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Ideas behind Haidt's Anxious Generation 'a significant conversation,' says School Superintendent

By Terese Taylor

Almost 100 parents and school division staff at Laura Secord elementary school showed up for a community meeting to discuss the ideas and suggestions in American social psychologist Jonathan Haidt's book *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewir-*

ing of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness.

In an inspirational presentation to the audience, Winnipeg School Division Superintendent Matt Henderson shared that he is a parent whose kids "love it when he

continues pg 3...

Workshop passes on new safety tips

By Cohen Berg

On one of the coldest days of the year, and as the news of the massive fires in California were wrecking havoc, Ian Desjarlais of Spence Neighbourhood's Bear Den quickly opened the door to community members arriving to attend an emergency preparedness workshop.

Ali Caporale of the Mani-

toba Eco-Network explained the workshop is part of a project "trying to tackle some energy poverty issues."

"When people are struggling to pay their energy bills, it's hard to stay warm and cool in their homes as temperatures become more extreme," she said. "We think it's valuable that people are prepared for

continues pg 4...



Victoria Albert School vice-principal Ross Patterson (back left) and phys-ed teacher Paul Delgado (right) have a team ready to try their best in new school league

Inner City basketball league scores

By Terese Taylor

A new inner city school basketball league will give kids "an incentive to go to school, to get involved in an activity over the lunch hour, the opportunity to play in a league and the opportunity to play in a world class facility," says Ross Patterson.

Starting this month on

February 24, Patterson has signed up 20 inner city schools who will hit the gym, twice a week, over the lunch hour.

The vice-principal of Victoria Albert elementary school said he admired the initiative of Peter Correia, Mulvey School Principal, who started the Inner City Soccer league,

and began to look into opportunities for students at his school in grades five and six.

Patterson reached out to contacts he knew in basketball, and was able to pull together a number of partners who were excited to join in, including the Minor Basketball Association,

continues pg 5...



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ON THE RIVER

Presents on ice; new warming huts on Nestaweya

By Cohen Berg

"When you push [yourself] to do things and you really believe in yourself, you can do things that are incredible," said Abby Stuart, grade 10 student at Exchange Met school. In her case, it was *The Present*, a brand new warming hut on The Forks' Nestaweya River Trail, which is now open to the public.

Stuart was excited to see her vision come to life, knowing that it's something many people will enjoy into the future.

Students from grades 9-12 at the school helped with the construction, which began in an indoor facility, and was finished outdoors on a particularly cold day. "It was a challenge, but we worked through it," says Stuart.

Five other warming huts invite visitors to explore; Jaimie Isaac and Suzanne Morrisette's *ROSEMARY Skool* warming hut was inspired by the birch bark basket and "conceptually references knowledge carriers and vessels to contain gifts." It was built with clay from the river and snow and will stay on the river until the ice melts and the natural materials return to nature.

Pom Pom was designed by Chinese architects, Haoran Deng and Bicen Song. Inspired by beavers, the hut "reminds us of our responsibility to protect and preserve the natural world." Nick Green and Greig Pirrie of Scotland combine the looks of a Manitoba grain elevator and Scottish castles in *Prairie Castle*, and *Wrong Turn*, designed by Christopher Loofs, Kaci Marshall, and Jordan Loofs of the United States, depicts a car sinking through ice, a visual reminder of the impacts of climate change.

Each year, students at the University of Manitoba's Faculty of Architecture design a warming hut—this year, it was *Prototype Home*. It represents a single-person transitional housing unit, "in response to the current volume of Winnipeg citizens experiencing homelessness."

These additions will shelter, inspire, connect, and welcome visitors of the Nestaweya River Trail, for this year and more to come.



The Present, honours designer Abby Stuart's grandparents (above)
Photo: Cohen Berg

Guest Artists Jaimie Isaac and Suzanne Morrisette (right) built the bricks for their basket by hand (photo provided)



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GROWING THE CIRCLE: will be offered to interested people residing in the Daniel McIntyre/St. Matthews Revitalization Inc. areas. In these classes participants will prepare healthful foods while making friends and learning about nutrition.. A nutritious lunch will be offered at 12:00 noon and classes will begin at 1:00 p.m., ending at 4:00 p.m. Participants will take home the food they prepare.
Dates: Tuesday Afternoons: January 21 to March 11

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In these after-school classes teens will participate in discussion and learn about the importance of nutrition and how to prepare healthy foods that appeal to their tastes and creativity. Prepared foods will be taken home, but can be sampled in class as well. **Dates: Thursday Evenings: April 3, 10, 17 & 24 Time: 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

COOKING CLASSES FOR KIDS

In these classes, children aged 6 to 10 years will learn about nutrition and prepare easy and tasty foods that they can take home and also sample in class. Making healthy food can be fun. **Dates: Tuesday Evenings: May 6, 13, 20 & 27th Time: 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.**

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SCHOOL RESEARCH / ANXIETY
from page 1

talks to them about cell phones," with a good dose of humour. But Henderson also shared the serious message behind Haidt's book - the analysis that the exposure of youth to social media is a significant cause of the mental health crisis in youth now being seen around the world.

The four harms of social media exposure, explained Henderson, include social deprivation, attention fragmentation, addictiveness, and sleep deprivation in youth. "We are all witness to that," he said. "Not everything the author says we are going to agree with - but for those of us who work in public education we see the impact - mopping up what happened over the weekend between kids, between families - that would be my morning. The bullying that happens online on social media, that turn into things that are incredibly serious."

The power of reading and discussion is something Henderson is promoting to school principals in the division, and "now we get together about twice a month," he said. His list of books that he shared with the audience delve into some of Winnipeg's school and curriculum history, the battles to change some of them, and successful educational trends.

School parent and volunteer Kaleigh Quinn was part of a neighbourhood book club that read the *Anxious Generation* over the summer, and jumped at the chance to help

organize a school discussion.

As Haidt clearly explains in his popular book, the hours spent on social media is not the only important factor on its own. At the same time, Haidt also points to a lack of independent play that was common up until the 1970s.

The sense of self learned through play, especially independently, and independently with other children, Haidt points out, is another cultural loss that is causing youth mental health to plummet.

The common custom of sending them "out to play" was replaced by overscheduling children in after school activities, but also an attitude that children were unsafe if they weren't supervised.

Gone was what came to be defined as "risky" behaviour - climbing trees, running to the corner store, throwing snowballs, and the like. A trend in schools was to entirely cancel recess, or to continue to provide highly supervised and monitored activities.

With the new attitude, parents also had to confront a new reality. They could be sued, loose access to their children, or, as in a case in the US, a mom who let her eight year old daughter take their dog out for a walk, was facing a sentence of ten years in jail for negligence.

It's an attitude that didn't escape Winnipeg either, as Wolseley mom Katharina Knuss found out in 2019. Letting her children walk to the

bakery on their street, while she was out in their yard gardening, led to a visit by child and family services, and an official visit in which she was instructed that her children were not allowed to be unsupervised at anytime until they were at least 12. This included walking to school.

Knuss says that contrary to what she was told at the time, she doesn't think that the legislation around child supervision clearly states that there is an age limit for certain types of independence and parental choice when it comes to the activities of their children. But at the time, she says, it was often perceived that way. Knuss started an online petition, met with the deputy minister of families at the time and worked to bring awareness of the issue. She knew that her family didn't merit CFS supervision for her decision to give her kids a wider berth that day. But she also knew that she had the resources, time and community support to take on the issue, and that many mothers in Manitoba did not. As the Covid pandemic extended over the next four years, families quarantined themselves and education moved online, the momentum around the issue waned.

Superintendent Henderson is candid about the limits of his advice. "I'm not going to tell you how to parent your kids," he told the audience, "but as schools there are a lot of significant things we can do."

He still gets told by some families that their kids have "so



Wade Davies, Laura Secord principal welcomed a huge audience to discuss Jonathan Haidt's book "Anxious Generation," and what approach the community might take to get kids off social media, and into healthy play.

much anxiety" that they should only be doing online learning.

"Let's unpack that," he cautions. "What do you want for them when they graduate from grade 12,?" he asks. "Do you want them still to only be able to be in their room on a screen?"

"Public school is the greatest place to be able to learn to be in community," he says, and as an aside, "we should consider this for adults. Have you checked out an airport lounge,?" he adds.

Dr. Michael Ellery, a parent and psychologist in West Broadway joined in the presentation to go over statistics that Haidt uses, including alternate views, and critiques of Haidt's work, that Haidt posts on his book's website.

"There may be differing views on how we got this way," Ellery pointed out, "but everybody is in agreement that there is a youth mental health crisis."

Haidt's book has slowly made its way into discussions

across north america, and Henderson shares that it is opening up small changes in the school division. One of the schools decided to let kids throw snowballs during recess, just as long as their target is a set of crates, and another school parent council told Henderson that they wanted to be "the first risky play school, not Laura Secord."

"I think we can all agree that we would rather have kids engaging with each other than online," says Henderson.

Quinn advised *The Leaf* that Laura Secord parent council will be hosting a follow up meeting **Wednesday, March 5th from 6:00 - 7:30 at Ecole Laura Secord School**, with child care available, to continue the discussion, share ideas, and look at action plans for the school community. "You need not have attended the January 22nd event to join," she says.

3000 jobs 'could have knock off effect' in West End, says BIZ

By Terese Taylor

"The whole situation with these tariffs and the terrible impact it can have on our businesses really highlights the importance of local and supporting local independent businesses in your communities where you live," says Eric Napier Strong, director of the West Broadway BIZ. "I think we're lucky that we already have so many strong independent, unique businesses."

Napier Strong said that tariffs will increase the cost for basic supplies and materials, and likely those costs will show up "in the coming weeks."

Buying local is one of the strategies being promoted by all levels of government, but expanding sales across the country is another. Currently, said Napier, certain products such

as alcoholic and other food products can not be easily sold in a neighbouring province without a lengthy, and onerous approval process.

Ramzey Zeid, manager of the Maryland Food Fare Grocery was watching the news closely when, on the day the tariffs were to take effect, February 1st, it was announced the tariffs will be postponed until March 1. "I think Trump was just trying to be a bully and didn't expect anybody to retaliate," he says. "Our goal should be to support companies and manufacturers that are local. Made in Manitoba first, and what we can't get, go to other provinces. But I think our goal should be to keep everything in house."

Oranges were slated to

have a Canadian tariff applied to their sale in retaliation to the Trump tariffs, but it's an item that Zeid has often offered for sale. "Because we have five stores we can buy in bulk and pass that on to our customers," he said. Zeid said the tariffs might support more of a return to seasonal foods when they are at their peak, and taste the best, and are at their best price instead of bringing in items year-round.

"Everyone is kind of scrambling and as the details are uncertain, it's been a real roller coaster," said Joe Kornelson, director of the West End BIZ. "There are about 3000 jobs in the area that would have knock-off effects if there is a slow down in the area."

Although there are many

front-facing smaller businesses that provide services to the community, Kornelson said there are several larger manufacturing and construction businesses in the area.

Sometimes people call the West End BIZ zone its own city within the city.

"It was a pretty steep notification period," said Paul Heide, general manager of Quest Metal, a manufacturer of custom stainless steel appliances and restaurant equipment in the West End. The company doesn't do a lot of sales into the US, "but we do import from the US, so the impact would be availability of the goods and their cost."

"There are lots of options, in terms of how we can navigate that, but with no time,

that's what we were faced with on February 1st," said Heide. "We are just in the early days now, need to make sure that we know where the risks are, and then we can reach out and start to work on plan to mitigate those."

Heide said he appreciates the effort of the government to assist businesses, but said they are almost in the same boat as everyone else.

"Hope is a great word," said Heide. "I'm going to fight like hell for my business and my country."

"Look for those opportunities in the neighborhood to buy locally made products, get your locally made kombucha instead of buying something imported, and just always think about that," said Napier Strong.

SAFETY TIPS
from page 1



Red Cross bookmarks (above) can be used to share information with neighbours who are often a first line of support in an emergency



(Left to right) Dwayne Hackinen of the Office of Emergency Management, Ali Caporale of Manitoba Eco-Network, James Wright of the Red Cross, Ian Desjarlais of the Bear Den with hand warmers he gives out for emergencies and Carolyn Labossiere of the Red Cross with 72 hour kit

extreme weather events and emergencies like we learned about today.”

The workshop included presentations by the Red Cross, and Winnipeg Office of Emergency Management.

Emergency Management Officer Dwayne Hackinen said not enough people are aware of the resources available to them — for instance, Smoke Alarms for Every Family Program (S.A.F.E.), which offers free smoke alarms and installation to at-risk residents of owner-occupied homes. He also mentioned ways to find out road conditions, severe weather and natural disasters — apps and websites like Manitoba’s 511, WeatherCAN, and Alertable.

Dwayne Gladu was not the only workshop participant to experience bad road conditions. He told *The Leaf* he was on his way back to Winnipeg from a Christmas Eve gathering, when the engine of his car broke down, and “nobody stopped.”

“I was outside, and [drivers] were like ‘Ehh, step on the gas, man,’” said Gladu, who waited for help on the

side of the road for eight hours with his kids and some spare blankets.

Presenters explained that when emergencies strike, you usually don’t have time to do anything except react. They stressed there are three simple steps you can take beforehand that could save your life — Assess, Plan, and Network

Assess risks unique to your neighbourhood, your home, your family, your vehicle, and yourself. You may be as prepared as the average person, but are you prepared for *your* specific needs? If you’re older, and on the 13th floor, be ready for the elevator not working.

The second step is **Plan**. Hackinen emphasized the importance of having a household emergency plan, just like the ones at work and school. Emergencies can happen at any time, even at home. For instance, where do you meet if you have to evacuate?

Networking involves connecting with your local community and support network. “Talk to [people] living in [your] building, talk to your neighbours, talk to the manage-

ment. Know the exits, know the routes, know how to get out,” Hackinen said.

The Red Cross took over the last part of the presentation, and shared physical emergency resources. One of these was an emergency contact card—kept in your wallet or pocket after filling out details like name, age, emergency contacts, and medical information. Labossiere reminded participants of the importance of carrying these paper copies on us, because we are often unable to charge devices in an emergency, and we have become more reliant on them for remembering phone numbers. Anyone can make a card by simply writing the info on a piece of paper.

Labossiere and Wright also talked about 72-hour kits with everything you need to live for 72 hours in an emergency, without access to essentials like water, food, heat, etc. One kit was spread out on a table to demonstrate, and was given away at the end of the event.

Similar to your emergency plan, Labossiere said the contents of the kit should be specific to your unique risks. We should be “focused on warmth, on food, and on water” at a very basic level, “but then also looking to create that kit that’s really specific [to] your household,

and the number of people that are in your home,” Labossiere said. The Red Cross has an on-line guide to making emergency kits.

The workshop presented several other on-line and phone resources. (See box below.).

Government Phone Numbers:

- 911 • Emergency
- 988 • Suicide Emergency
- 511 • Road/Travel Conditions
- 311 • General City Services
- 211 • Community Resources in multiple languages

Websites and Apps:

- 988 • 988.ca
- 511 • manitoba511.ca
- 311 • winnipeg.ca/311-city-services
- WeatherCAN • tinyurl.com/weathercan
- Alertable • alertable.ca
- Emergency Kits • tinyurl.com/redcross-emergencykit
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- SAFE Family Program • gov.mb.ca/safefamily

Canadians want feds to advertise with Canadian news media

TORONTO, ON (*News Media Canada*). Nearly two-thirds of Canadians (65 per cent) want the federal government to commit a percentage of its advertising budget to Canadian news media, according to a new survey conducted by Totum Research.

“The Government of Canada’s decision to resume advertising with Meta is a real kick in the shins to independent publishers across Canada,”

said Dave Adsett, publisher of the Wellington Advertiser and chair of News Media Canada. “Disinformation travels faster than the truth, and it sends the wrong signal to local advertisers when the government is rewarding a company that is unwilling to fact check information on its own platforms.”

Almost two thirds (63 per cent) of Canadians trust advertising in newspapers/news sites, while just 28 per cent

trust ads they see on Facebook/Instagram.

“News publishers call on the federal government to follow the Government of Ontario’s lead to and support the home team by earmarking 25 per cent of their advertising budget to trusted news sources,” said Paul Deegan, president and CEO of News Media Canada. “Last year, just two per cent of all federal advertising dollars went to all

print publications in the country combined.”

When it comes to their preferred medium to receive information about federal government programs and initiatives, more than half (58 per cent) of respondents cited newspapers/news sites, while only 17 per cent chose Facebook/Instagram.

Totum Research conducted an online survey, on behalf of News Media Canada, of 2,418

adult Canadians between December 9-22, 2024 / January 6-20, 2025, with a maximum margin of error of ±2.0% at the 95% confidence level.

News Media Canada is the voice of the print and digital news media industry in Canada and represents hundreds of trusted titles in every province and territory.

BASKETBALL from page 1

Zueike Apparel, the Manitoba Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Council (MASRC), and the Manitoba Association of Basketball Officials (MABO).

Games will be held at the Manitoba Sports for Life building across from the Manitoba Museum, and Patterson has already had to turn some schools away.

"It's got that vibe.....inner city vibe," said Patterson. "The kids really love soccer and really love basketball."

MABO has helped to develop a basketball referee accreditation program at Daniel Mac Collegiate, and grade 11 and 12 students who have

gained accreditation will be paid to referee the games, and gain valuable experience.

"They can be role models for the kids, right?," says Patterson.

He's hoping that it's a way to open doors for kids who might not otherwise have contact with other city leagues and opportunities, which is often due to their cost, said Patterson, and to get experience under their belts.

Patterson says the games will be timed, but no scores will be taken - but he's betting that the kids will be keeping their scores in their own heads. "I would," he laughs.

Team players will be provided with team uniforms from their school, and Zueike will be providing "team effort" awards.

Patterson looks forward to the launch of this first season, and is hoping they'll be able to let up to 36 schools play next year. Professional basketball player Chad Posthumus (who recently passed away due to a medical issue) came from Winnipeg's inner city, he said, playing in professional leagues in Europe before returning to be team captain of Winnipeg's first professional league, the Sea Bears.

"This'll give kids hope," says Patterson. "It'll give them the chance to meet other students."

"One of our goals is to increase attendance. For some kids, this is what will get them out of bed."

Vice-principal Russ Patterson (centre back, below) has the height advantage, but students at Victoria Albert are practicing their rounds with coach Paul Delgado (below left). They will face off on their first game later this month. Inner City Basketball team jerseys (left) will be ready for the team.



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KIN & BELONGING

Story and photos by
Terese Taylor

"What do we do in Winnipeg in February?," asked two spirit educator, knowledge keeper and activist Albert McLeod, to a packed house in the WAG. "We go to the art gallery."

At the opening of *Threads of Kin and Belonging*, A Trinnipeg Live Mixtape Project featuring the art of Kimani Beckford, Caneu, Rosalie Favell, Bria Fernandes, Alex Janvier, patchwork monoceros, Ebony G. Patterson, Betty Piryaug, Jane Ash Poitras, Lorna Simpson, Jeffrey Thomas, Chukwudubem Ukaigwe, and Walter Williams, WAG director Steven Borys said "it's more important now than ever that we create spaces

where we can engage with art that speaks to our shared humanity. This show allows us to connect not just with the artists' stories, but with the idea that we're all part of a larger ongoing narrative of belonging, memory and community."

In what the Winnipeg Art Gallery is calling a first, and emanating from a long friendship between Nestor Wynrush and Julie Lafreniere, the two have partnered as co-curators, in partnership with Synonym Art Consultation, to explore and bring together a conversation between Black and Indigenous communities on Treaty One Territory. "It's a

conversation that Ness and I have been having for close to 20 years now. It is not the first step, but one in many, as we are resting on the shoulders of the giants that came before us," said



Nestor Wynrush (left), and Julie Lafreniere, in the gallery space outfitted with features that allow for more accessibility, including lower hung artwork on the walls and a wheelchair accessible desk that Wynrush used while designing the exhibition. Painting above by Kimani Beckford, Collage at right by Ebony G Patterson

Lafreniere, WAG-Qaumajuq Head of Indigenous ways and learning. "This exhibition is about remaining true to ourselves as Indigenous, Black and racialized nations and our ancestors. It is a reminder to lead with love, care, and

compassion."

Judy Williams, a historian of Winnipeg's Black community and organiser, opened by sharing some writing from her family, who arrived in Manitoba in 1905 on her mother's side, and her father's, from Jamaica,



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The artwork of Bria Fernandes welcomes visitors to *Threads of Kin and Belonging*

“This exhibition is about love, care, compassion, and listening. My hope is that everybody feels seen, cared for, and loved when they are in this exhibition space.”

Julie Lafreniere, WAG-Qaumajuq Head of Indigenous ways and learning



Cercle Moliere Theatre hosted the launch of the fourth annual Black and Proud (Noir et Fier) Festival with a panel discussion by (from left) Laliberté editor Sophie Gaulin, educational assistant Natou Sako, Cercle Moliere artistic director Geneviève Pelletier, and founder of the festival and former journalist Wilgis Agossa in the exhibit space that will be open throughout the month of February. Black and Proud hosts discussions, and artistic events throughout the month, including a gala fundraising dinner February 27. Info at noiretfier.ca

in the 1940s. They both discovered and became part of an active Black community in Winnipeg that connected across borders, cultures and political lines.

“We shuffled people,” said Wynrush. “We are the shuffled people.”

“We’ve been removed by forces that are not our own and brought together again and reassembled. Languages taken, drums (taken), but yet the drums showed up.”

Wynrush’s project Trinnipeg Live Mixed Tape has collaborated over four years on innovative poetry, and music. In the WAG exhibition, pieced together ceramic vessels made by artist Chukwudubem Ukaigwe bring in sounds from a Nigerian market, “a Nigerian diaspora in Hartford Connecticut,” explained Wynrush, but they are also, he

told *The Leaf*, meaningful to him as a disabled person. “Because they are pieces put together, they remind me of artificial limbs, making things work, and adaptability.”

Wynrush counts three places that share his deepest roots; Trinidad, Toronto and Winnipeg. “All three count as home, but are they home?,” he asks, a question he shares with the audience.

Threads of Kin and Belonging’s beginning honours Black History Month, but will continue, with special artist’s workshops, until Indigenous People’s day on June 21.

WAG Board member Melissa Ridgen offered a February incentive to buy a membership for a friend or lover at the WAG; memberships can include a companion for free if purchased by the end of the month.

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Newman Street neighbours save 7 elms

By Mike Maunder

As all of us watch tree after tree on our streets receive the red dot of death, residents on one street in Wolseley have found a way to fight the loss of their elms. In June, 2023, neighbours on Newman Street raised enough money to inoculate the seven treasured elms on their street against Dutch Elm Disease in a procedure that protects the trees for three years.

This year, they saw the dreaded red dots appear nearby on Wolseley Avenue. But, 50 yards away, their majestic old elm at 482 Newman escaped the death sentence.

Debra Jean Moore lives across the street from that big elm. She lost her big elm four years ago, plus other nearby trees. She remembers the sense of despair as neighbours saw the entire nature of the street change. Then, at the block's 2022 summer party, an idea came up that might save the trees.

One neighbour, Evan Finkler, further up the block, had become aware of an inoculation process that provides elm trees with three years of protection from Dutch Elm Disease. He and his neighbours investigated and found an arborist company that has done the procedure on trees throughout Winnipeg on private property.

Although the price tag was steep –\$4,000 to save seven trees– they banded together.

Moore explained that the block has a history of organizing events: block parties, neighbourhood clean-ups, tree-banding, etc. That history means that neighbours know one another. Moore has been a block captain for Neighbourhood Watch and has maintained an e-mail list of neighbours for years.

"Our neighbours on Newman are great people," explained Finkler, "And it was great the way we came together." Thirty homes donated varying amounts (a little under \$100 each) and the business at the end of the block –where two of the trees provide shade for their employee's picnic table – contributed \$1,500 for their two trees.

In June 2023, neighbours watched as the arborists inoculated their trees. "It's almost impossible to put into words how much it means to still have these trees," says Finkler.

He's right – words can't describe it. But a simple Google streetscape comparison can. The streetscape view of part of the street in 2015 shows eight big trees, branches interlaced and providing deep shade. The 2024 view shows only two big trees, a variety of young trees, and a street of scorching sun.

Perhaps the saving of those seven trees provides a middle way between the shaded streetscape of mature

trees and the streetscape of young saplings bare to the sun.

"Mature trees provide many benefits that younger trees can't provide," says Finkler. "A simple thing like shade immensely affects quality of life. Maybe enough mature trees can be preserved so a neighbourhood can adjust. Plant new species to give diversity, but save enough of the old to allow the gradual growth of the new."

Finkler believes that a lot of trees that are now considered doomed could be saved if more people worked together like the neighbours on Newman did. "Any street could organize a grassroots campaign, and the business community has a lot to benefit as well," he said. "We were able to do this without any government funding. I think that government involvement would help a lot."

Moore believes that government could help a lot, but feels current policies just accept the loss of the canopy and concentrate on replanting a wider diversity of trees. That policy means it will be 20 years before trees once again interlace their branches above Newman Street.

It's true, as the old saying goes, that the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago.

But maybe, in 20 years, there'll be a new saying that praises the vision of today's

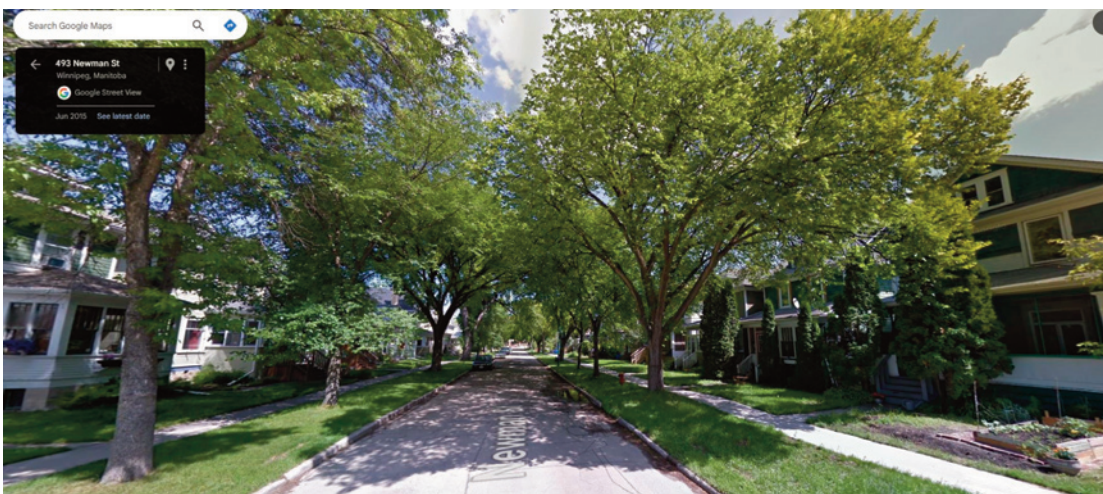


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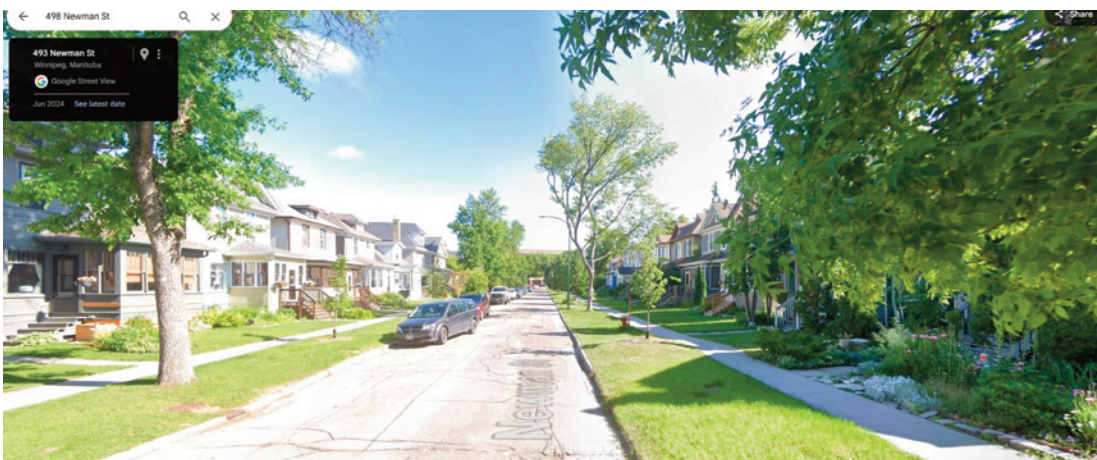
"The best time to save a tree is 20 years ago."

And that "20 years ago" is now.

Some of the neighbours who helped save seven trees gather at the big elm at 482 Newman Street.



Streetscape shows the same part of Newman Street (2015, top) (2024, bottom).



Working for Wolseley

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A SPECIAL TREE FROM 70 YEARS AGO: "Whoever was on the ground had to be very observant," remembers Jim Palmquist

I recently joined the Wolseley Tree Committee, a sub-committee of the Wolseley Residents' Association, that is looking at one of our most beautiful features of living in Wolseley -- our trees.

I'm learning about the exciting things people are doing to save trees -- like the neighbours on Newman Street who banded together in a program

to save the elms remaining on their street. (See page 7)

It's made me realize how much I love trees; and it's when you love something that you want to save it. For me, this love of trees has deep roots -- I think, back to my childhood, growing up in St. Vital, which at that time, was full of trees.

But there was one special

tree I remember. Back in 1949 there weren't many other houses around my house on St Vital Road, but the best thing was the dense bush, more bush than houses. The lane out our back door led to a huge forested area with a path we called 'the Bear Path' for some reason that only kids would understand. The Bear Path meandered through the forest to a big field on Pulberry St. just before Moore Ave.

In the middle of this field stood a magnificent old Oak tree.

A classic beauty, but we didn't think of it that way then. To the 12-year-old mind of me, Brad and Nevin, the tree was a climbing challenge to be conquered. So, we set out to do exactly that. We hammered pieces of wood into the bark to the first branches, maybe 10-15 feet up. Once there, of course we couldn't sit still, we had to see what things looked like higher up. Ten feet further up, where the tree's main branches splayed out, was the perfect place to make a fort that would command the neighbourhood.

All summer long, we hauled scrap lumber, old nails, hammers, saws and rope to the tree and then up to that fork in the branches. It was dangerous at times as knots came loose and the supplies came crashing down. Whoever was on the ground had to be very observant.

The finished 'fort' was really just a platform of boards that could barely seat all three of us if we held onto the branches for security. But it was an achievement no one else had done. Later we climbed maybe another ten feet to build a lookout. The branches were much thinner and the wind caused them to sway. It was scary working up there. We only secured one board and even that had to be tied down since the branches were too thin for nails. One of us at a time could perch in the lookout. Nevin was up there the most, while I preferred the safety of the fort below. All this construction kept us busy, off and on, for nearly two years. But as we got older we went on to other projects. We continued our construction/design skills with our famous go-kart emblazoned "The Three Screwballs" (see picture).

Sometime in the next five years, builders with bigger hammers and bigger dreams than ours cut down the oak

and all the other trees in our forest. Three-bedroom bungalows, garages and sidewalks took their place.

The forest of our childhood was gone.

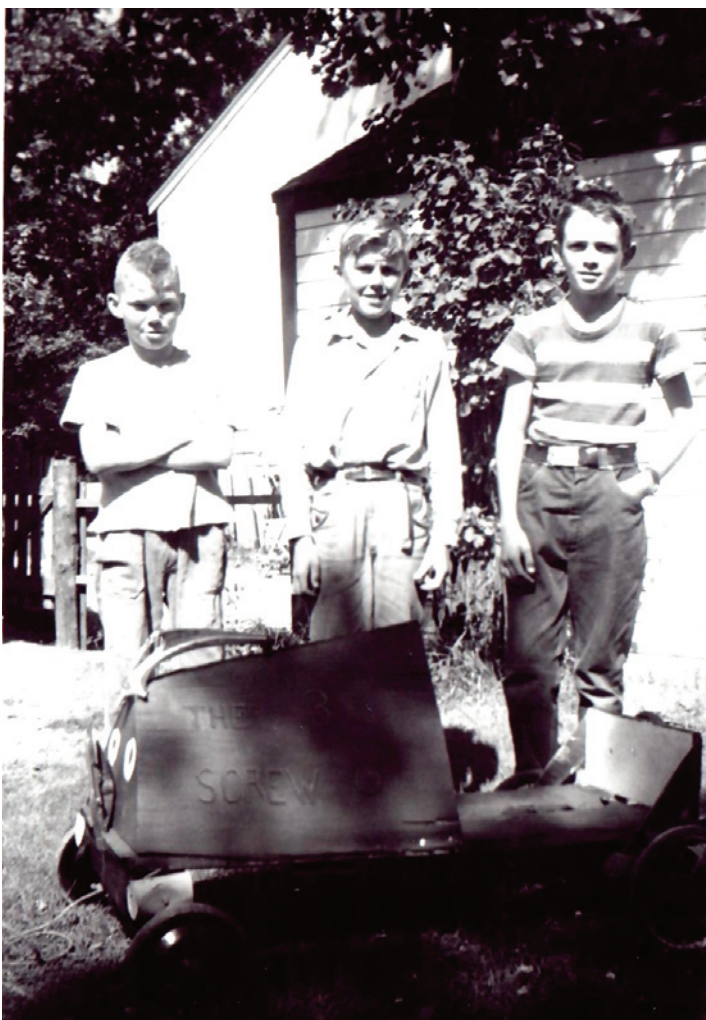
But that old tree planted a seed in me, and I think that's what's led me to become part of the Wolseley Tree Committee to do what we can to keep trees and forests for the 12-year-olds who still need a tree to climb and a fort to build. And that's not to forget all the other gifts our trees bring -- their cooling shade, the world's most efficient air filter, a bird sanctuary and resting place for all, a soil refresher, and just their incredible, simple beauty.

So, just like I remember my special tree, if you have a special tree you love, please tell us its story.

It is by remembering the trees we love that we can help protect the trees that remain in our lives.

Send your story ideas to:

myspecialtree@gmail.com.



Jim (left) remembers a special tree -- a magnificent oak in St. Vital Forest (now gone) whose branches provided a tree-fort home for him and fellow fort-builders Nevin and Brad in 1956.

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LEADERSHIP



AMAZON WARS

By Paul Moist

The new year did not begin well for 1,700 Amazon workers employed at seven company facilities in Quebec. All will be laid off by March, as the company decided to permanently close its Quebec operations.

Amazon is not ending their business in Quebec. They have decided to shift to a “third-party model”, where contractors will be used to deliver packages throughout the province.

The Amazon playbook does not include unionization of its staff, and after 200 workers at the company’s DXT4 warehouse in Laval chose to organize last spring, the company challenged Quebec’s automatic certification labour laws, which grant certification without a vote if a clear majority indicate, by signing a union card, that they want to be organized.

Automatic certification is foreign to Amazon, such provisions do not exist in the United States. The company lost their challenge to the Quebec laws, and they have opted to close operations as they faced the imposition of a first

contract by way of an arbitrator if they did not reach a negotiated deal with the union.

Even where workers win government supervised certification votes, as occurred at Amazon’s JFK8 Fulfilment Center, in Staten Island, New York, in April 2022, the company has filed countless legal appeals and refused to negotiate with the workers.

This approach to labour relations is not new in the U.S. It is why late last year, the downward trend continued to where less than 10 per cent of the American workforce is now unionized, the lowest level in nine decades.

American educator and writer, Jefferson Cowie, in his book, *The Great Exception*, the New Deal and the Limits of American Politics, quotes American labor law professor, Cynthia Estlund, commenting on the state of American labor law, stating:

“The core of American labour law has essentially been sealed off – from both democratic revision and renewal and from experimentation and

innovation”, leaving it, “frozen or ossified, for over fifty years.”

Billionaire oligarch, Jeff Bezos, the owner of Amazon, joined Elon Musk and most of the leaders of Silicon Valley in support of Donald Trump’s successful re-election as U.S. President. Bezos and company had front row seats at the Trump inauguration with cabinet members seated behind them.

Trump, who won the election largely due to the unprecedented support from working-class people, especially males without college degrees, has quickly pivoted from those workers and is delivering for big tech.

In late January Trump fired the acting chair of the National Labor Relations Board, Gwynne Wilcox. This was an unprecedented move as Wilcox served under a congressional appointment not set to expire until 2028. This move, along with the dismissal of NLRB General Counsel, Jennifer Abruzzo, caused former U.S. Labour secretary, Robert Reich to comment:

“Presto – American workers are no longer protected from illegal firings or unfair labour practices by their employers. The National Labor Relations Act of 1935 is effectively gone. Employers can wreak havoc on their workers.”

In the end, this is all about power, and the oligarchs, some of whom used to oppose Trump, have decided their path to enhanced privilege and power is through alignment with the Trump 2.0. Expect union density in America to continue its long, steady decline, which means inequality will continue its long steady rise.

Contrast that with events here in Manitoba, when it comes to worker rights.

Since their election in October 2023, the NDP government led by Wab Kinew has increased worker rights, including the following changes:

- Introduction of Anti-Scab legislation.
- Restoring card-based union certification rights.
- Restoring Project Labour Agreements for public sector capital works.

- Restoring 1-1 apprenticeship ratios..

- Restoring the bipartite ministerial health & safety advisory committee.

- Restoring respect for public sector collective bargaining rights.

- Proclaiming Orange Shirt Day as a statutory holiday.

- Ensuring trade union representation on crown corporation boards.

The NDP have won nine of the last 15 elections in Manitoba. No NDP government has done more for workers in such a short period of time than the present government. Their record is not perfect, and they face no shortage of challenges.

But the restoration and expansion of worker rights paves the way for less inequality and a brighter future for our province.

This will offer little solace to Quebec Amazon workers as they face lay-offs. But it underscores the fact that worker rights are central to the formation of the strong democracy that we all want, and must fight to defend.

Bringing vitality back; Proposed design to bring rebirth to old lot

Architect George Cibinel remembers arriving in Winnipeg in 1985. “I remember coming back from Europe and Boston, and was just surprised at how many empty parking lots we had,” he says, of Winnipeg’s downtown. “And it hasn’t changed much.”

It’s one of the reasons that Cibinel is excited about a new project to put some life back into what has been quite a notorious parking lot behind the Sherbrook Hotel.

The hotel’s new owner Neil Soorsma bought the property last year and has sold the giant parking lot behind it. It has mostly sat empty for the last 15 years, as the hotel morphed mainly into low cost apartments. Soorsma wants to keep the affordable apartments and maybe revive some of the entertainment capacity of the original hotel building, but saw a new opportunity for the back property.

The parking lot was so big, there’s enough room to put a 5 story building on it while preserving the mature trees on the boulevard in front of the new building site, and adding more trees along the back.

The planned multi-family development is slated to have two story, three bedroom, suites facing Furby Street, with a mix of studio, and 1 and 2 bedroom suites throughout the building, and with a designated commercial space off of Westminster Ave. Approximately 25% of the suites are planned to be affordable in accordance with CMHC’s MLI Select program, and with up to eight of those units in accordance with Manitoba Housing’s affordability requirements.

As recipients of the tallest net zero (ZCB-Design v3 Certified) building award last year (in western Canada) for their 21 story building design of 308 Colony Street, Cibinel Architec-

ture has ample experience in environmentally-conscious design. Cibinel says that its design will be 25% better than the national energy code, with a well-insulated building envelope, and high efficiency mechanical systems.

Lotus Holdings Winnipeg, (who were also the developers of 308 Colony Street) along with Soorsma, are the developers of the new project.

Newer building codes provide for greater accessibility in general, but Cibinel also stresses that accommodations can be tailored to accommodate persons with disabilities.

Two spots in the des-



Artist’s rendering of proposed design shows Sherbrook Hotel in grey that will remain as is, and new design for an apartment and green space off the hotel’s east lot.

ignated 28 parking spots at the building will be for shared vehicle use, but the building will also feature secure bike storage for up to 45 bikes, and 14 outdoor bike racks.

“It’s a really nice walkable neighborhood well located, and close to transit and I think developing a few of the pockets in the area will contribute to

the vitality in the area,” says Cibinel.

Cibinel Architecture has provided questionnaires for residents to comment on the proposed design which can be accessed on their website, or by contacting Connie Jantz at Cibinel Architecture by email at connie@cibinel.com.

The Leaf and Streets have a **new website!** Find news, editions, and a place to send us your submissions at theleafnews.ca



Rental costs are up: Financialization's to blame

By Leah Gazan,
Winnipeg Centre MP



For countless folks across Canada, the housing crisis is not just an ongoing news headline – it's a daily reality. At times that might mean putting off basic needs when rent's almost due. For others, it could mean living in unsafe environments due to rising costs or being on the verge of becoming homeless.

For many years elected representatives treated the housing crisis like business as usual. More recently, they've resorted to scapegoating immigrants. But this is just a smokescreen to distract from the real cause: financialization. Bankers and financial asset managers are profiting absurdly from your skyrocketing rent.

Financialization is the process where financial actors like banks, asset managers, and real estate investment trusts (REITs) have dominated the housing sector, transforming housing from a social good to a tradable, for-profit financial asset. This predatory model has been ushered in since the 1990s when the federal government withdrew its social housing provision and deregulated the finance and housing sectors.

As a result, wealthy financial institutions went from owning zero rental suites in Canada in the late-90s to nearly 400,000 today. They now hold 20-30% of Canada's rental stock, and even more when it comes to seniors' housing. Being pressured by investors to increase profits, financial actors jack up rents as soon as they acquire new properties, often evicting tenants to get around rent control regulations.

The result has been skyrocketing rents. Since 2018, the average rent for a two-bedroom home increased 70% faster than overall wage

growth. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives has found that in every province, the income needed to rent without foregoing basic needs is now considerably higher than the minimum wage, and in some cities, it has even surpassed the median income.

All these factors have contributed to rising homelessness, in violation of human rights. The right to housing is explicitly affirmed in the International Covenant on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights – of which Canada is a signatory – as well as the Canada Housing Strategy Act.

Elected representatives need to treat this problem like the crisis it is. The Liberals' latest response is to pressure landlords to disclose past rental prices to new tenants, which does not deal with price gouging. Meanwhile the Conservatives plan to gut public funding for housing to pay for tax cuts, which would further empower financialized landlords. And both parties are blaming immigrants and migrants for the housing crisis creating unfounded xenophobic fears to cover up the real culprit: the financialization of housing. We need real solutions that address the profit-hungry motives at the root of this crisis. That means investing in public, affordable rental housing and terminating subsidies to financial giants who profit off renters' housing insecurity. It also means incentivizing stringent rent controls by the provinces to stop gouging on existing market-based units.

At critical moments in history, the rich and powerful often point the finger at anyone but themselves to distract from their greed and incompetence. It's time that we admit where the blame really lies and fix the policy failures driving housing

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Visitors appreciate Marcel Dzama's Ghosts of Canoe Lake exhibit at the Plug In Institute of Contemporary Art.

The exhibit explores themes of landscape from Canadian history, and Dzama's own childhood memories of the Manitoba and Saskatchewan wilderness. Through the exhibit, Dzama acknowledges the landscape artists before him, especially Tom Thomson.

Dzama was born in 1974 and studied art at the University of Manitoba. He ascended to prominence in the 90s and has been featured worldwide, including museums in London, Dallas, New York, Los Angeles, Montréal, Ottawa, and Vancouver.

The exhibition was organized and circulated by the McMichael Canadian Art Collection in partnership with Contemporary Calgary. The Plug-In is open Tuesday-Saturday afternoons, and the exhibit, running until March 8, is free.

(Photo by Karen Asher)

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