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# Lac du Bonnet CLIPPER

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## Carving out a bright future

By Arlene Davidson

Jim "Chuck" Niedermayer of Silver Falls has a rare talent, and the art world is sitting up and taking notice.

Chainsaw Carving is a growing art, and by earning a name as one of Canada's best carvers, Niedermayer is finding himself in growing demand. Chainsaw carving events draw a large audience, fascinating spectators as detailed and intricate works of art come to life before their eyes.

Visitors to the recent 4-P Festival had an opportunity to see Niedermayer at work when he competed in and won Pine Falls' first chainsaw carving event. Organizers and participants reported that this successful and popular event will be incorporated into future festival weekends.

Niedermayer said that he has been around carving all of his life and in the 1970s started creating chairs blocked out of stumps. He got the idea while watching an episode of Oregon Chainsaw on the television.

"It was fascinating and I remembered the moves," Niedermayer said.

It wasn't until the mid-2000s that he started carving a variety of things like bears and eagles.

"During that time I carved nothing but chairs. I didn't realize you could do other things until I saw a bear," said Niedermayer who confided that he didn't show his early work to anyone.

In 2009, he found the courage to post a picture on a chainsaw carving forum online, and was overwhelmed with the response he received.

"Other carvers responded and encouraged me to go to the Ridgway Chainsaw Carving Rendezvous, a week long event held in Pennsylvania," he said.

With encouragement from his wife Joanne, and help from his family and friends, Niedermayer made his way to Pennsylvania in 2010.

"That year, there were 165 carvers from across the globe and it was one of the most inspiring events I have attended. Every morning workshops were held by top name carvers and then we spent the rest of the day at the carving site," said Niedermayer. "For me, to be surrounded by others that have the same interest, and they're willing to share their knowledge, gave me many years of experience."

"It was overwhelming to meet other carvers who had the same passion. It inspired me. It was an honour just to be invited to an event like that," he added.

Niedermayer entered his first chainsaw carving event after returning home with new found knowledge and inspiration. The event was the 2012 Trappers Festival in The Pas, and Niedermayer walked away with a second place win. He has returned for the past two years and claimed

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Photo by Arlene Davidson

Chainsaw wood carver Jim "Chuck" Niedermayer in his outdoor work area at his home in Silver Falls.

## Sunrise by-election set for Nov. 19

By Dianne Hamill

Lac du Bonnet residents will head to the polls on Nov. 19 in a by-election to replace the late Chuck Reynolds on the Sunrise school board.

The Ward 8 (Lac du Bonnet) seat has been vacant since Reynolds' sudden death in August.

Under the Public School's Act, a by-election must be held "as soon as is reasonably practical."

Boards must consider the availability of election officials and facilities as well as voter participation – including the impact summer vacation and, in rural areas, harvest and farming schedules – before setting a date.

Sunrise has appointed its secretary-treasurer Elise Downey as the senior election officer (SEO) for the Lac du Bonnet by-election, following the resignation of former SEO Carol Bender.

Candidates can submit their nominations beginning Oct. 8 to Oct. 14 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Sunrise Business Centre, 75 Fifth St. South in Beausejour. Appointments are recommended.

Papers can also be faxed to 204-268-4149 during those hours.

Nominations will not be accepted after Oct. 14. Nomination packages can be obtained through Downey at 204-268-6514.



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## Happy Birthday

Photo by Arlene Davidson

Pictured with grandson Brian Choptain (right), Lilly Carriere was surrounded by friends and family on Sept. 27 as she celebrated her 106th birthday at the Lac du Bonnet Personal Care Home.

# Cell tower gets bad reception

Powerview-Pine Falls resident says structure an eyesore in wooded area

By Keith Borkowsky

Construction has started on a new cell phone tower site in Powerview-Pine Falls, although not everyone is pleased the old tower is moving to a site near the Pine Falls Golf Course Road.

Howard Townsend had objected to the 220-foot MTS cell phone tower being constructed there, as he was concerned it would create an eyesore for those living next to a wooded area. He also objected to the process used by the Town of Powerview-Pine Falls and Industry Canada to approve the tower site.

"I wrote up my concerns about the tower and submitted them," Townsend said. "I have a concern that we have a microwave tower going up in the wooded reserve between the golf course and Pine Falls that traditionally was used for recreation. There was no notification to the community by the town or an open house or alternative sites discussed because there was no open forum for it."

He said he didn't object to the tower being built at all, but felt there were other more unobtrusive sites in the area, which would have balanced the need for cell service with a desire to maintain the scenery the woodland reserve in that

part of Pine Falls provides.

"The town did not notify people so I'm not done with this," Townsend said. "My past career was in land use. I'm not naive on avenues to pursue."

The tower will replace one that stands near Midway Foods along the Winnipeg River. Powerview-Pine Falls CAO Margie Bonekamp said that tower is subject to erosion and is also on developable land. The new tower site is expected to provide service to Little Black River as well as enhancing the service already available in Powerview-Pine Falls.

"We had actually been working for a number of years to get the tower moved," Bonekamp said. "Now the lease came open and that allowed us to meet with MTS to talk about moving the tower. They were agreeable to the new site because the height will give them more coverage."

Bonekamp was sympathetic to Townsend's complaints about the tower, but added the town, MTS, Industry Canada and the CRTCC had all followed all of the regulations regarding public input on the tower site and construction. E-mails provided by Townsend indicate Industry Canada is satisfied the public consultation requirements have been met.

Bonekamp added the agreement with MTS to move the tower was signed on Aug. 26, 2014, though work had been delayed at the site while they investigated whether Townsend's objection had merit.

"We have met every requirement we have to in this agreement and we already have a tower in town. It's just moving," Bonekamp said. "It's kind of a new construction in that it is a new location but we already have one in town."

Townsend disagreed with Bonekamp's assessment, as he believes neither the town nor MTS fulfilled requirements for public notices and public hearings.

"I maintain their standards of notification changed in 2014 and the applicant, through MMM Group (the consulting firm MTS is using for this project) used the old standards in contacting people within three times the height of the tower away. The new standard is if it impacts anybody they have a legitimate concern. However they have not notified the rest of them other than through an ad by the proponent, not the landowner. There are still avenues to pursue. I'm not satisfied. That tower will be seen more than 600 feet away. It will be seen all over the Village Green."

Townsend lives in what

was once called the Mill Manager's house just off the Village Green. He said his deck, several bedrooms, the living room and dining room will all have views obstructed by the tower.

"This house was once considered by previous owners for a bed and breakfast," Townsend said. "Well how successful would a bed and breakfast be if the bedrooms all face a microwave tower? That impacts the aesthetics and possibly the property value of my house."

Cell service is not the only factor in play. The tower is being built on Town of Powerview-Pine Falls land, which means MTS will be paying the municipality rent for using its land. While specifics on how much the town will benefit were not immediately available, Bonekamp said similar deals can net the landowner \$1,000 per month in lease rates. In Powerview-Pine Falls, \$12,000 in revenue would equal an equivalent of 0.5 mills in tax revenue.

"That's partly why we didn't want to lose it," Bonekamp said.

The tower site, which has been in the works since 2012, has now been cleared, and a road has been constructed. Hydro poles for power lines have also been constructed. The tower is expected to be complete by mid to late October.

## Carving continued from front

first place on both occasions.

Largely due to the publicity Niedermayer earned at the Trappers Festival, this summer he was one of nine artists that were invited to compete in the first bi-annual Chainsaw Carving event in Manitou Beach, Sask. Niedermayer shared the spotlight with Paul and Jacob Fernette from the television program Carver Kings, filmed in Prince George, B.C.

Niedermayer is rarely in need of logs to carve as neighbours and contractors in the area call him on a regular basis to report they are cutting down a tree, and ask if he would like it. He readily accepts. Niedermayer was an employee of the Pine Falls Paper Mill until its closure in 2007.

"When the mill went down, I bought out their wood, and I've never cut a green tree down. I use dead wood and bring it back to life... give it a second chance," said Niedermayer.

The artist said that the planning and vision of creating a work of art takes more time than the carving itself, which he said he can generally complete in a matter of hours. Although Niedermayer has a spacious indoor workshop, he prefers to work in a covered area outside.

Niedermayer compared his wide variety of chainsaws to a painter and his brushes. To complete the rough work and carve down to the shape, he uses a 1980 professional chainsaw with a 42-inch bar and 100ccs of power. For the most intricate work, he utilizes a cordless model with a modified sprocket on a special bar with a dime sized tip. All of Niedermayer's work is created with a single piece of wood, including the carved base.

Niedermayer said the next step is to start using splicing in his work — a technique where pieces of wood are physically connected to increase the size of the carving, or to add accents to an existing structure.

He has been attending carving sessions at the home of Cathie and Rick Brereton where he is picking up many technical tips from the talented couple.

"They are both amazing carvers and Cathie is teaching me how to give character to my creations," said Niedermayer.

His future aspirations are to compete in Canada's premier chainsaw competition in Chetwind, B.C., the U.S. championship in Alaska and the prestigious Husky World Cup in Germany.



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