



Education funds: public vs. private ³

Nine Regina football players make national team ⁷

Boudoir photography ¹²

Local weapon seller gives guns a second shot



Darryl Schemenauer holds a vintage rifle that was brought into his Regina store, TnT Gunworks. Schemenauer says people should sell their guns, instead of surrendering them to the RPS' Gun Amnesty. Photo by Michaela Solomon.

Michaela Solomon
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The Regina Police Service collected 82 guns in the first week of its first-ever gun amnesty, but not everyone is cheering. Some firearms enthusiasts are unhappy the weapons will be destroyed.

During the amnesty period, police will pick up unwanted guns, illegal or otherwise, and there will be no charges associated with possession of the weapon.

Amnesties across the country have proven successful. One-hundred fifty-two guns were surrendered in Halifax over a two-week period during their September 2016 amnesty. Prior to that in 2009, Pixels for Pistols offered digital cameras in exchange for unwanted guns, which took 1,074 gun and 10,000 rounds of ammunition off the streets of Halifax. Additionally, 1,184 firearms were turned in

during an amnesty throughout British Columbia last year, over the month of October.

"We've seen a gradual increase in the offences involving firearms," said Elizabeth Popowich, who is the spokesperson for RPS. "We've also seen an increase in the number of guns that are seized by police out in the community." In 2016 there were 141 violent offences involving firearms in Regina, which is 90 per cent higher than the five-year average.

As the guns come in they are screened by police for involvement in criminal activity and once cleared they will be destroyed. RPS is offering a free one-month city transit or leisure pass, in exchange for the surrender of unwanted or illegal firearms.

Darryl Schemenauer isn't crazy about the RPS' plan to destroy guns. As the owner of TnT Gunworks, Schemenauer thinks firearms are valuable. "Some of these are World

War I generation firearms," he said. Schemenauer added that his store has already collected 25 firearms, and offers a \$50 minimum in exchange for unwanted guns.

"They could be museum-type firearms. They could go to people with licences. They could go to firearms instructors. They could be resold and the money could go back into policing or training. It's just a big waste to see these firearms cut up and destroyed." Schemenauer also said he will donate guns to hunters, in the name of the person who turned it in.

However, Popowich says, "If a firearm is considered to be of historic value we can make application to 'not destroy' it and donate it to a museum."

CJ Summers is a journalist who openly supports gun ownership. He took to his Facebook page stating, "You can work with any of the participating firearms businesses and play an important part in preserving our

history. Local gun shops all across Saskatchewan offer drop off or pick up service options for unwanted/unneeded firearms year round!"

In an interview Summers explained his reason for promoting the alternative option. "I believe that if you want to have an amnesty, and have an initiative as strong as you could possibly make it, you need to put all options on the table," he said. "I think by including private businesses, you do that."

"It's a program that we think will take some unwanted guns out of our community," Popowich said. "And in doing that it's really important to recognize that sometimes guns that are used in crimes in our community are stolen in a break an enter, where a firearm isn't necessarily properly stored."

Regina Police Service's gun amnesty runs Feb. 1 to 15.

Montreal opens injection sites; Sask won't



Montreal has become the second city in Canada to implement legal safe injection sites. There are 10 other legal injection sites across Canada waiting to be approved. Photo by Cory Coleman.

Cory Coleman
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Canada now has two cities with legal safe injection sites.

Federal Health Minister Jane Philpott announced that Health Canada has approved three new safe injection sites in Montreal.

Safe injection sites allow addicts to use illegal drugs under the supervision of trained medical professionals.

Safe injection sites were criticized by the former Conservative government, who said the sites would promote drug use and increase crime rates. The Liberal government, however, supports safe injection sites. In December 2016, the Liberals introduced Bill C-37 which, if approved, would ease restrictions against opening safe injection sites that were enacted by the Conservative government.

Philpott said the safe injection sites will address the growing number of opioid overdoses and deaths in Canada, which is considered a public health crisis.

Montreal's public health authorities and drug counselling organizations have been calling for safe injection sites for several years, arguing safe injection sites save lives, reduce drug consumption in public, and prevent the spread of HIV and other diseases that can be spread

intravenously.

According to a statement released by Philpott's office, "At these sites, people who use drugs are supervised by qualified staff who can provide immediate treatment in the case of an overdose. The facilities also provide sterile equipment, information about drugs and basic health care and treatment referrals. In many cases, they also provide access to other health-care services." Three Montreal community associations will run the sites.

The mayor of Montreal, Denis Coderre, has fully endorsed the new safe injection sites.

With the addition of three new sites in Montreal, there are now five legal safe injection sites in Canada; the other two are in Vancouver.

There are currently 10 other supervised injection sites awaiting approval: three in Toronto, two in Vancouver, two in Surrey B.C., one in both Victoria and Ottawa, as well as a mobile location in Montreal.

Todd Cullen is an intake manager at the Salvation Army in Regina. Cullen can't speak on behalf of the Salvation Army, but he believes supervised injection sites are beneficial for the community. "Safe injection sites have individuals on site to help facilitate the process. It's beneficial for harm reduction measures," he said,

adding the main benefit is reducing overdoses.

Cullen also said safe injection sites can potentially lead individuals to treatment. "Harm reduction sites are very good at building relationships with individuals. That's what allows us to help people help themselves, by building positive relationships and getting individuals to understand that they deserve better for themselves."

With safe injection sites increasing in Canada, Cullen thinks Regina would benefit from having a safe injection site. "I think it would be a really good thing if we had a safe injection site. There would be less needles in the community," said Cullen. "There are many good reasons to have a safe injection site in the city."

As of now, the Government of Saskatchewan doesn't plan to implement a safe injection site.

A written statement from the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health stated, "Although there has been an increase in fentanyl-related overdose deaths since 2010, the experience in Saskatchewan is not reflective of what is being experienced in other jurisdictions. While we are not considering supervised consumption sites (also known as safe injection sites), we continue to look at the evidence and support investments into prevention and risk reduction programs."

Numbers you should know:

Insite is the oldest safe-injection site in North America. It was established in 2003 and is located in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Here are some stats about usage at the clinic in 2015:

263,713 visits by 6,532 individuals

440 injection room visits per day

768 overdose incidents

5,359 clinical interventions (ranging from allergic reactions to cardiac arrests)

Principle substances were heroin (54%), methamphetamine (23%) and cocaine (10%)

27% of participants were women

20% were Indigenous

Source: www.vch.ca

Private vs. public education: a fight for funds

Jennifer Ackerman
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While the U.S. Senate's appointment of wealthy businesswoman Betsy DeVos as education secretary has raised alarm among public education advocates – who say she lacks experience with public schools and may divert funds to private options – here in Saskatchewan, debates over education funding and public-private models are nothing new.

In January the provincial government asked school divisions and other publicly funded bodies to impose wage freezes across all sectors, in response to a then-\$1 billion deficit, which has now increased to \$1.2 billion. Additionally, the government urged school divisions to explore further cost cutting measures.

The announcement raised concerns and speculation about looming provincial budget cuts. Education minister Don Morgan is also proposing a possible amalgamation of Saskatchewan school boards. Meant to improve efficiency, critics believe it's really just a cost-cutting measure in disguise.

In response, the Canadian Union of Public Employees – the largest union in Saskatchewan, with over 30,000 members – submitted a report to a government review panel that

outlined the union's opposition to the amalgamation in light of, among other items, increased funding for private schools.

"It is unacceptable for the provincial government to force consolidation of school divisions and reduce their funding in the name of efficiency when it has increased funding to small, independent religious schools that are not accountable to the public," stated the report.

In 2011, public funding for associate schools was increased from 70 to 80 per cent of per-pupil costs. Independent schools went from zero to 50 per cent public funding.

An independent school is a school owned by a person or organization other than the government. An associate school is independent school operated by a non-profit corporation based on a specific religious perspective. They are two different streams of private schools in Saskatchewan.

Larry Steeves, a University of Regina educational administration professor, has worked as a teacher, principal and school board director in the public school system in Saskatchewan. He was also associate deputy minister of the Department of Learning for the Saskatchewan government from 2005-2006. When asked if the increase in public funding to private schools hurts the public school sys-



Government funding for private K-12 education in Saskatchewan has increased the past few years. Photo by Jennifer Ackerman.

tem, Steeves said he doesn't think so.

"At this point, not particularly ... Now, do I think (schools) should be funded better? Probably but, on the other hand, in a province right now that's undergoing some fiscal hard times, not likely gonna happen, you know, and I mean, hey, everybody gets that. So it could be a lot worse, let me put it that way," said Steeves.

But Jackie Christianson, chair of the CUPE's education workers steer-

ing committee, feels Saskatchewan could do better.

"There's one pot where the education funding comes from," said Christianson. She said private schools have ways of making up for lost government funds, such as raising tuition or limiting enrollment, options that aren't available to public schools.

"You can't just walk off the street and say, 'Hey, I want to go to Luther.' They get to

Continued on page 8.

Bus riders need to be Saskatchewan tough

Brenna Engel
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It's -45 C. Welcome to Saskatchewan. For Regina Public Schools that means buses aren't running, though schools remain open. Locals joke that the schools themselves don't close because they're built "Saskatchewan tough."

"Why don't they just cancel

school... (the) risk is too high to have to walk," comments Sandy Smith on a Facebook news link that stated school buses wouldn't be running but classes would still be on.

This is a question that many parents have.

"We do not close schools at RPS. The key reason is because kids will show up to a school whether it's closed or not," explains Terry Laza-

rou, Regina Public's supervisor of communications- "We have communities in our city that will send their kids to school regardless; they don't take buses they walk. If the school is physically closed it is a significant safety risk for the kids."

Blair Gullickson, an overseeing principal for three Regina schools, stressed schools do what they can for those students who can't be bused and reinforced Lazarou's point that it would be more of a safety risk to students if they closed schools.

"I've been in situations where I've driven around the community and picked up kids who were walking a distance where I thought it was unsafe to do so. It's difficult but you've got to weigh out what is most safe for the kids" said Gullickson.

Presently there isn't any sort of program to transport students to school when buses stop running. School buses do not run when it's too cold because they are not running all day and staying warm, whereas city buses can still operate because they are running all day. According to Regina Transit Operations Centre, it would be impossible for them to utilize city buses as an alternative for those children because they don't have enough buses.

The effects of bus closure vary.

Gullickson said it depends on what community you live in because the number of students who take the bus could be anywhere from 10 to 85 per cent.

Some may wonder if this is just a Saskatchewan policy or nationwide.

Chris Hagen, senior field officer with Winnipeg's pupil transportation, said their school rules are similar to Saskatchewan's. If the temperature reaches -45 C schools stop buses from running. If it reaches -80 C, then they look to closing all the schools within the division.

Though Winnipeg may have a temperature at which they will close schools, -80 C seems a nearly impossible-to-reach benchmark. Just as in Saskatchewan, Manitoba's schools will remain open in -40 C weather.

Moving on from the Prairies, locations like Ottawa are more likely to stop busing if there has been heavy snowfall or freezing rain. According to the Ottawa Student Transportation Authority, the city schools don't have a max temperature like -40 C for cancelling buses simply because Ottawa doesn't normally reach such frigid temperatures.

For those students who take the bus, it looks like you'll have to bundle up and stay Saskatchewan tough.



When the temperature in Regina reaches -45 C school bus services are cancelled, but schools remain open. Photo by Brenna Engel.

Anti-corruption protests rock Romania



Romania has experienced protests since the government passed legislation reversing anti-corruption measures on Jan. 31. Photo illustration by Janelle Blakley.

Janelle Blakley
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Romania's new government only took power last month, but the public is already expressing their anger as massive protests - some of the largest since the fall of communism - have erupted across the country.

Madalina Balasescu lives in Romania's capital, Bucharest. She went to a protest last week in Victoriei Square where she estimates 300,000 people were in attendance.

"It was absolutely amazing. Everybody there was very determined, not violent, but very determined to reach the goal, because it's democracy in the middle (of it) and our lives. It's very important what is in the middle of this political game," said Balasescu.

The protests are in response to an emergency ordinance - passed by the government on Jan. 31 - which decriminalized financial misconduct by public officials if the amount is less than 200,000 lei (US\$47,600).

The issue of corruption has dominated Romanian politics since the fall of the communist regime in 1989. According to a 2016 report by Transparency International, a corruption watchdog, over half of Romanian citizens surveyed said their representatives are corrupt. Romania also has one of the highest bribery rates in the EU; 29 per cent of households

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reported paying a bribe in the past 12 months when accessing basic services.

Monika Cule, head of the economics department at the University of Regina, said corruption is common in



Monika Cule says says corruption is common is post-communist countries. Photo by Janelle Blakley.

post-communist countries in eastern Europe.

"(Corruption) comes directly from the nature of the transformation that these countries embarked (on) from the early 1990s and they continue. They are completely changing not only the economic system but also the political system because they moved from a one-party system to a competitive democratic system," said Cule.

Established democracies, like

those in western Europe, developed slowly over many years. After the fall of communism in the east, new governments put in place legislation borrowed from western democracies,

Cule explained.

"This kind of institutional borrowing of the rules and regulations, things that have been created over years in these developed countries, western European countries, did not have that legitimacy in the eastern European countries," she said.

Romania joined the European Union in 2007 and has previously made progress in the fight against corruption as anti-corruption measures

were a condition of EU membership. Since Brexit has raised new uncertainties about the EU's future, member states may feel more confident to bend the rules, said Cule.

"They already have the membership and in a climate where membership is questionable for others, they might feel that they can pull back from what was initially imposed on them to become members in the first place," she said.

Cule believes the protests are a good way for citizens to take a stand against corruption.

"At the end of the day, you can have the best regulations, if it doesn't have legitimacy among the larger population, then it's not a good regulation because it's going to be very hard to enforce," said Cule.

Balasescu said Romanian people have had enough.

"The people lack trust in the institutions, it's more than a number of people upset because of this ordinance, it's a lot of people sick and tired after 27 years post-communism, because they pay taxes and (the government) took the money, everybody in the political system, we have a very bad problem here with corruption," she said.

Protests across Romania are expected to continue as Prime Minister Sorin Grindeanu survived a vote of no-confidence in parliament on Feb.8.

Political reporting dwindling in Saskatchewan



The Saskatchewan legislature's press gallery removed their general phone line, which has created an obstacle for some journalists.

Kyrsten Stringer
@Stringky

The direct line to the press gallery at the Saskatchewan Legislature has been cut.

The phone number is still listed in the Saskatchewan government's online telephone directory, but when you try to call it an automated, matter-of-fact voice tells you that the number you have reached is not in service. It tells you to check the number and try again.

Once upon a time, the direct line was used by visiting journalists who didn't have office space. Leader-Post legislative columnist Murray Mandryk, who has been a political report-

er since 1983, said that staff journalists have their own private phone lines and that the press gallery number has probably been rendered obsolete by the rise of cell phones.

While it may not seem like a big deal that the press gallery no longer has a general phone line, its loss could

be considered a metaphor for the changing environment of political reporting and journalism across the board. "Political reporting is monitoring how our democracy is doing, and keeping a watch on the institutions at the base of our democratic processes," said Leader-Post legislative reporter David Fraser. "Without journalism, you don't have democracy. Journalism is a public good. It's very much needed in any sort of democratic institution because a free press is representative of the public, tasked with keeping close watch on — and holding to account — not just elected officials, but the entire institution that is government."

There are few places where the value of good journalism has been put to the test more than it has in the United States since the election of Donald Trump. He took up Obama's mantle with the promise of giving America back to the people. As the new president, Trump has

been scrutinized by journalists, and has been critical of them in turn. He has called news outlets like CNN and the New York Times 'fake' and has even gone as far as to refer to the media as the 'opposition party.'

Stefani Langenegger, legislative reporter for the CBC, said that Trump is not the first person to do that.

"I started covering politics in 1999, and generally the government always gets annoyed with political reporters and starts to say that we're working too closely to the opposition," Langenegger said. "I've been accused of that by both the governing Saskatchewan Party and the governing NDP in my time covering politics."

Fraser said that he's noticed an

increase of criticism from politicians in Saskatchewan targeted at media outlets.

of his program. For from that scrutiny comes understanding, and from that understanding comes support or opposition. And both are necessary."

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation." Presently there are six staff reporters at the legislature representing four different news outlets. Murray Mandryk and David Fraser are the only ones who could be considered full time. Political reporters are stretched thin, and there is little time to cover all the issues.

"If I wanted to write exactly whatever the government wanted, I guess I'd go work for government," said Mandryk. "There's four or five hundred public relations people, communicators working for government and there's one of me."

Perhaps U.S. president John F. Kennedy said it best in 1961: "No president should fear public scrutiny

"Without journalism, you don't have democracy. Journalism is a public good. It's very much needed in any sort of democratic institution because a free press is representative of the public." - David Fraser

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increase of criticism from politicians in Saskatchewan targeted at media outlets.

"The CBC has been doing a lot of reporting on the Global Transportation Hub," Fraser said. "More than once Premier Brad Wall has criticized in some pretty strong language the

of his program. For from that scrutiny comes understanding, and from that understanding comes support or opposition. And both are necessary."

URSU food pantry helps feed students

Katie Doke Sawatzky

@kdokesawatzky

More students are taking advantage of a new food pantry program at the University of Regina.

The program started last semester and runs every other Wednesday in the multi-purpose room. It's part of the University of Regina Student Union's URSU Cares initiative. As of Feb. 8, there were 150 students signed up compared with 120 at the end of January.

Anusha Subramanian has used the food pantry since she began studies in January. She and her friends learned about it during orientation.

"It's \$10 dollars per annum, which would attract anybody to take (it). So we were overwhelmed...if you're going to get it fortnightly then it's a great deal, right?" she said.

As an international student, she pays \$6,500 a semester in tuition. She also lives in the residence, which costs \$3,500 a semester. For weekly grocery shopping, she takes a bus on Saturdays that drops students off at Superstore.

"So when I actually do an apple-to-apple comparison from the Superstore (items) to what we get (at the pantry)...It's much cheaper for me," she said.

And it also saves her from going outside in winter.

"It's so cold outside. I think (for the past) two days the temperature feels like its -46 or -47 C. This weather is like more than impossible for me," she laughed.

Justin Stranack, who started going to the pantry in December, is completing his Grade 12 diploma at Saskatchewan Polytechnic. His wife

is a school-bus driver and they have three kids under the age of five.

"The number of expenses that we have compared to our income doesn't leave a lot of room for money if we pay all of our bills. That little bit extra kind of helps make things easier to afford," he said.

Stranack chooses fresh produce because it's hard for him to afford healthy food. He also doesn't have much time to prepare food for himself because of homework and his job.

"It's even harder to eat enough with my work schedule," he said. "The time between when I leave the house at 7:30 (a.m.) to when I get home at around 12 (midnight) doesn't leave a lot of opportunities for preparing food. My diet basically these days consists of macaroni and cheese sandwiches 'cause they're so quick and easy."

In a previous pantry experiment, only a few students cleaned out the larder. The revamped program is membership-based and targets students who need help. Once a student has used the pantry 15 times, URSU will reach out to the student to see if they need further help, such as from the Emergency Bursary Fund.

"The core idea of the new program is that we will help make life more manageable for students while being able to identify who might need more substantial help," Neil Middlemiss, operations manager for URSU, explained in an email.

Middlemiss recognizes that food security is becoming more difficult for students. The University of Regina has the highest tuition rates in Western Canada, making it difficult for students to afford healthy food.

The Regina Food Bank supplies



Anusha Subramanian, a U of R student, takes advantage of goods at URSU's food pantry on Feb. 1. Photo by Katie Doke Sawatzky.

the pantry. Laura Murray, manager of community programming, said 39 per cent of students say they face food insecurity and hunger, and supplying the pantry improves students' access to the Bank.

"One of the challenges for students to come to access the food bank is our hours of operation," she said. "We're open ... from 8 to 12 and 1 till 4, which sometimes is hard for students especially without transportation."

Subramanian and Stranack are grateful for the pantry but think it

could improve. Subramanian said she hasn't seen any vegetables yet. She's a vegetarian, so they would be a welcome addition. Stranack suggests that staff should be ready before they open the doors.

"If someone comes in early, grabs what they see and leaves they might be missing out on things that aren't out on the tables yet," he said.

The pantry will next be open March 1.

Have a Heart Day raises awareness

Madina Azizi

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It is the fourth time that the University of Regina has held its annual Have a Heart Day campaign, part of a nation-wide campaign to raise awareness about inequalities faced by First Nations children. The event kicked off a week of activities.

Organizers said the Canadian government has failed to take effective action following a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal hearing that found that First Nation children are funded 38 per cent less for on-reserve services, such as healthcare and education, than the amount offered to non-First Nation services. In 2016, the tribunal ruled this is a form of racial discrimination, and ordered Ottawa to close the gap.

"The federal government is responsible to make it right, to make

equal opportunities for First Nation children as for every other children in Canada, so we are doing this to spread awareness and to hold the government accountable," said Nicole Bear, volunteer and member of Have a Heart organizing committee.

Have a Heart is an entirely youth-led campaign that calls on Canadians to come forward and stand up against the discriminatory policies of the government on First Nation reserves. Elementary schools, high schools, and universities across Canada are taking part in the week-long campaign.

The U of R organizing committee hopes that the campaign will influence the government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.

Jordan's Principle was established after the death of Jordan River Anderson, a five-year-old from Norway House Cree Nation in Manitoba.



Volunteers with Have a Heart campaign assist students in signing letter to the government demanding equal care for First Nation children. Volunteers: Nicole Bear, Carrie Fehr, Sara Wysman, Mikayla Missed, and Daphne Kay. Photo by Madina Azizi.

Jordan spent two years in a Winnipeg hospital and died at the age of five while the federal and the provincial government argued over which jurisdiction was responsible to pay for his homecare needs in Norway

House. According to the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, Jordan's Principle, passed by parliament in 2007, "aims to make sure First Nations children can access public services ordinarily available to

other Canadian children without experiencing any service denials, delays or disruptions related to their First Nations status.”

“Part of the problem is that the federal government says that there are very few children who’ve been found that they need services. They said that they found only 22 kids in Ontario,” said Sara Wysman, volunteer and member of the organizing committee. “But you look at the First Nations community in Ontario that had two girls commit suicide that applied for the funding but were denied.”

Members of the Have a Heart campaign have written letters asking the Canadian government to pro-

vide equal services for First Nation communities. To date, U of R students have sent the most letters to parliament.

Organizing the campaign is difficult especially with only few volunteers. However for lead volunteer Mikayla Missed it really comes down to priorities. “This is the one volunteer opportunity I will always say ‘yes’ to. Everything else, if school pops up, I put aside until I can get to it. This one will always be priority,” she said.

There are activities held throughout the week including letter writing, Cultural Creativity crafts, and Bring Your Teddy. The campaign will continue until February 14.



The Have a Heart campaign began with a PowWow dance. Photo by Madina Azizi

Nine Regina Riot members chosen to play on national football team

Rebecca Marroquin

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Representing Canada at the 2017 IFAF Women’s World Championship has become a reality for nine Regina athletes.

This will be Canada’s third year participating in the championship since it was established in 2010. In the previous two competitions, Canada captured two silver medals.

Hoping to come home with the gold around her neck is Aimee Kowalski, quarterback for the national team. She will be returning to the international field for the second time.

“At this point, I’m as prepared as I

can be. Personally, I’m stronger than I’ve been, and in better shape than I’ve been,” said Kowalski, who has been playing for the Regina Riot since the team was established seven years ago.

Over 100 athletes were invited to try out for the national team this past summer. Most of them play for their provincial teams and are scouted during national championships. Others are American players who have Canadian citizenship.

There are two selection camps located in Eastern and Western Canada. The Western tryouts were held on Dec. 17, 2016, in Moose Jaw, Sask. Because the competition is elite, coaches have to narrow down their



Nine Regina Riot members will be playing for team Canada at the 2017 IFAF Women's World Championship this summer. Players from right to left: Alex Kowalski, Artemis Kouropoulou, Adrienne Zuck, Ashley Viklund, Aimee Kowalski, Katie Hungle and head coach Olivier Eddie. Missing: Carmen Agar, Claire Dore and Emilie Belanger. Photo by Rebecca Marroquin.

roster selection to a total of 45 players. An additional 11 athletes are then selected for the reserve roster.

Olivier Eddie, the Regina Riot head football coach, is also the special teams coordinator and receivers coach for the national team. This will be Eddie’s second term coaching team Canada. “We sure take it seriously, there is no doubt about it. We scout extensively,” he said. Final decisions

Eddie believes that football is a sport where all body types are welcomed and accepted. “Talk about a fun opportunity to give somebody some self-esteem, to make them feel valued. As a coach, we’re fortunate to get the chance to do that for people,” he said.

Prior to coaching the women’s team, Eddie coached men’s football at the university level. “I guess I look

“I want to lead my team and my nation to a gold medal.” -Aimee Kowalski

were made by January.

Six of the nine Regina picks are rookies.

Four years ago, Artemis Kouropoulou was playing basketball when her friends, and now football teammates, encouraged her to try out for the Regina Riot.

“I laughed at them. I was like, ‘Have you seen the size of me? I’m tiny, and don’t play contact sports.’” But in only a few months, the now football linebacker will be representing Canada at the World Championship for the first time.

“I’m ecstatic, I’m really nervous. I don’t know what to expect, it raises the hair up on my neck when I think about it,” said Kouropoulou. “I’ve never played at such a high level of sport, so that’ll be incredible”

at the game through a different way. I think culture is extremely important for women’s football,” he said.

The Regina Riot players attending the tournament are Aimee Kowalski, Carmen Agar, Ashley Viklund, Claire Dore, Alex Kowalski, Katie Hungle, Artemis Kouropoulou, Emilie Belanger and Adrienne Zuck. Celeste Schnell and Mallory Starkey are on the reserve roster.

The team will report to the championship on June 17 and will play from June 24 to July 2. The location has yet to be determined but players have heard rumors that it will be held in British Columbia.

Kowalski said she looks forward to “wearing the maple leaf on the jersey and being able to do it with the best players in the nation.”





The Grid VR Arcade opened in Regina on Oct. 14, 2016. Company president Rob Bryanton says they accept booking for parties, with a maximum of six people. Photo by Josh Diaz.

Canada's second virtual reality arcade finds Sask success

Josh Diaz
@joshdiaz4

A local Regina man has turned his passion for virtual reality into reality.

Since opening in October, The Grid VR Arcade has attracted hundreds of new customers to try out virtual reality for the first time, according to its company president, Rob Bryanton. Operating on a pay-per-hour system, the business has been captivating both old and young to experience the new technology.

"Business is good and we're growing fast," said Bryanton. "We're still a relatively new business, so the word hasn't entirely gotten out yet that we're here, but since October we've had some people come more than a dozen times. The bookings come in off of our website and we've had no trouble filling our arcade," said Bryanton.

The Grid VR Arcade offers the unique experience of being able to insert yourself into a selection of VR

compatible games, instead of simply controlling a character like a traditional video game. With the help of the VR goggles, hand-held controllers and a spacious room, players navigate a wide variety of games, doing everything from sword fighting to flying through a city.

The most popular games at the arcade include The Brookhaven Experiment, a game where you combat a horde of oncoming zombies, and Richie's Plank Experience, a game where you are taken to the top of a skyscraper, to see if you would be able to walk off a wooden plank protruding from the edge of the roof and fall to the ground. "I've played the game probably seven or eight times now," said Bryanton. "I still can't get myself to do it."

"It's truly something you have to experience to understand," said arcade customer Riley Martin. "The experience of swinging a sword, or catching a ball in virtual reality is amazing, the

only disappointing part being when you take off the goggles and realize you've just been walking around a room for an hour," said Martin.

The Grid VR Arcade has a total of three rooms with plans to expand to five rooms by the end of March. Each room allows parties of up to four or six people, and is equipped with all the latest technology, including one HTC Vive Virtual Reality System. High-resolution widescreen TVs allow the other people in the party to view what the player is seeing.

Behind the scenes, The Grid VR Arcade has wide array of high-performance computers outfitted with the latest 10-Series Nvidia Graphics Cards, and Intel Kaby Lake Processors to power the VR systems. "The actual HTC Vive is one of the cheapest parts," Bryanton laughed, as he described the list of components needed to set up each room. While the HTC Vive can be purchased online for \$1,149.99, it takes a powerful comput-

er to run the system. These computers can often be priced at twice or even three times as much as the HTC Vive itself.

Being only the second VR arcade in Canada when it opened, The Grid VR Arcade has so far appeared to provide a proof-of-concept for the experimental business venture; another VR arcade named Aspect Virtual Reality Gaming Studios opened on Feb. 3 in Saskatoon. Due to their rapid gain in popularity, there is no formal tally on how many VR Arcades currently exist in Canada. Bryanton said that by the end of 2017, the idea of going to an arcade or even a theater to experience VR will be one that is widely accepted.

"The concept of mainstream virtual reality is one that I think excites a lot of people," said Bryanton. "It's exciting to think that we were one of the first businesses to start something that has the potential to be the next big thing."

Continued from page 3
pick and choose, but you can't do that in the 28 schools divisions (in Saskatchewan). You don't have a choice. You must educate that child," said Christianson.

Christianson is also a structured learning classroom assistant with the Regina Public school division and has seen how funding cuts are impacting teachers and students on the front-

lines.

"I have worked in education for 16 years and I have never felt this kind of pressure in the classroom," said Christianson, who works at Campus Regina Public. She used to use some of her classroom budget to buy food for her students who couldn't afford it. She said cuts in the last few years means she is buying that food with her own money now.

Christianson feels strongly that funding for private schools should be rolled back and re-allocated to the public school system. Putting your child in a private school is a parents' choice, she said, and should not take away from public school funding.

But not everyone feels that way. Steeves believes that private schools have a right to public funding.

"There is, I think, an appropriate

role (for private schools), given the Canadian and Saskatchewan context and our constitutional, legal and cultural context to be respectful of communities that really want to have some of their own additional focus in terms of what their kids get for schooling," he said.

Regina live bar has local musicians on Cloud 9



Cloud 9 is one of Regina's newest live music venues. Above, Georgia Laloudakis tickles the ivories in a recent performance. Below, Corey Ruecker plays a solo set. Photo by Jared Gottselig.

Jared Gottselig @jgottsel

There is a hidden gem in downtown Regina called Cloud 9 Live Bar, which could be local musicians' saving grace— if live music fans show up.

Les Fraser, the owner of Cloud 9, welcomes a wide variety of genres from indie music to hard rock. "We decided to go with local artists to give them a chance to play on stage to a live audience," said Fraser. "Regina has an abundance of very talented artists."

"The atmosphere has a classic, chill vibe to it," said Katelynn Kowalchuk of the band Panic Button, which has performed at Cloud 9 twice over the past few months. "It can host a variety of acts because of its versatility, and isn't strictly an indie, rock or jazz venue."

Cloud 9 took over a bar called the Gaslight located on the second floor of a cozy building on Broad Street. Upon entry, patrons immediately notice a relaxed, 70s-style feel to the venue. The bar can be found on one side of the room with cold Rebellion beer on tap and, on the other side, artists can be found performing on a high stage under swanky neon lighting.

Cloud 9 currently hosts a schedule of themes such as Indie Thursday, which focuses on original music by local artists and live music of all kinds on Friday and Saturday nights. Recently, Cloud 9 has also begun hosting Saturday afternoon jam sessions.

Local musician Gord Phillips has played six shows at Cloud 9 in the

past year, and really enjoys playing at the venue. "Cloud (9) may be this city's best kept secret. It is a rare gem in that it gives all artists, regardless of genre, a place to do what they do,"



Phillips said. "It's the underdog you can't help but root for."

However, Fraser admits bringing patrons into the venue has been difficult for the organization, because

Cloud 9 primarily relies on social media promotion to get the word out. "At the end of the day people are coming for the entertainment, so it's really up to the musicians to promote as well,"

said Fraser.

Although Cloud 9 is off to a slow start, Phillips believes the organization will thrive. "Audience turnout

could be much better," Phillips said. "Cloud 9 is the new kid on the block in Regina's music scene (though), and is slowly but steadily gaining traction."

Fraser has plans for the future of Cloud 9 to diversify the types of events that the venue will host. Fraser is currently planning on organizing a karaoke night soon, along with opening a games area. "We (also) plan to do a contest in the near future with recording time for local musicians," said Fraser.

Despite the organization's current difficulty with exposure, several regular performers have nothing but good things to say about Fraser and Cloud 9's support for local talent.

"I think (Fraser) is amazing, and is really interested in supporting live music and bands, which is really important," said Brandt Wanner, a band mate of Kowalchuk's. "The support really makes me want to keep performing there, and make sure more people know about it and come out to support the venue."

Several regular performers are grateful for a venue like Cloud 9, and it motivates them to continue with their craft. "I would recommend this venue to any bands or solo acts looking for a gig to play," said Kowalchuk. "It's definitely one of my favourite places to play."

Tonight, Feb. 16, Cloud 9 will be hosting a variety of acts including Alex Mullock, Jam Slayer and the Awkwards and Little Root. Doors will be open at 8 p.m.

Crossing Borders: Connecting with the environment



Over 230 registered for the 2017 Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation Workshop. Photo by Celine Grimard.

Celine Grimard
@celinegrimard

While the prairies may look tough at first glance, nature's balance is delicate. This is the challenge conservationists are tackling at the 2017 Native Prairie Restoration and Reclamation Workshop. The workshop, organized by the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan, runs Feb. 8 to 9 at the Ramada Hotel in downtown Regina.

The workshop's theme, Reclaiming Spaces, Restoring Species, has proven popular. "We have, I think, the highest number of registrants this workshop, compared to past years; we have over 230 registrants," said Kayla Balderson Burak, manager of the Action Plan group.

An affordable workshop fee and a chance to hear from some 20 experts helped draw the crowd, Balderson Burak believes.

"We also tied Species at Risk Conservation in with Native Prairie Restoration this year, which is a bit different," said Balderson Burak. She said the organizers did this because the two topics go hand in hand.

"It's not all about protecting what we have left but (also) what we can do with what has been disturbed," said

Balderson Burak.

A SPCAP workshop is held every two out of three years. This year's event includes a trade show, poster session, and a silent auction to raise funds for the group's education programs.

The federal and provincial governments help fund the workshop, but

"It's not all about protecting what we have left but (also) what we can do with what has been disturbed."

-Kayla Balderson Burak

Balderson Burak said one of the main challenges for SPCAP and similar programs is an overall lack of resources.

Balderson Burak said new methods to restore habitat can be quite costly in both the equipment and work time.

"A lot of the smaller groups do struggle to meet the requirements to be able to implement some of these initiatives," said Balderson Burak.

This workshop allows people "to connect and network and get more intimate and really talk about some of these challenges with each other," said Balderson Burak.

One of the speakers is Francis Kilkenny, who flew in from Idaho to speak about the Great Basin Native Plan Project. Kilkenny is a research

biologist with the United States department of agriculture's forest service branch, based out of Rocky Mountain Research Station.

Balderson Burak said Great Basin project is "about growing native plants and harvesting native seed, specifically for species at risk." She added there is nothing quite like it in Canada yet.

"I think we can learn a lot from (the project), here in Canada," she said.

Researcher Kilkenny described the Great Basin Native Plan Project as "an intern agency partnership between the U.S. Forest service and the bureau of land management, which is a part of the department of interior and we also have a partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service."

According to the Great Basin Native Plan Project website, one of its goals is to "increase the variety of native plant materials available for restoration in the Great Basin."

"We tend to work typically on post-fire restoration," said Kilkenny. Because of the typically large scale of devastation, the goal is to get the ecosystem's functions back by using common, rather than rare, plant species.

"I think we've tended to think about it (as), 'well, can I get something on the ground that grows,' instead of thinking about it in a long-term way and understanding (that) what we're doing to the environment as we do these practices... is really important," said Kilkenny.

The areas Kilkenny works on contain grasslands and shrublands. "There are a lot of similarities in the types of restoration that might be done (in Saskatchewan)," he said.

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Make sure to come and check out the showcase, an investigative current affairs project done by students, on April 13, 2017.

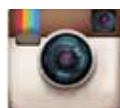
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Boudoir photography uncovers body positivity



Above and below: Jackie Larkin (in yellow) shows her client, Veronica Wilgosh, the final prints from their recent boudoir shoot in Larkin's Regina studio. Photo by Caitlin Taylor.

Caitlin Taylor @caitlinjtaylor

More Saskatchewan women are trading in their everyday attire for something a little sexier – and many are learning to appreciate and celebrate their bodies along the way.

"I felt beautiful, I felt alive, I felt young. It actually made me smile and feel really good inside," said Veronica Wilgosh, who recently had a boudoir photo shoot with Jackie Larkin, a Regina-based photographer.

Photographer Larkin believes that more women are starting to appreciate their bodies. "I think there is more of an acceptance of that...to celebrate ourselves and put ourselves out there," she said.

Larkin has been a professional photographer for eight years. She also shoots for businesses, families and weddings. When it comes to boudoir, her clients are mostly professional women aged 30 to 50 years old.

"I hit a milestone birthday, I was basically turning 50. Part of me just felt, you know, it would be nice to celebrate my age verses looking at it as a negative," said Wilgosh.

Wilgosh enjoyed the session with Larkin. "It was easy, I felt very

comfortable. It felt natural," she said. "There was a comfort level with (Larkin)."

Wilgosh was very pleased with how her photos turned out. "I loved them actually," she said. "To me it captured the true essence of what I

was trying to achieve."

lunge of her job is trying to make clients comfortable during the shoot. "I'll take a photo of them and I'll show them the photo and say something like, 'See? you look great, you don't need to worry.'"

Stettner said she was nervous at

reacted to the photos, Stettner said, "My husband loved it. I think more he loved the idea that I was able to get in front of a camera and feel beautiful. When he saw the photos, he looked at me and said, 'I told you, you are the most beautiful thing.'"

Crystal Dutka says that her clients are always happy to see the photos. "I think it has a lot to do with the fact that they didn't realize they could look like something they see in a magazine," she said.

But when it comes to editing the photos, Dutka doesn't believe in making major changes to clients' bodies. For example, she wouldn't change the size of someone's waste or remove stretch marks. She would, however, edit out a pimple or other blemish that's not regularly there.

"I think that women are beautiful, any shape, any size," she said. "So why would I change them to be something that they are not when they are celebrating their own sexuality and their own self?"

Stettner said that the photo shoot helped her appreciate her body.

"I learned that my body has changed... I just needed to learn to love the new me and love the way the new me looks. And I learned not to be shy and to be proud of the new body that I do have being a mom."



was trying to achieve."

Tamara Stettner is a stay-at-home-mom who also decided to do a boudoir session with photographer Crystal Dutka from Broadview, Sask.

"I did it for my husband, and a little bit for myself, too," said Stettner.

Dutka says that the biggest chal-

first but soon settled in. "I definitely felt relaxed, I felt beautiful, I felt confident. But going into it, I did not feel that way," she said. "Once I was there with Crystal and saw the atmosphere, I was so much at ease and I didn't feel nervous anymore."

When asked how her husband