station agent's living quarters on the top floor. With its location now right in the heart of the community, it became and remained the central hub of the town for decades.

Reduced passenger traffic and an increased use of trucks for hauling gradually phased out the use of the rails.

In the late 1980s, CPR decommissioned the line. The station was sold off in 1990 and was used to make a private residence in the Milner Ridge area.

"It was just an old business to some, but to others, who love history, it was an important part of our community," Tottle said of the station. "It's a shame we couldn't have saved and preserved it."

Some artifacts from the days of the CPR line remain including an original train switch, a piece of the railway track and a ticket from 1932. These pieces can be found at the Lac du Bonnet District Museum.

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Photo courtesy Winnipeg Hydro

The tragic history of the Skinny Bridge

By Arlene Davidson

More than 100 years after the collapse of Lac du Bonnet's original 'skinny bridge,' the tragedy and circumstances surrounding it are still discussed by local historians.

The PR 313 bridge that crosses the Winnipeg River has a long history in the RM of Lac du Bonnet, and was built to allow for the construction of the power station at Pointe du Bois.

A book published by Manitoba historian Peter Lacey in 2014 titled *Tramway to the Pointe* details the history of the engines that rode the track.

The book was written to commemorate the 100th anniversary of a tragedy that occurred in 1914 when the bridge

collapsed under the weight of a newly commissioned engine that had been dubbed the White Star.

In his book, Lacey explains that the building of the 24-mile road, which crosses the Winnipeg River by way of the 'skinny bridge,' was 'protracted and messy.' Although the road traversed some rugged country, Lacey said there was nothing new or unduly remote that would hold back the construction project that took over two years to complete.

One issue that caused delays in construction was the continuous tension between local contractor William Newman and C.B. Smith, chief engineer.

"As well, it proved difficult to obtain sufficient rails of good enough quality to last for a few years until they could be

replaced by higher-quality stuff to transport the heavy equipment and the many tons of concrete and gravel to the site," said Lacey. "The line was fully operable early in 1909."

Equipment was difficult to acquire, and although there were many used steam locomotives available, very few were suitable due to weight, age and expense.

"The tramway's first locomotive was a very used engine from the A.C. Torbert Co., of Chicago. This old beast served for a while, but by 1913 was considered to be beyond repair," said Lacey.



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Photos courtesy Winnipeg Hydro

The White Star proved too much for the Skinny Bridge when, in 1914, she broke through and plunged into the Winnipeg River.

The engine was dismantled to aid recovery efforts.



"The city purchased a brand-new engine from the Canadian Locomotive Co., of Kingston, Ont."

The engine, dubbed the Star, or White Star, was perfectly fine – except for its weight.

Lacey said that while shortcuts had to be taken during construction, ignoring weight allowances seemed like such a blatant error that one would have expected heads to roll.

The second engine proved too heavy for the railway itself and Lacey explained that on one set of curves, the tracks had to be re-gauged every time the locomotive traversed them.

"It makes one wonder about engineering standards in those days," said Lacey. "The original engine weighed 46 tons. The new one weighed 133. The bridge was certified for 88 tons. Something would have given sooner or later... it was clearly sooner."

On June 30, 1914, within the first month of being commissioned, the bridge over the Winnipeg River collapsed under the

weight of the new engine.

"Engineer George Wrighton was killed, but fireman Peter Riddell was able to jump to safety," explained Terry Tottle of the Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society. "The engine was torn apart to get her out of the river, reassembled and sold to the Greater Winnipeg Water District Railway in 1916."

Several other pieces of the tramway's equipment survive, including the Davenport Locomotive No. 4 and the BI bus on display at the Winnipeg Railway museum.

"One little diesel, 'Snoopy,' is on display at Portage la Prairie," added Lacey.



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Life on Bird River



Bird River with the Post Office way in the background, before the water was raised.

Pioneer Emma Osis recalls the best years of her life

Submitted by Chuck Leibert

BIRD RIVER 1910-1921

It was 1910 and the first of the Latvians to settle in Bird River began to arrive. Early Bird River was a thriving community and a gateway to the wilderness as prospectors and trappers alike used it as a stepping off point to "the bush".

Joseph Drawson, thought to be the first Latvian who settled at Bird River in April 1910, built an odd structure, mostly of galvanized tin nailed to a frame with a room constructed of logs at one end. He must have used it only for the summer.

Mr. Drawson and his wife had opened a rooming house near the railway station in Winnipeg where they welcomed the Latvian immigrants as they arrived, giving them shelter and advice. About a dozen Latvian families settled the area between 1910 and 1927.

My father, Michel Osis came with his wife Anna and four children. He purchased land in Bird River in September 1910 along with the Katlis, Arro and Gulbis families.

Bird River around our area was like having a place in a big park. The fields were all fenced off by barbed wire strung between poplar fence posts, which were put in the ground by sharpening one end and pounding them into the ground with a flat rock.



The Osis family in front of their first home, 1910. Michel and Anna with Peter, Anna, Milda and Zelma

Cattle and horses had to graze in the surrounding bush until after haying, which was after the growing season.

The Latvians carved their living out of the wilderness with only a few hand tools. Ladders were made of two straight trees with saplings for rungs. Houses were made from logs, shingles were split by hand and floors were mud. Pieces of log were used for chairs and beds were a wooden slab platform topped with mattresses made of canvas bags filled with straw. Quilts and pillows were sewn and filled with feathers.

Mrs. Joseph Drawson was known to be a good midwife. She lived across the river at that time and Nov. 24, 1913 was a cold day. She must have stayed there waiting for me to be born.

She was such a wonderful person to leave her business in Winnipeg to come out to help my mother, but the ice was forming fast on the river. The Osis family were slaughtering pigs when Anna went into labour. Michel and brother Peter came quickly across the icy river, and with the help of Mrs. Drawson I was born hearty and hale.

Our first home of logs was already built when I was born in 1913. Dad and Peter worked together on everything. My sisters Anna and Milda were not at home very much as they were babysitting for other families and helping them with farm work. Zelma and Ella were attending school. I stayed home to watch my brother August as mother had other chores. We had one cow and calf, two pigs, one horse and the vegetable garden.

During fall freeze-up and the spring ice break-up we were isolated as there was no road passage and no way to get across the river. In emergencies people walked across the river with one foot in the canoe! One of the spring chores was to drain the spring-melted snow water from the bush around the cabins into the river.

Letters and lists of things needed from Lac du Bonnet went to our local post office on Thursdays. In the summer, a boat with a 10 hp outboard motor, and in the winter a horse pulling a sleigh would depart Friday morning, drop off the list at the Lac du Bonnet General Store, go to the post office to drop off the mail, pick up goods from the bus depot and rail station, return to pick up the store orders and journey back to Bird River to the crowd.

Everyone was at the Bird River Post Office on Friday afternoons. They came by canoe in the summer, skates in the fall after freeze-up, on foot and sometimes by horse and cutter in winter. It was the highlight of my week. I was allowed one treat and it was always a big decision between candy, a chocolate bar, or a can of Libby's pork and beans.

Dad and Peter built our second house while I cared for my little brother August and mother did chores. I watched with great interest as they pulled pine logs from the bush with our little horse, peeling the logs so white and smelling so fresh, splitting the shingles and gathering the moss to chink between the logs.

I spent time carrying chips and blocks to mother's kitchen. I was not made to do this but wanted to help.

August was soon a companion and a little person to me instead of a baby. We worked together, constantly going into the woods, spending many hours on the rock hill behind the barn building on South Road and enjoying a long swim in the river afterward. Once we moved into our new home it made me sad to watch the split logs turn an ugly brown.

I recall the school principal urging my dad to let me go to school, but dad's answer was "Emma is a help to mother looking after the little ones. I will let her go when August gets bigger."

My little brother Charlie soon came along and I was nine years old when dad finally let me go to school.



Alec Arro's weekly summer mail delivery.

EMMA OSIS MEETS CHARLIE LIBERT 1922-1932

The year was 1922 and I finally started at Bird River School. In those days the grades were passed by marks and not by how many years you put in so I studied hard and caught up with the rest of the kids my age. The years went by fast and I was 13 when I passed Grade 8 which was the last grade in the country schools. That was as far as I ever went.

I kept dreaming ahead of life, of romance, and meeting the man of my dreams just as any normal teenager does, but I couldn't see myself with any boy I went to school with. I thought that to meet someone I would have to leave Bird River, find a job, or end up an old maid, which frightened me somewhat. I had no idea that my future husband would soon be on his way.

At that time my father subscribed to the Latvian newspaper direct from Europe. Dad and my brother Peter wrote an article and sent it there with snapshots under the headlines, *How Latvians live in Canada*. In it they wrote about the white-skinned trees and panning for gold and staking claims. They showed a photo of a pile of furs and a large bear that had just been shot.

It happened that a young Latvian by the name of Karlas

Libert (later nicknamed Charlie) read this article. His father had passed away and left his country store and beer parlour to his sons Karlas and Edward, but Karlas decided instead to come to Canada, destination Bird River, Manitoba.

Karlas sold his shares to his brother and with that money started his journey. Along the way he met another Latvian, Albert Herman. Together they came to Bird River.

It was a beautiful misty morning in June 1927 when I first met "Charlie." My brothers August and Charlie and I were getting into a canoe to go to school when in a bend in the river we spotted one of Ledin's flat bottomed boats with two inexperienced boatmen. We chuckled as they tried to get the boat to go straight, but kept hitting the shore from side to side.

That evening I met the two men. Charlie Libert was eager to join dad and Peter in the bush to learn how to stake claims, collect samples and trap furs. Albert Herman had no interest for a life in the bush, so Dad and Peter got him a job at John Peterson sawmill where he worked for a long time.

Although he could barely speak English, it wasn't long before Charlie was running his own business. He took to picking samples and hired men to stake claims for him. He was all energy and life; so eager to get ahead. Dad liked him so he stayed with us and when he wasn't in the bush staking claims, he made piles of wood for winter. I liked him too and was especially nice to him, but kept thinking he would not notice me, a girl going on 14.

We were a family that loved music and our evenings were spent singing. August got himself an accordion and John Lapin taught my brother Charlie the violin. I plunked notes on an old piano. I never learned to play, but could play tunes by ear. Charlie Libert joined in and we had many wonderful evenings together.

In those years, a lot of claim staking was going on. Mining companies were formed and gold or other minerals were in demand. Charlie still struggled with broken English, but had a good head for business and talked companies into paying him to "stake" for them. He always hired a couple of men to help him and made a pretty good living that way.

One day in early spring of 1929, my romantic dream came true. I was halfway home from the post office when I saw Charlie Libert walking towards me. I wondered where he was going.

"I came to meet you and talk to you," he said. "You know I love you. I want to marry you and take you to Europe to meet my mother."

It made me so happy to hear this from him!

I would be 16 in the fall, so we set the date for Oct. 15 to leave for Europe and be at his home for Christmas. Mother thought I was too young, but they finally consented and we took a boat



Emma Osis and Charlie Libert before they were married. Emma has just come out of the smokehouse checking the Sturgeon.



Charlie and Emma's home in Latvia, 1931.

with a 10 hp Johnson motor to Lac du Bonnet and we were married, returning to the Osis' residence for the reception.

On Oct. 16, 1929, we left Bird River and went by train to Halifax. The next day we got on an ocean liner which took us to South Hampton, England in seven days. We spent some time in England and then took a smaller vessel across the English Channel to Antwerp, Belgium and then by train through several European countries.

As we travelled around Charlie purchased some new clothes for me. A couple of long gowns to wear to the opera and wool dresses for social events. Life was very different here.

The day finally came to meet his mother. We took a cab from Riga to their home in the country. They had arranged a big reception with relatives, friends and neighbours in their one storey stone building with a store at one end and a large beer parlour with living quarters at the other. After a big dinner and welcome speeches, we were presented with a cut glass fruit dish, some silver spoons and a glass sugar bowl.

We visited my mother's relatives and her birthplace, it was very impressive. One side was a flour mill run by waterpower and on the other side a furniture shop with living quarters at the back. We also visited the little country farm outside of Riga where my father grew up and where my brother Peter and sisters Anna and Milda were born. It was a wonderful experience!

We returned to Bird River in April 1930. Charlie had fallen in love with Canadian bush life and was anxious to get back to claim and stake.

We needed a house of our own. As my father owned a large acreage of land across the river (purchased from Joseph Drawson) we picked out a two acre spot as a wedding present. His plan was to leave his own homestead to August and this land to brother Charlie, as Peter had bought the point at Lee River Falls and he and his wife Wilma were planning to open a picnic ground.

Mr. Simon was to be our carpenter. He stayed at the homestead while building our house. He said he was hiring a helper and took my brother August, a boy between ages 12 and 13.

"I will show you how to build. I know you will be good at it," Mr Simon told my brother. August became a carpenter and built a real house for me.

Charlie Libert got more popular for hiring men to stake claims and pan for gold. He was flown by plane to Flin Flon, Beresford Lake, Island Lake and around San Antonio Gold Mines (Bisset) on Rice Lake. He also gave a lot of men jobs to go with him to stake claims and cut lines.

After the 1929 stock market crash Charlie bought up stock

and made money in the stock market. He bought two lots in Lac du Bonnet where the Laverendrye Store stands and the other near Dancyt's Store.

We were barely a year in our Bird River home when Charlie and I returned to Europe. He wanted to share the news of great prosperity in Canada. At that time, we purchased our Latvian home. It was purchased in full and managed for us by a caretaker.

In the winter of 1932 I was a fine lady. We entertained a lot and life was grand, but Charlie once again grew restless and we wanted to start a family. He wanted to return to Bird River so our children would be born in Canada.

My father once again gave us two acres of land, but we knew we would not be staying long. We still had our home in Latvia and we thought we would travel back and forth.

Soon I was busy raising two children while Charlie was up north looking for gold and playing the stock market. Extra money was sent to Latvia to take care of the estate.

Little did we know how our lives would turn.

In 1937 we spoke of returning to Latvia, but Hitler and Mussolini were causing trouble and war was inevitable. I soon would realize that these plans would not materialize as the estate was confiscated in war and our lives changed on the Bird River.

CHARLIE LIBERT AND EMMA LIBERT CAMPING HOLIDAY 1932-1944

One day in September 1932, my husband Charlie and I left our home on the river and went on a camping trip by canoe to explore their camps so I had an idea of how Charlie, Peter and my dad lived in the bush. To get to Camp 1 at Bird Lake we carried the canoe over two portages. Very small and low without windows or doors, the cabin had a hole big enough to crawl in with a canvas platform to lay on between two logs.

On the ceiling hung little canvas bags to keep mice out of the food inside. Inside one was a loaf of stale bread and other smaller bags held salt, sugar, tea and coffee. Those things were always stored there. The rest of the food for meals was brought in by pack sack.

An open fire stove had been made from two piles of stones with cross sticks so that a pail could hang in between. We made a fire and that evening our meal was of canned goods and tea from lake water in a blackened syrup pail.

I was not willing to sleep inside, so Charlie made a bed of Spruce boughs and we slept outside on canvas sheets. The next

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morning we ate a breakfast of coffee, bread, cheese and jam. Charlie later shot a couple of partridges and was very proudly going to make lunch the way dad and Peter had taught him. He cleaned the chickens and kept only the breasts, throwing them in the black pail with a few potatoes. The salt was missing, so to find some we planned to go to Peter's main camp about a mile away.

Charlie did not want to miss a chance to hunt and fish along the way so he loaded the gun and put in the fishing line as we entered the canoe. When we landed on shore, as I stepped out to control the swaying canoe I heard a shot. I turned around and to my horror I saw Charlie's right arm, white bone below the elbow and blood gushing.

He shouted to me to remove my blouse and tie it around his arm to slow the bleeding and then we paddled frantically to where there was a motor boat that could take him to a doctor.

He could only use his left arm and I with both of mine with all the strength I could find. Somehow we dragged the canoe across the portages and when we finally arrived it was I, not Charlie, who passed out.

Later Charlie told me that he had cocked the gun and laid it across the middle seat ready to shoot should a duck cross our path. The swaying canoe caused the gun to slide toward him and when he reached for it his fingers caught the tip of the barrel causing the gun to go off. It shot off half of his little finger and the muscle below the right elbow.

Charlie was taken by boat to a doctor in Lac du Bonnet, and I was taken home to clean up. He was then sent to St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg and I hurried to join him in support.



Peter Osis' trapping cabin. Cabins and camps were never locked in case anyone was in need of shelter. The Osis cabin had only one small, square opening about two feet off the ground so you could enter during winter without shovelling snow.

After Charlie spent seven weeks in hospital, we returned to Bird River – and I revealed to him that I was expecting our first child, who was conceived during our camping holiday. Charlie needed a lot of rest and we spent all of that winter in our cabin.

In May 1933 Charlie and Albert Zeemel were prospecting at Gods Lake when our son was born. The company's owner hired an aeroplane to fly out to deliver the news. The men were swimming in the bay on God's Lake when they landed on the water and called out to them, "Charlie Libert has a boy, nine pounds, 11 ounces!" We named him Clifford after the doctor who treated him while he was in hospital with his arm.

A little less than two years later, in March of 1935, our daughter was born.

Life was busy over the next few years with Charlie prospecting and I minding young children. One fine morning in the early days of September 1940, he was preparing to leave again for the bush and I was looking ahead to his return from the last trip of the season.

I would miss him. He spoke of a party we would throw to celebrate our wedding anniversary when he returned... but that day would never come.

Later that night I awoke to my sister and a policeman at my door. There had been an accident. Charlie's canoe had tipped over and he was unable to reach shore. My beloved Charlie had drowned and I would never see him again.

I desperately wanted to awaken from the nightmare, to see him again. Even after the funeral I was expecting him to come home out of the bush. It was difficult to go on, but I had to do it for the sake of my children.

One day I gathered up all of his bush clothes and piled them out in the field... and then I lit them on fire and sobbed while I watched them burn. It was time to let him go.

On our own now, but with my family nearby, the children (11 and nine years of age) continued to attend the same Bird River School as I had years before.

We left our cabin along the Bird River in 1944 and moved to Winnipeg to start a new chapter in our lives, but I will always think of those 10 wonderful years I had with Charlie Libert as the best of my life.

– Chuck Leibert brings fresh vegetables to the surrounding cottage community and garlic all over the province from the second homestead property. In 2009 Chuck created Emma's Garden in honour of Grandma Emma who grew up there.

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Old Pinawa Dam

By Michelle Grimmelt

Located less than a 15 minute drive from the Town of Lac du Bonnet, rests the historic site of the Pinawa Dam Provincial Heritage Park.

Touted as one of the greatest engineering phenomena of its time, construction of the dam began in 1903, when entrepreneurs, James Ross and William McKenzie, both of the City of Winnipeg, realized that in order to meet the enormous electrical needs of the rapidly growing city, a continuous year round supply of electricity would be essential.

Winnipeg – the fastest growing city in North America at the time – was dubbed “the Chicago of the North” and “the Railway Gateway to the West.”

Going against the nay-sayers that believed hydroelectricity could not be sent from great distances, the consortium formed The Winnipeg Electric Street Railway Company and scouted the ideal location for a dam construction and what would soon become the Winnipeg River’s first and Manitoba’s second hydroelectric producing station.

The location selected was less than ideal as there were no roads, rail lines or a bridge across the Winnipeg River. However, the magnitude of the Winnipeg River outweighed these obstacles and the site was ultimately selected.

The transportation issues were tackled by men, horse teams, derricks and steam power. Heavy equipment was moved from Lac du Bonnet over river ice during the winter, and by summer it was moved over scow and “corduroy roads” – some of which can still be walked along today.

Up to 75 teams of horses were in constant use during the construction of the dam, and the importance of the horse-teams was proven with first priority being construction of a heated barn on site.

The channel that was selected for the dam contained water



Photo by Donna Besel

The Pinawa Dam was touted as one of the greatest engineering phenomena of its time.

only at times of high water levels on the river. In order to allow more water to pass through it, the channel had to be dredged.

Most of the channel was granite and therefore, the rock had to be blasted. Debris that was removed from the channel bed was piled beside the channel. This rock can still be seen at the diversion dam (the old control dam) at the end of PR 211 near present day Pinawa.

Working through all four seasons, the dam took three years to complete at a cost of \$3,000,000.

The first power transmission of the Winnipeg Electric Company from Pinawa Dam to Winnipeg was on June 9, 1906, with the generating station producing 18,643 kW of power.

By 1916, Winnipeg had quadrupled in size and the demand for hydroelectricity increased. Meeting these demands, the Pinawa Dam was able to increase its output of power to 22, 371 kW.

As would be expected during a construction project of this size and nature, a town of sorts sprang up close to the site. In the beginning, the structures were built of log, but by 1908, structures were being built for a more permanent settlement.

As the importance of the dam solidified itself and jobs were secured for the ongoing operation of the dam, the town soon grew to encompass a general store, a town hall, a garage, tennis court, curling rink, a “company” garden and a school.

The town was largely self-sufficient – growing their own


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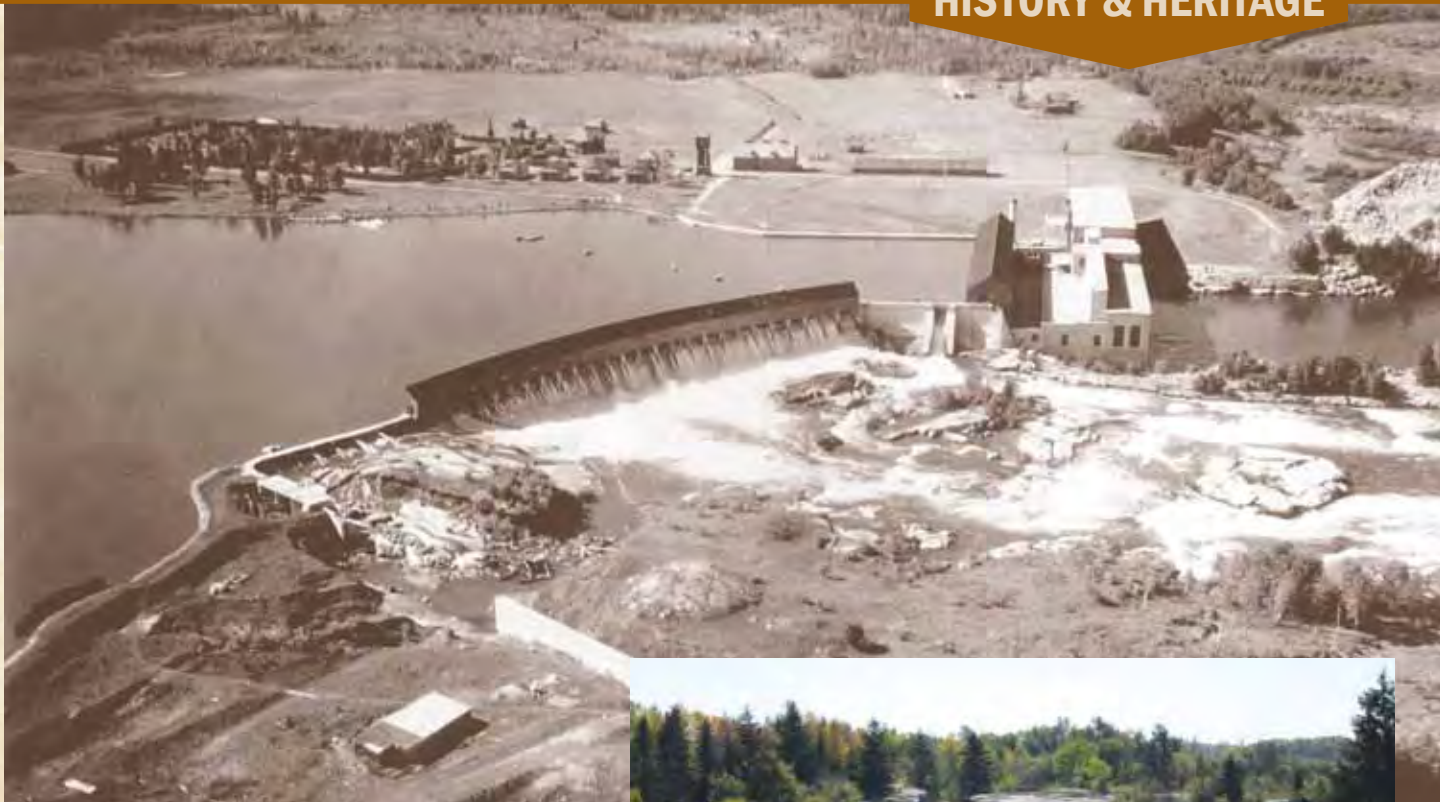


Photo courtesy the LdB & District Historical Society

Pinawa townsite beside the Winnipeg Electric Railway Co. Pinawa Generating Station, 1926.



Photo by Michelle Grimmelt

The Manitoba Government declared the site The Pinawa Dam Heritage Park in 1986.

food and farming their dairy products. Attending social functions close to Lac du Bonnet was a mere four mile walk to the ferry crossing.

But, all good things eventually come to an end. As the Province of Manitoba's electricity needs grew, more hydroelectric dams were being constructed along the Winnipeg River.

By October 25, 1951, the final decision was made to retire the Pinawa Dam in favour of allowing the Seven Sisters Hydroelectric Dam to raise their water levels for increased power production.

One turbine at the new Seven Sisters Dam could produce as much power as all of the turbines were producing at Old Pinawa Dam. Subsequently, the Pinawa Channel control dam was filled in and became a diversion dam now directing the water to Seven Sisters.

The once thriving Pinawa Dam town-site soon became a ghost town. Some workers transferred to other power stations, while others retired. Many of the lumber homes were sold and moved to the Lac du Bonnet area by dragging them over the ice during winter. The dams were blown up and the hydroelectric equipment was dismantled. By the 1970s the remainder of the buildings were demolished.

It wasn't until 1986, that the Manitoba Government declared the site The Pinawa Dam Heritage Park.

By 1996, a handful of volunteers formed a nonprofit group

called The Friends of Old Pinawa. Together with the Manitoba Department of Natural Resources, Town and RM of Lac du Bonnet, the LGD of Pinawa and other groups, they pledged to preserve the history and heritage of the Old Pinawa Dam site.

The Friends of Old Pinawa have added a long list of accomplishments to the Old Pinawa Dam resume, including (but not limited to) nature trails, a footbridge, a heritage walk brochure, interpretive signage and an 18 foot (diameter) 3,300 pound turbine blade from Seven Sisters Dam (showcasing the reason for the closure of the Pinawa Dam).

In 2008, the Old Pinawa Dam was honoured by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers. Commemorating the significant engineering achievement accomplished with the planning, construction and operation of the Pinawa Generating Station, an Engineering Milestone bronze plaque was presented to the Manitoba Electrical Museum. Manitoba Hydro donated a duplicate bronze plaque, which is mounted on the ruins in the park.

The Friends of Old Pinawa continue to fund raise and bring awareness of this integral part of the area's history.

As the RM of Lac du Bonnet celebrates 100 years of history, a visit to the Old Pinawa Dam Heritage Site is a must-see for residents, newcomers and tourists.

The dam site is located along PR 520, five kilometres north of PR 211 and six kilometres south of PR 313.

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Airborne Voyageurs

Much of Manitoba's aviation history took flight from Lac du Bonnet



Photo courtesy Robert Starratt

Pilot Shorty Holden, later a resident of Lac du Bonnet.

Much like the fur traders who used Manitoba's waterways for transportation and commerce, the 'Airborne Voyageurs' that took off and landed in Lac du Bonnet opened the skies to much of this province's aviation history.

It was in the early 1920s that mining geologists, engineers, and managers began utilizing air transportation to access and service remote mine sites throughout Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario.

Canadian visionaries like James A. Richardson and Harold Anthony Oaks visualized the vast potential of air travel. Many Bush Pilots were on board, including Fred Stevenson and W.L. (Leigh) Brintnell.

The first mention of an aircraft situated in Lac du Bonnet was from a newspaper article in 1922 that identified a plane on survey work being based in the area. It was a time when area residents would rush to the dock to see an early morning arrival as an aeroplane was something read about but rarely seen.

By 1925, prospecting the Red Lake area by dog team and canoe had given way to prospecting by bush plane. In the mid-1930s, Red Lake became one of

the busiest airports in the world, due to the discovery of gold and what has been dubbed "the last great gold rush in North America."

In the infancy of aviation, Manitoba's pioneering pilots were flying in 'open cockpit' aeroplanes. They wore felt masks and goggles to help protect them from the elements.

The early aircraft flown over Manitoba's virgin skies were the Canadian manufactured Vicker's Vedette 'Flying Boat', and the Dutch 'Standard' Fokker.

Both aircraft had little more than a compass in their instrument panel. There were no communication systems, so pilots were expected to leave a note in a tin can which was attached to a tree, at the point of departure. They were also advised to

be sure to let someone know where they were going!

The Manitoba pilots flying men and equipment to remote mine sites often delivered newspapers, parcels, letters, food supplies or gifts.

Manitoba's sky pioneers embraced air travel with passion and commitment – an exciting adventure that saw them map, explore and prospect untapped (and tapped) mine sites, service remote areas and



Photo courtesy Robert Starratt

Lined up on the Winnipeg River.

belong to an elite group that was breaking ground in the future of Manitoba's economic and industrial revolution.

It was Richardson, who began Western Canada Airways Limited in 1926, and Oaks, who also saw the vast potential in air delivery service.

On Jan. 11, 1927, Oaks formally requested that Richardson contact government postal authorities in Ottawa and propose a mutually beneficial mail delivery contract, which he did.

Two months later, the Canada Post Office Department (Canada Post) gave approval to Richardson for Western Canada Airways to issue their own airmail stamps.

In May, Capt. Fred Stevenson took passengers and freight up to Red Lake, following the spring break-up.

It was shortly after this flight that Western Canada Airways Limited was formally awarded the contract from Canada Post to fly the mail between the northern Manitoba points of Lac du Bonnet and Wadhope, via Bissett. This airmail contract was only the second national contract awarded by the Canada Post Office Department.

On June 1, 1927, the first airmail flown in Manitoba took off from Lac du Bonnet to Long Lake with Stevenson at the helm of a Western Canada Airways Fokker Universal.

It became a scheduled Monday morning flight, with the aircraft leaving Winnipeg, a stop in Lac du Bonnet, and then continuing on to Long Lake. They would then work between Lac du Bonnet and Long Lake all week, not returning to Winnipeg until Friday afternoon of the same week. It was the beginning of the significant role that aviation would contribute to Lac du Bonnet's cultural, economic and social life.

Prior to the air mail service, mail was distributed to Lac du Bonnet by oxen, canoe, horse and sleigh.

It was also in 1927 that the Royal Canadian Air Force moved its base near the current Winnipeg River Bridge to carry out fire pa-



Photo by Michelle Grimmelt

The cenotaph placed near the Lac du Bonnet dock recognizing the region's aviation history and the bush pilots who serviced the area.

trols for the Manitoba Forest Service.

Within five years the Manitoba Government Air Service (MGAS) carried out its first patrol flight for the forest service with Lac du Bonnet as its headquarters. The first five pilots of the MGAS were J.C. Uhlman, L.H. Phinney, C.H. Travers, M.H. Kennedy and M.B. Barclay.

In 2010, the Town of Lac du Bonnet erected a memorial cenotaph to honour Manitoba's early Airborne Voyageurs and to commemorate the historical flights taken from Lac du Bonnet. The cenotaph is aptly located at Lac du Bonnet's first unofficial 'airport' near the Lac du Bonnet town dock and beach, the point of departure for these historic flights.

In 2013, The Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee in conjunction with

numerous supporters erected a Vicker's Vedette monument to recognize the craft's contribution to Lac du Bonnet's cultural aviation history. It sits at the Lakers Ski Club Park on PR 502 in Lac du Bonnet.

— Sources: the Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society, Lac du Bonnet Times, Lac du Bonnet Leader, Logs and Lines, Pioneering in Canadian Air Transport by Kim Molson, and Canada's Flying Heritage by Frank H. Ellis.

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Starratt Airways and Transportation

Robert Wright Starratt was one of several men to carve out a living in connection with Lac du Bonnet's aviation history.

Born in 1887, Starratt grew up in Dorchester, N.B. As a young man he ventured west in 1910 to Saskatchewan, working with the survey crew for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway.

His fiancée Iris Irving travelled west in 1913 and they were married that year in Wakaw, Sask.

When his work on the railway ended he joined the Hudson's Bay Company freighting supplies by canoe and small boat during the summer season and horse teams in the winter.

Iris travelled back to the east coast by train in 1916 for the birth of their first child, a son named Bud.

Soon the young family moved further west into the Peace River country of northern Alberta. Bob broke the land and the family homesteaded there until late in 1925. While there, sons Billie, Don and Dean were born into the family. Iris returned to New Brunswick with the four children and Rob gained employment in Winnipeg during the winter.

HUDSON HISTORY

Bob secured employment with the Hudson's Bay Company once again and was sent to Hudson in the spring of 1926 to run their transportation interests in the Woman and Confederation Lake areas. In September 1926 Iris and the four children arrived in Hudson.

In 1928, Starratt and partners formed Northern Transportation (NT). He became the sole proprietor the following year.

Starratt Airways and Transportation quickly became a dominant player in the transportation industry in Northwest Ontario. In 1939 alone, Starratt flew 12,604 passengers and 6,583,804 pounds of freight while flying over 1,000,000 air

miles. Boat and tractors hauled another 600 passengers and 34,000,000 pounds of freight.

LAC DU BONNET CONNECTION

Starratt Airways and Transportation started flying regularly scheduled flights into Manitoba in January 1938 after purchasing a Beechcraft 18 twin-engine aircraft, CF-BGY. BGY was the first Beech 18 on skis and floats.

Initially the flights landed at the Winnipeg airport on skis, but because the aeroplane was equipped with floats in the summer, a water base would have to be established.

Discussions with the city of Selkirk resulted in the city constructing a dock to accept the Starratt aircraft. At this time, other airlines servicing the gold fields in Northwest Ontario, such as Wings Ltd. and Canadian Airways, were flying into Lac du Bonnet and transporting their passengers to Winnipeg via taxi.

The Starratt fare to Winnipeg and Selkirk however was lower than the others fares to Lac du Bonnet. The Department of Transport allowed Starratt to continue to fly into Winnipeg and Selkirk, but they would not approve the lower rate.

To remain price competitive, Starratt began using Lac du Bonnet as their Manitoba base. The base agent converted a



Photos courtesy Robert Starratt

Bud Starratt, regular pilot into Lac du Bonnet, crashed and died on a return flight from Lac du Bonnet via Red Lake in January 1941.



Gipsy Moth AGX checking on a tractor train en route to Red Lake



Starratt planes being prepared for the summer season.

Dodge car into a seven-passenger vehicle by removing the trunk, adding dual rear wheels and a roof baggage rack and made the taxi runs in and out of Winnipeg with this vehicle.

In 1938 the schedule was Kenora-Red Lake-Winnipeg in the winter and Kenora-Red Lake-Lac du Bonnet during the summer months.

In 1939, the route was expanded and BGY was based in Hudson instead of Kenora. All days of the week but Sunday, BGY piloted by Hump Madden would fly Hudson-Sioux

Lookout-Uchi Lake-Red Lake-Lac du Bonnet and returned to Hudson by the same route.

In 1940 the route expanded again and during that year Hump Madden joined the Royal Canadian Air Force and was replaced by Bud Starratt, son of owner R.W. Starratt.

Pickle Lake was added to the route and the schedule became Hudson-Sioux Lookout-Pickle Lake, back to Sioux Lookout-Uchi Lake-Red Lake-Lac du Bonnet. If one of the locations on the route did not have any passengers any given day, it would be bypassed.

Tragically in January 1941, on the return flight from Lac du Bonnet via Red Lake, Bud Starratt was overcome by carbon monoxide poisoning and BGY crashed onto the ice on Bruce Lake near Ear Falls. Bud and the lone passenger were killed – the only fatalities ever suffered by the airline.

Starratt Airways rented another Beech 18, CF-BQG, and continued to fly into Lac du Bonnet until the company was sold to Canadian Pacific Railways.

The name Starratt Airways was used by CPR for a few years and then was eventually joined together with similar feeder airlines in the country to form Canadian Pacific Airlines, Canada's second national airline.

In 1967, R.W. Starratt passed away in Florida at the age of 80.

Robert W. Starratt and his first wife Iris, along with the remains of his sons Bud and Billie (killed as a teen in a shooting accident) are interred in the Elmwood Cemetery in Winnipeg.



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Loving care preserves Pioneer Home

By Arlene Davidson

The only known, original pioneer home still standing proudly in the RM of Lac du Bonnet is located on Riverland Road.

The home was built in 1907 by Isadore Lecaille Jr. (also spelled LeCoy and Lecoy). He was born in Ste. Marie, Michigan in 1851 to Charlotte Parreau and Isadore Lecaille Sr., a voyageur and employee at the Minnesota Fur Company. It is believed the Lecaille family originated from the Brittney region of France.

In the early 1900s, Lecaille arrived in the Lac du Bonnet area and found work clearing bush for the brick plant and the sawmill.

He moved to the Fort Alexander Fur Trade Post where he lived for many years.

Lecaille married an Ojibwe woman named Isabel Sipi and the couple built a home in the present Riverland North area on a section of land designated as NW26-15-11E. Lecaille established a workable, fenced farm that contained a house, stable and granary.

A Lecaille family history recorded by the Lac du Bonnet Municipal Historical Advisory Committee reports that he continued to clear a few acres each year.

In 1920, when he was 76 years old, Lecaille applied for a patent to homestead. He received title for the property in 1924 under the Real Property Act.

In 1929, the property was sold to Dr. Henry Bruce Chown, and the family used it as a summer home for many years.

Sold to Dennis and Pat Oscarson in 1981, the property was designated as a historical site in 1991, while still owned by the Oscarson family, as they had restored the house to near original condition.

Current owners Duane and Eileen Glenhorn continue to meticulous care for and complete necessary structural upgrades.



Photos courtesy Lac du Bonnet and District Historical Society

The Lecaille House on Riverland Road is the only example of early pioneer housing that still exists today in the RM of Lac du Bonnet.

"The very few owners, and their loving care for the house contributed to its survival in a largely intact condition to the present time," said Gus Wruck, president of the Lac du Bonnet and District Historical Society.

The Lecaille House is one of 230 designated municipal heritage sites. Because it is privately owned, it is not open for public viewing.

— Sources: Lac du Bonnet Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee.

The interior of the Lecaille House has been restored to near original condition.



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Lac du Bonnet Brickworks

Laying the foundation



Photo courtesy Western Canada Pictorial Index

Workers dry bricks in covered sheds.

By Arlene Davidson

Bricks made of local clay were used to build many of the historic buildings that stand today in the community of Lac du Bonnet.

More than a century later, bricks continue to bond the community in other ways.

Walter William Wardrop established the Lac du Bonnet Mining, Developing and Manufacturing Company on March 24, 1898 to prospect for mineral rights and timber on land spanning from the community of Seven Sisters Falls north to Bird River.

The company took full advantage of the abundance of natural resources in the region including clay from the banks of the Winnipeg River that provided raw material for the production of bricks.

When Wardrop received confirmation that the clay samples he submitted for testing were suitable for manufacturing brick, he ordered mixers and presses from the United States.

Once the factory was built and the equipment was on site, Wardrop brought in a crew from Eastern Canada to assemble the Lac du Bonnet Brickworks.

The brick plant was powered by a steam engine fed by a 2,500 gallon water reservoir. Tough manual labour was required to manufacture the bricks by scooping clay from the

banks of the Winnipeg River with a shovel and piling it into carts. The material was wheeled to a hopper that poured the clay into brick moulds. The moulds were dumped and the soft bricks were then left to dry on slats in covered sheds. After the bricks were turned several times, they were transferred by wheel barrow to be fired in kilns.

"At its peak, the brick plant employed 50 men seasonally," said Terry Tottle of the Lac du Bonnet and District Historical Society. "Runs of 50,000 bricks were made per day with totals up to seven million bricks per season."

In 1901, construction of a CPR line from Molson to Lac du Bonnet was completed, providing direct shipping access to outside markets.

That same year, J.D. McArthur purchased the entire holdings of the Lac du Bonnet Mining, Developing and Manufacturing Company, which played a major role in the economy of the region.

Lac du Bonnet bricks provided building materials for many homes and businesses in the region, and in the south eastern portion of the province including the hydro power houses at Old Pinawa and Pointe du Bois dam sites.

Other noted buildings in the region made from these local bricks included the company store, four homes, a large two story staff house at the Pinawa Dam town site and McArthur's General Store and Post Office, which was located at the corner of First Street and Park Avenue in Lac du Bonnet.

The brick factory operated until 1920 when it was decided that the venture was no longer viable.

Years after the closure of Lac du Bonnet Brickworks, locals continued to make use of these building blocks by reclaiming bricks from old, unused structures.

The RM of Lac du Bonnet municipal office was made from bricks reclaimed from a silo that once stood on the Ramsay McIntosh farm.

With construction on the building started in 1991, it was completed in time for the RM's 75th anniversary the following year.

A plaque at the entrance of the building reads, "The bricks on this building were manufactured by Lac du Bonnet Brickworks which operated from late 1800 until the mid 1920s. These bricks were donated by Ramsay McIntosh, great nephew

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of Brickworks owner, Mr. J.D. McArthur.”

A cairn that contains some of these local bricks has been erected by the Lac du Bonnet Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee at the Lac du Bonnet Boat Launch, denoting the history and location of the once flourishing company.

The Lac du Bonnet and District Charitable Foundation, a philanthropic, nonprofit organization that has supported local service groups in the region since 2008, uses a ‘brick’ logo designed to represent strength and endurance.

The logo was designed after those that were manufactured at the Lac du Bonnet Brickworks plant, complete with the imprint that was imbedded to represent where it was manufactured.

In only eight years, the fund has grown quickly to a current balance of \$400,000.

“This community was built with Lac du Bonnet bricks, and the foundation is continuing to build the community,” Lac du Bonnet and District Charitable Foundation president Gerry Arbez said when the logo was unveiled in 2016.

“It’s simple, memorable and readily identifies the foundation... one piece, one grant, one donation at a time.” ■

– Sources: Terry Tottle of the Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society, Winnipeg Free Press, Logs and Lines, Trails to Rails to Highways, descendants of Walter Wardrop and Mary Lawson, Henderson’s Directory, Manitoba Historical Society and MHAC Archives.



Photo courtesy Les Wardrop

A never before published photo of the Lac du Bonnet Brickworks yard.

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Photo submitted by Kathy Picard

Centennial School Grade 8 Class picture from 1968-69.

Back row, left to right: Arthur Chulka, Norman Lussier, Randy Blair, Ron Lussier, Vern Petersen, John Enright, Norman Scott, Wesley Jansson, Ed Stine; Middle row, left to right: Gary Mikolaychuk, Billy Boyer, Holly Arsenaault, Kathy Picard, Karen Bruchanski, Karen Dancyt, Kathryn Shand, John Goulet, Mr. Gideon Trudeau, teacher; Front row, left to right: Sharon Chikowski, Lisa Campbell, Lydia Karklin, Carol French, Lori Arseniuk, Holly Nadolsky, Gail Matthew, Sandra Chikowski.

Centennial School turns 50

By Arlene Davidson

Centennial School in Lac du Bonnet is celebrating a significant birthday of its own in 2017.

Centennial School opened its doors in 1967 and was named in honour of Canada's 100th birthday.

The school, which serves Kindergarten to Grade 6 children in Lac du Bonnet, is excited to be sharing five decades of quality education with the RM of Lac du Bonnet's centennial.

Prior to 1967, the Park Avenue School served children in Grades 1 to 8 in Lac du Bonnet, but only the Grades 1 to 3 students remained when Centennial School opened and took over the Grade 4 to 8 classes.

When an addition was built on to the Lac du Bonnet Senior School in 1971, the Grade 7 and 8 classes moved there, leaving

the Grade 4 to 6 students at Centennial.

In 1989, an addition was built on to Centennial School to provide space for Kindergarten to Grade 3 students.

From that time, until present day, Centennial School has operated as a K-6 school.

Staff members and students of Centennial School planned a variety of activities to recognize the school's 50th birthday within the school and with groups in the community.

"We found some old newspaper clippings from the late 1980s and early 1990s that we have put on a bulletin board.



Many of the kids in the articles are parents of Centennial kids now,” said Principal Dave Ogren. “We have also been sorting through boxes of old pictures that have been stored at the school to see what we can learn about the school and community members. As we go through these, we will post some in the school halls.”

Ogren added the celebrations at Centennial are focused on bringing people and stories of the past into the present. To this end, they have invited numerous former teachers to return to the school to read to the students and to tell stories of their time there.

He noted that Joanne Lowery, Kathy Picard, Bob Becker, Karen Kost, Janice Halliday, Cheryl Cassidy and Tony Penner are some of the former staff members who have been invited back.

Picard was a Grade 6 student at Centennial School when it opened in the spring of 1967, and was in one of two Grade 8 classes that received an education there.

“I came back to Lac du Bonnet to teach at Centennial in 1984 and taught there for 26 years, retiring in 2010,” said Picard. “So Centennial and I go way back!”

Steve Mazur served for one year as the first principal of Centennial School and was replaced by Gerry Kachur. Doug Craig maintained his position from 1980 until 2003.

In the past 15 years, Marg Janssen, Janice Leroux, Diane Drawbridge and Ogren have provided leadership at the school.

Staff and students have partnered with the Lac du Bonnet Historical Society to bring local seniors and students together to acknowledge the importance of oral story telling. During the

school year, students will interview local seniors and record their memories of Lac du Bonnet and talk about what they recall about the early days of Centennial School.

Artefacts, stories, pictures and books will be used by the students to learn and record the information they collect.

“All of this will culminate with a community celebration during which students will present their learning in whatever way they have chosen to record it,” said Ogren.

When the project was launched in January 2017, local dignitaries and former students were invited to an assembly to share some memories of their days at the school.

RM of Lac du Bonnet Reeve Loren Schinkel was one of these students who served on student council in 1967, the year the school opened.

He disclosed at the January assembly that he and fellow members of Centennial School’s first student council buried a time capsule at Halliday Park.

“We filled it with items and notes from council and hopefully we can find it and open it for your 50th anniversary at a celebration of the RM’s 100 and Canada’s 150th birthday,” said Schinkel.

“There was also a time capsule hidden at the school 20 years ago, which we have yet to find,” said Ogren, who added they have been asking former staff members and community members who were around then to see if they can discover its location.

“Regardless of whether or not there is an unearthing, we are planning on burying a time capsule this year to celebrate our 50th,” said Ogren.

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Theatrical Company forms for RM Centennial

By Arlene Davidson

The RM of Lac du Bonnet turns 100 years old in 2017, and as part of the celebration, a theatrical group called the Eureka Players and Puppeteers will deliver their debut performance of a historical saga called *JD McArthur and the Winnipeg River Princess*.

The show will run as a dinner theatre on Aug. 18 to 20 utilizing actors, shadow puppets and full body puppets.

Members of the group have transformed a novella written by Lac du Bonnet artist and author Sheldon Sveinson into a script that will portray a mythical tale of the history of Lac du Bonnet.

Sveinson said many talented people have stepped up to contribute their skills to the project. Original music will also be incorporated into the performance.

"The story will be told in a mythical style, but what I've been doing is reinforcing the myth with photos," said Sveinson. "The play will be a musical with original live music written by professional theatrical writers."

Sean E. McMullen, Person of Theatre at the University of Winnipeg's Department of Theatre and Film, said *The Saga of JD McArthur and the Winnipeg River Princess* is the kind of story that goes untold in Canada and that the novella gave him a true scale and perspective of what this land used to be before modern development.

"Great tragedy and injustices are intertwined in the founding of our Canadian nation," said McMullen. "What Sveinson

has accomplished in this novella is the elevation of such an instance to a tangible and poignant reminder of the devastation caused by greed and corruption. The characters are big and colourful, making this story worthy of legend in its ability to stir the imagination, allowing us to question how different things could have been."

Sveinson hopes that the Eureka Players and Puppeteers will continue as a permanent theatrical group and leave a legacy to the RM of Lac du Bonnet for its centennial celebration.

"A community is a lot of things, and the most important aspects are the things that make a person want to live there. The recipe is different for everyone," said Sveinson. "A theatre group is just as important as an arena, a snowmobile club or a lake to fish in."

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Boreal Shores Art Tour debuts in 2017

By Arlene Davidson

A group of artists from Eastern Manitoba will be hosting an exciting event this year called The Boreal Shores Art Tour. This 2017 debut is in conjunction the RM of Lac du Bonnet Centennial.

The organizing group defines the concept of the Boreal Shores Art Tour as a self-conducted tour of juried artist studios and central locations in the geographic area.

The event will take place Aug. 19 and 20 and will feature the works of over 30 artists from Falcon Lake, Rennie, Brereton Lake, Whitemouth, Hadashville, River Hills, Pinawa, Lac du Bonnet, Bird River, Lee River, St-Georges, Pine Falls, Manigotagan, Lester Beach, Hillside Beach, Victoria Beach, Belair and Lakeshore Heights.

Committee chair Janice Charko said the upcoming tour is similar to the Interlake's WAVE Tour, which is in its 15th year, with as many individual stops as possible.

The Boreal Shores event will also provide gathering spots for those who don't have public ready locations, as is done with the South of the Lakes Art Tour, which is in its 10th year.

Organizers are planning for 16 stops on the tour with groups of up to eight artists in the communities of Pinawa and Lac du Bonnet.

The committee identifies the Boreal Shores Art Tour by the uniqueness of the event, the artists and the work that will be on display.

"Creativity runs deep in Eastern Manitoba and inspiration surges at every turn," said Charko. "From the surreal east shore beaches of Lake Winnipeg, through the Winnipeg River system, to the rugged lake country of the Whiteshell, join us on a tour of art and landscapes as artists across this beautiful region open their homes and studios to share their world with you."

The public will have the opportunity to see not only oil, acrylic and watercolour paintings of exceptional quality but also glass art, pottery, fibre art, wood carving, hand crafted knives, beautiful original jewellery, photography, pebble art, wood turning and sculpture.

Charko noted that people taking the tour will visit many individual artist studios and group locations spread across the region.

"The east shore beaches will have several individual studio stops plus one in the beautiful Grand Marais Community Centre," said Charko.

With overwhelming support of artists and local governments in the region, the group plans to make this an annual event.

Visit borealshoresarttour.ca for a listing of all those participating in this year's tour. ■



Photo by Arlene Davidson

Fabric artist Janice Charko (left) and photographer Shirley Kurian are two of the region's talented artists who will share their work with the public during the Boreal Shores Art Tour in August. Below: The work of photographer Stu Iverson will also be featured on this year's tour.



Remembering Robert Kost

*Family of late
Lac du Bonnet
painter keeps
artwork,
memory alive*

By Mel Stefaniuk

The work of Lac du Bonnet artist Robert Kost continues to live on thanks to the preservation efforts of wife Grace and his children.

Born in Lac du Bonnet in 1936, Robert Kost's early childhood memories of life on the prairies is something that would continue to appear in nearly every phase of his artistic career.

Robert met Grace in high school and they were married in 1959. They had three children: Karen, Anthony and Jonathan.

His interest in art developed throughout the 1950s and he worked on his craft by studying at the Mechanical Drafting School in Winnipeg.

By the end of the 50s, he was co-owner of a service station with his father. The work did not get in the way of his passion for painting and he was soon decorating the building with his art. It did not take long before the building became a travel destination for art aficionados in the province.

After his father died in 1966, Robert decided to sell the service station and have a go at being an artist full time.

Grace remembers the trips they would take to scenic locations throughout the province where Robert would paint on site.

"We'd park on the side of the road and he would set up and paint what was around us," Grace said. "We had a lot of family trips that way."

Robert's work was soon exhibited across the country and he began selling his pieces to private collectors, corporations and even the provincial and federal governments. Hundreds of his paintings are spread out across Canada and the U.S. having been purchased by groups such as Imperial Oil, Canada Council Art Bank and the N.V.E. Capital Corporation.

Robert went through many styles of painting throughout his decades of work. He began with loose impressionism before his focus turned more to the environments around him which led to the trips across the province and realistic landscapes he



Photo by Mel Stefaniuk

Grace Kost with some of her late husband's work.

became known for.

Grace said her husband wouldn't compromise his art for anyone. She said that he once received an offer of thousands of dollars for his painting "Marigolds" which depicted a beautiful sunlit window sill. The only catch? Robert had painted a tiny dead fly on the windowsill which the interested buyer wanted removed from the picture.

"Robert turned down the money," Grace said. "He wasn't willing to change his art even if it was something as small as a fly."

Following her husband's death in 2003, Grace and her family have worked on ways in which they could ensure his work lived on.

Grace and her children have been working on and off on a book. The publication will display some of the most memorable work from his catalogue as well as share his personal history, which inspired his art.

His work will also be highlighted in the Boreal Shores Art Tour held in Eastern Manitoba on Aug. 19 and 20.

The Boreal Shores Art Tour shines a light on artist studios and galleries from the east shore of Lake Winnipeg through the Winnipeg River System and into the Whiteshell.

Grace will be opening her home to the public during the tour and allowing aficionados a chance to view and purchase selected original pieces created by Robert.

"Robert always said he was lucky to have been able to make a living doing what he loved and he would be pleased to know his work is still being appreciated," Grace said. ■

Fire & Water

Music and Art join together for one great festival weekend

By Arlene Davidson

European pioneers who settled in the Lac du Bonnet region brought a variety of traditions and cultures with them, so it is no wonder that art and music remain as important aspects of life in the community.

Lac du Bonnet's award winning Fire & Water Music Festival celebrates these traditions over the August long-weekend with a three day event featuring music and art with a focus on local and provincial talent.

The festival provides important opportunities for new, upcoming acts to introduce their talents to a broader audience and showcase their original material.

The festival is organized and run by volunteers, many of them being artists and musicians as well.

Organizers of the Fire & Water Music Festival provide a family event filled with entertainment, activities and attractions for visitors of all ages. In addition to indoor cabaret-style concerts and performances on outdoor stages, visitors can enjoy impromptu workshops and informal jams initiated by the performers themselves.



Photos by Arlene Davidson

Rosie and the Riveters perform at the Fire & Water Music Festival.



The Fire & Water crafter, artist and vendor Trade Show.

The laid back environment of the festival encourages up front and personal contact with artists who often leave the stage following their performance and join the audience to catch the next act.

Other main attractions include a fine art display, an artisan square and trade show and special stages featuring children's performers.

The Lac du Bonnet Farmers' Market joins the festival on Saturday, and food vendors are set up on the grounds for the entire weekend.

This year marks the celebration of the 11th annual Fire & Water Festival. With the abundance of artists and a growing pool of talent, the event promises to remain a popular one for years to come!

Visit firewater.ca for more information.

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CAR SHOW 'N SHINE – Sunday, July 2 on Second Street, overflow at the Community Centre Parking Lot

MIXED SLO-PITCH TOURNAMENT – Saturday & Sunday, July 1 & 2

TALENT SHOW – Sunday, July 2, at the Community Centre, 2 pm

PARADE – Sunday, July 3, 12:30 pm

FIREWORKS – Saturday, July 1 at dusk, town dock (rain date Sunday, July 2)

FAMILY FUN ZONE / LIONS OASIS - Saturday & Sunday, July 1 & 2 at the Community Centre...hamburgers, hot dogs & beverages

CHILDREN'S EVENTS – Sunday, July 2, 1-4 pm, petting zoo, barrel train rides, face painting - all free

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A Roaring Good Time

Lac du Bonnet Lions Canada Day Celebrations a regional delight

By Arlene Davidson

Thanks to members of the Lac du Bonnet Lions Club, the annual Canada Day celebration are known as the community's biggest summer event.

The July long weekend celebrations feature a midway, beer garden, mixed slo-pitch tournament, parade, show n' shine and a talent show.

Great food is on the menu with pancake breakfasts at the Pioneer Club and a pickerel fry at the Lac du Bonnet Community Centre.

The highlight of the weekend is the renowned fireworks display that is touted as being the best in Manitoba.

During the weekend, the Lions Club also ensures plenty of free fun for children by providing a petting zoo, barrel train rides, face painting and a variety of games and activity stations that are set up at a family fun zone.

A Lions oasis has been established as a comfortable spot where parents can relax and grab a bite to eat while their children expend some physical energy in a supervised setting.

Receiving their charter in 1963, the Lac du Bonnet Lions Club has remained true to their motto by serving the community for the past 54 years.

This dedicated and hard working group of volunteers represent the community spirit Lac du Bonnet was founded on, and unselfishly extend a hand of assistance in virtually every event that takes place in the community.

In 2017, the Lac du Bonnet Lions Club not only celebrates Canada's 150th birthday and the RM of Lac du Bonnet Centennial, they are also proud to boast the 100th Anniversary of Lions Club International. ■

Photos by Arlene Davidson

Top: A Petting Zoo is one of many free events offered to children during the Canada Day weekend.

Right: The Winnipeg River Car Club hosts a Show n' Shine during the annual Canada Day celebration.



Farmers' Market

A Lac du Bonnet Tradition



Photo by Arlene Davidson

Angie Arthur, organizer of the Lac du Bonnet Farmers' Market sets up her display of fresh baked goods every Saturday during the summer at the Community Centre parking lot.

By Arlene Davidson

Organizers of the Lac du Bonnet Farmers' Market have been delivering this popular summer experience for over 20 years, offering a handy venue where visitors can find a variety of home grown and hand made goods.

The Farmers' Market, located in the parking lot at the Lac du Bonnet Community Centre at 25 McArthur Avenue, is open every Saturday from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. during the summer.

Vendor participation in the Farmers' Market has a simple rule: you are welcome to set up a table if you make it, bake it or grow it. Fresh vegetables, canned goods, plants, crafts and homemade delectable's are just some of the many treats visitors can find at the Lac du Bonnet Farmers' Market.

This popular event has become a Lac du Bonnet tradition enticing local visitors, seasonal residents and travelers to stop by and check out the vendor offerings.

The first market of the year takes place on the May long weekend and the season ends following Labour Day in September.

"Some of our customers are very particular, and are regulars. We appreciate that," said returning vendor Heather Edworthy.

Angie Arthur of Lac du Bonnet has been the primary force behind the Farmers' Market, which attracts approximately 20 vendors each Saturday, with up to 35 on long weekends.

Occasionally, the Market will set up at the Legion parking lot to accommodate weddings and events booked at the Community Centre.

"It's getting huge" said Arthur reporting that in addition to area vendors, the market is gaining popularity from communities throughout the Eastman region and Winnipeg.

Every year on opening day, the Farmers' Market invites a local non-profit organization to join them by providing space to set up an information and fund raising table.

Norman and Fern Lussier run Beef on Wheels, and provide a convenient lunch and snack venue to the Market patrons.

"We started coming in 2004, and haven't missed a day," said Fern.

Following the close of the season on September long weekend, vendors gather for one final Market in November held at the Legion Hall in conjunction with the Lac du Bonnet Christmas Craft sale.

Organizers are grateful to the Community Centre and the Town of Lac du Bonnet for their support.



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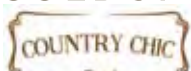


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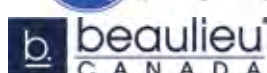
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Lac du Bonnet District Museum

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Located in beautiful Halliday Park on PRs 502 and 313 near the Winnipeg River Bridge, the Lac du Bonnet District Museum collects and preserves area artifacts from prehistoric to early pioneer times.

The museum provides a walk back in time to the early European settlements of the region, offering visitors a glimpse of the way people lived before electricity and household appliances replaced mechanical gadgets and brute human force.

The museum is housed in a restored hand crafted stacked wall log cabin built in 1935 by Hans Erickson for his daughter Linnea Tyndall.

Erickson immigrated to Canada from Norway in 1904 and secured employment blasting rock and cutting wood (winter) at the Pinawa Dam. He was one of the first to secure a home-
stead grant of 160 acres north of the Pinawa Dam town site.

The cabin was donated by Liz and Alvin Tyndall to the Lac du Bonnet and District Historical Society to use as a museum. The facility is managed and staffed by members of the historical society, who completed the repairs using the same structural materials used in the original building.

The inside has been refinished in pine slats proving a warm atmosphere in which historical artefacts are tastefully displayed and offer a comprehensive history of the settlement of the region.

Opening the door, one discovers how hydro dam construction, railway, aviation, timber, brick, pulp, fishing, mining, tourism, hunting, trapping, forestry and farming contributed to the development of this area.

A growing photo display focuses on the region's 27 plus nationalities that through the years melded to form the village and RM of Lac du Bonnet.

The museum also offers visitors a chance to see how the aboriginal people lived, using stone implements, arrow heads and rock hammers to complete daily tasks. Pottery shards unearthed throughout the region are also on display showing a variety of patterns.

A corner of the museum has been dedicated to the history of trapping, which provided a livelihood to many people in the early settlement days. Traps and pelts are displayed to provide insight to the abundance of wildlife once sought for their valuable furs.

The Lac du Bonnet District Museum is open from May to September.

For information on the Lac du Bonnet District Museum phone 204-213-3023, visit their website at ldbhistorical.ca or follow them on Facebook at Lac du Bonnet District Museum. ■



Photo by Arlene Davidson

Summer student Skylor Mitchell on duty and in costume at the Lac du Bonnet District Museum.

The Lac du Bonnet and District Historical Society

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*Artist's impression of the J.D. McArthur sawmill
on the Winnipeg River dated from 1912.*



Lac du Bonnet
District Museum

ldbhistorical.ca

Our Mission Statement is to establish the Lac du Bonnet & District Historical Society as the primary agent for the assembly and preservation of the history of the Lac du Bonnet area.

The Pioneer Club

By Michelle Grimmelt

It was the winter of 1976 when Lac du Bonnet's Billie Butchart saw a need and began fulfilling her vision for a social club for residents over 60, in the Lac du Bonnet area.

A record number of people turned up at the first meeting and immediately a Board of Officers was elected. Determining the club would be a nonprofit organization, a token fee of \$1 for a yearly membership was decided upon, and a host of volunteers were easily recruited.

In the beginning, meetings were held in the lounge at Bonny Vista Seniors Home, but as the membership grew quite rapidly, the urgency for larger accommodations became apparent.

Securing a new location on 2nd Street (behind Adele's Hair Salon), was paramount to the growth of the club and to fulfilling the obvious need in the community.

Upon receipt of a New Horizons Grant, the club was able to purchase furnishings, a pool table, piano and stereo. The new senior's 'recreation centre' was officially opened by MP Jake Epp, on Sept. 23, 1978.

At the time, the club was hosting card parties every second Wednesday, a birthday party once a month, cribbage, bowling and pool competitions, as well as an annual New Year's Eve party.

Fund raising was of utmost importance, with the club compiling and selling a cookbook, holding bake sales, plant sales, as well as the selling of Nevada tickets and raffles.

The Pioneer Club was also instrumental in the arduous task of compiling the history book *Logs and Lines*, a very important and detailed account of Lac du Bonnet and area's rich and diverse history – a copy of which can still be borrowed from the Lac du Bonnet Regional Library.

As membership continued to swell, the Pioneer Club soon outgrew their club room on 2nd Street, and once again they found the need to look for larger premises.

With membership reaching 470-plus, the board determined it was time for the club to have their own building. In order to do so, it was necessary for them to become incorporated, which they did.

They then set their sights on the vacant property at 32 Park Ave. The location was central and perfectly situated within the community. With a commitment from the federal government to match funds, the club set out in earnest to fund raise to help with construction costs.

The first phase of The Pioneer Seniors Club's new building was completed in (circa) 1981, with the addition be-

ing completed in (circa) 1983. Covering approximately 5,000 square feet, the building boasts a stage and a dance floor area, a large seating area, a full service kitchen,



Photo by Michelle Grimmelt

Pioneer Club members Shirley Goerzen, Margie Holyk, Gladys Melquist and Joan Siple.

floor curling, a pool table and darts area.

When the Club first opened on Park Avenue, they offered numerous activities including a kitchen band, square dancing, and pot-luck suppers, along with the activities that are still being enjoyed today. The club currently offers floor curling and floor shuffle board, bingo and a pool table and dart board.

An important part of the club's fund raising agenda is their pancake breakfast for Lac du Bonnet's annual ice-fishing derby in March.

Presently, a membership costs \$25/year and it is open to all people over 50.

"The best part of the club is the fellowship," said past-president Marj MacIver. "Membership is starting to dwindle and it needs to improve so that we don't lose our club. The club's success is all dependent on membership and volunteers."

"We are always looking for new members," added Ethel Cottrell, another past-president of the club. "We average about 105 members every year and we need to grow that number."

The socializing aspect of the Club is integral to the ongoing fabric of Lac du Bonnet and area.

For further information phone 204-345-8333 or e-mail pioneerclub@mymts.net

Polar Bear Dare: Freezin' for a Reason

By Arlene Davidson

Lac du Bonnet continues to play host to the Annual Polar Bear Dare fund raising event.

Following the motto Freezin' for a Reason, organizers invite anyone brave enough to don a costume and plunge into the chilly waters of the Winnipeg River to raise funds for KidSport, an organization dedicated to helping hundreds of children participate in organized sport programs.

Spectators are invited to attend this free event and are treated to a variety of antics that result from team competitions and prizes awarded for best costume, most entertaining team and most money raised.

Over the past six years, individuals and teams of coworkers, families, sport teams and friends from the region have banded together to raise over \$100,00 for KidSport.

The 2017 Polar Bear Dare took place in March at the Lac du Bonnet beach.

The Town of Lac du Bonnet annually supports the Polar Bear Dare by helping prepare the ice area at the beach, and members of the Lac du Bonnet Fire Department provide supervision and a comforting presence to jumpers both on the ice and in the water.

Celebrity hosts join organizers to introduce the teams and provide pre and post jump interviews with the participants.

"Sport has always been a huge part of our lives and this is a great way for us to give back and show our support for KidSport," said Shannon Schade, Sport Development Officer with Sport Manitoba Eastman Region.



Photo by Arlene Davidson

Lily Robertson (left), an exchange student from Tasmania, and Pinawa resident Ron Fitzmaurice about to make a splash as first timers at the annual Polar Bear Dare in Lac du Bonnet.

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Lac du Bonnet Ice Fishing Derby

By Arlene Davidson

When the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet was established a century ago, the region was populated by a growing number of hard working men and women who fed their families with resources from the land, which included hunting and fishing for their daily meals.

Ice fishing has changed since that time, but every year, the Lac du Bonnet Chamber of Commerce celebrates and encourages the activity by hosting the Lac du Bonnet Ice Fishing Derby in early March.

Making its debut 11 years ago, the Lac du Bonnet Ice Fishing Derby draws an average of 800 enthusiastic seasoned and novice anglers from across the province every year.

With over 1,000 holes drilled on the morning of the event, the non-competitive derby provides a wonderful family outing on the ice at the beautiful Lac du Bonnet beach.

Participants are invited to bring propane heaters, but no open fires or shelters are allowed on the ice.

The derby provides many incentives to anglers including over \$25,000 in cash prizes awarded on both hidden fish lengths and times when they are caught. The first place winner takes home \$10,000 for catching the fish that most closely corresponds to the drawn description, and by using this selection approach, anyone can take home the big prize.

In addition to the major awards based on time and length, a special cash prize is awarded for the longest fish and 45 random draws ensure a good opportunity for everyone to take home a prize.

Youth fishers are welcome at the derby and special prize packages are awarded to the first five youths under 18 years of age that catch a fish.

Organizers of the Lac du Bonnet Ice Fishing Derby work with numerous nonprofit groups and organizations in the area, where their members act as volunteers before, during



Photo by Arlene Davidson

Ice fishers of all ages enjoy a day on the Lac du Bonnet beach at the annual Ice Fishing Derby.

and following each event.

Final profits after expenses each year are distributed to these groups based on the total number of volunteer hours the members contributed to the event.

A percentage of the funds generated at the derby is allocated back to the community in the form of approved grant requests.

Following the fishing, everyone is invited to gather at the Lac du Bonnet Community Centre to warm up, enjoy some social time and await the announcement of the winners of the day.

For more information about the Lac du Bonnet Ice Fishing Derby, visit www.lacdubonnetchamber.com or call 204-345-8816.



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Kristen Meads
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Lake Sturgeon on Winnipeg River

By Don Lamont

The Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet is 100 years young in 2017.

Over the last 35 years of my life as a professional angler, I have spent my fair share of time exploring this outdoor wonderland.

My first job in the fishing industry was as a fishing guide on the Winnipeg River. My first tournament as a professional was on the Winnipeg River.

Needless to say there are a lot of great memories.

There have been mostly good times, with the odd bad day thrown in. Still the opportunities have been endless, and thanks to new regulations the fishery in this part of the world is as healthy as it has been in years.

Groups like the Lac du Bonnet Wildlife Association have also been playing a lead role in this.

In 2013, Manitoba Fisheries Branch, in cooperation with the Lac du Bonnet Wildlife Association, received a grant from the Fisheries Enhancement Fund to check on angling mortality for lake sturgeon below the Pointe du Bois Generating Station. This was in response to complaints that fishing had a negative impact on lake sturgeon. This was necessary information.

The result? It showed that the lake sturgeon that had been caught on hook and line all survived, a 100 per cent survival rate with fish held four days in a holding pen.

Recently retired biologist Ken Kansas has been leading the research on the lake sturgeon in the Lac du Bonnet region of the Winnipeg River and he says the news is good. These prehistoric fish are recovering and thriving.

Two years ago as part of our Centennial School youth fishing day, Kansas and Ken Cudmore netted and tagged a number of sturgeon with the help of the Grade 6 students.

What better way to educate than through participation and understanding.



Ken Kansas tags a sturgeon.

These fish were fitted with radio transmitters designed to track movements within the Winnipeg River system. Designated as an endangered species, these prehistoric fish are making an impressive comeback when given half a chance.

If anglers catch a sturgeon it's extremely important to release them back into the water as quickly as possible. Keeping the fish out of the water for extended periods of time contributes to delayed mortality.

Have your camera ready if you need a quick picture while the fish is in the water.

Sturgeon are strictly catch and release for good reason. They don't reach sexual maturity until they are 25 years of age. They are not fast growing fish and many of the large one are close to 100 years of age.

They can grow large though and put up an incredible fight when hooked by anglers.

I can remember night fishing for them as part of my television series. As my cameraman followed the action I could see my fishing line rising to the surface in the light of his camera. Sure enough a large sturgeon broke the water right beside the boat, hitting the camera with his tail and splashing everyone in the boat.

They love to jump and can be caught on a wide variety of bait. Worms, leeches and dead minnows all work.

Please use heavy angling equipment with at least 30-pound test line and level wind reels if at all possible. A large soft net helps with the release.

Take care of this great fish and they will be around forever. Remember: some are as old as the RM of Lac du Bonnet!



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Lac du Bonnet Trails Association meets national goal

By Arlene Davidson

The Lac du Bonnet Trails Association is excited to have met their commitment of having the local portion of the world's longest network of recreational trails complete for the RM of Lac du Bonnet's Centennial.

The national goal for the Trans Canada Trail was to see the system complete from coast to coast to coast in time to celebrate Canada's 150th birthday this year.

Although that didn't happen nationally, members of the local trails group had a very busy year in 2016 as they constructed the final connections to complete the Bluewater South portion of the Trans Canada Trail.

This spectacular section of trail, built and maintained by volunteers in the region, spans 38 kilometres from the Old Pinawa Dam to Great Falls.

Development of the Bluewater South trail system was part of the Border to Beaches project, funded by Trails Manitoba, the Trans Canada Trail Foundation, and the provincial government.

In 2016, the association completed construction of approximately nine new kilometres of trail through the Lee River Wildlife Management Area providing an important connection from Pinawa Hill Road to Old Pointe Road.

"This scenic trail winds through boreal forest, over rock ridges, and through some wetland areas," said Kathy Picard, president of the Lac du Bonnet Trails Association. "This section presents great opportunities for hiking and bike riding in spring, summer and fall, and for snowshoeing and skiing in winter."

Another short, but significant portion of the trail was con-

structed last year when the RM of Lac du Bonnet gave approval to build through a small piece of municipal property west of the Winnipeg River Bridge.

"This section is only about (two-thirds of a kilometre), but it takes the trail away from busy (PR) 313 and into a lovely forested area," explained Picard. "It is already being well-used and appreciated by area residents."

Association members requested and received approval from Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation for right of way along PR 313 to build a connecting link from the bridge to Dancyt Road and from Airport Road to Blueberry Rock Drive. This new link provides a much safer route for pedestrians and cyclists travelling from the Winnipeg River Bridge to Blueberry Rock Drive.

"The Blueberry Rock Hiking Trail was extended further north to emerge opposite Mackenzie Point Road, providing a more scenic route over ridges and through forest, than following the municipal road," said Picard.

In addition to a grand opening in the spring, nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts can expect many scheduled activities in 2017 highlighting the core activities of hiking, biking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, horseback riding and snowmobiling (where permitted).

The Lac du Bonnet Trails Association has developed print and online maps, and encourages residents and visitors to explore the beauty of the area as they enjoy some outdoor activity.

Events and activities will be posted on www.myldb.ca and on the Lac du Bonnet Trails Facebook page. If you would like to volunteer to help with trails, or want more information, call Picard at 204-345-8422, e-mail kdpicard@mymts.net



Submitted photo

Nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts can expect many scheduled activities in 2017 including hiking, biking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing to name a few.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

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Child & Family Services	1-888-834-9767
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LDB Health Centre	1-204-345-8647
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Pinawa Medical Clinic	1-204-753-2351
Pinawa Hospital	1-204-753-2334
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Pinawa RCMP	1-204-753-2919
Lac du Bonnet Fire Department	1-204-345-2997
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Sunrise School Division	1-866-444-5559
LDB Centennial School	1-204-345-2462
LDB Senior School	1-204-345-2585
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Pinawa Secondary School	1-204-753-2381
LGD of Pinawa	1-204-753-5100
Town of Lac du Bonnet	1-204-345-8693
RM of Lac du Bonnet	1-204-345-2619
Pinawa CDC	1-204-753-5172
Winnipeg River Recreation District	
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www.abundantlifechapel.ca	204-345-2934
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Pinawa Lutheran Church	204-753-2201
Pinawa Alliance Church, 1 Bessborough Rd. Pinawa	
office@pinawaalliance.com	204-753-2927

LIBRARIES

Lac du Bonnet Regional Library	1-204-345-2653
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Pinawa Public Library	1-204-753-2496
Community Centre	www.pinawalibrary.com

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kimber5897@gmail.com	
Kim's Kick & Fit	1-204-340-5492
lacdubonnetkarate.wordpress.com	
kimber5897@gmail.com	
Mind and Body by Mad Back	1-204-340-5285
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Lac du Bonnet Minor Hockey	1-204-345-9293
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Lac du Bonnet CanSkate	1-204-345-2473
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