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Vol. 12 - Issue 4 | Tuesday, January 24, 2023

An experience like no other as Whitecourt Taekwondo contingent trains in Thailand



Photo by Jim Rennie

**A recent two-week adventure on the other side of the world will undoubtedly be a core memory for several area families. A contingent of Whitecourt Taekwondo athletes flew out the day after Christmas to train in paradise for a once-in-a-lifetime experience.**

By Serena Lapointe

Members of Whitecourt Taekwondo experienced the trip of a lifetime to cap off 2022 and begin 2023. On December 26, a large group flew from Vancouver to

Thailand, where they stayed until January 8. Master Jim Rennie has been bringing groups of taekwondo athletes from the community, and across North America, to Asia for decades.

This trip was several years in the making, thanks to restrictions. "This was our club's 20th visit to Asia. It's such a great opportunity,

continued on page 10

## 'Affordability payments' from the provincial government are now accessible for eligible families and seniors

By Serena Lapointe

Starting Wednesday last week, eligible Albertans could apply for their chunk of a \$2.8 billion funding platform from the provincial government. Aimed at lessening the effects of inflation, the funding will be spread out over six months (\$100/month per eligible person). At a recently held news conference, Alberta's Minister of Affordability and Util-

ities, Matt Jones, said the mission was to help keep Alberta affordable.

"Parents are buying less food, less nutritious food, and they are struggling to keep their children in the activities they need and love. Seniors are choosing between paying their utility bills and getting their prescriptions refilled, and Albertans on core support programs are stretching their already limited budgets to make ends meet.

Our government committed to help Albertans face this affordability crisis both through significant broad-based relief and now through \$600 in targeted support to help those who need it most."

Jones said the money would get into the hands of Albertans quickly. "I'm pleased to announce that eligible Albertans will be able to apply for

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Provincial funding has officially been launched to help families, and seniors navigate inflation and increased costs. Those eligible can apply to receive \$100/child/senior 65+, tax-free, each month until June, totalling \$600. From left to right: Minister Mickey Amery, Minister Nate Glubish and Minister Matt Jones.



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## GET INVOLVED....IT'S YOUR TOWN! Opportunity for Public Participation

Every fall, the Town of Whitecourt recruits citizens to fill volunteer positions on various boards and committees that provide Town Council with perspective and recommendations regarding important civic issues. Whitecourt is a diverse, growing town, and citizens are in the best position to provide input on our changing community needs.

Get involved! It's your town. Share your knowledge and meet new colleagues.

The Town of Whitecourt is now accepting applications for:

**Subdivision and Development Appeal Board**

*"To make decisions on appeals of subdivision or development decisions made by the Development Officer or Municipal Planning Commission."*

(2) Members – terms to expire in October 2025

**Whitecourt Tourism Committee**

*"To establish a brand and program to further the interests of the Town of Whitecourt in the tourism industry."*

(1) Member – term to expire in October 2025

**Municipal Planning Commission Committee**

*"To deal with land use planning matters with particular emphasis on the Land Use Bylaw."*

(1) Member – term to expire in October 2024  
(2) Members – terms to expire in October 2025

**Health Professionals Attraction & Retention Committee**

*"To develop and support a sustainable and collaborative system for health professionals' attraction and retention that will support ongoing health care services to the community and provide a welcoming environment for health care providers and their families."*

(1) Member – term to expire in October 2024  
(1) Member – terms to expire in October 2025

If being on a Council Committee interests you, please complete an application form which can be found on the Whitecourt website at [www.whitecourt.ca](http://www.whitecourt.ca) or picked up at the Town Office. Applications must be received before 12:00 noon, Wednesday, October 20, 2021 to:

Whitecourt Town Administration Office  
Attention: Executive Assistant  
5004 - 52 Avenue, Box 509, WHITECOURT, AB T7S 1N6  
email: [wendydauidson@whitecourt.ca](mailto:wendydauidson@whitecourt.ca)

Applications will be presented to Town Council at the February 13, 2023 Regular Meeting.

## NOTICE OF DECISION

The following decision was made by the Municipal Planning Commission:

Application 22-124: 4752 51 Avenue – Freestanding Sign – Approved with Conditions

**Date of Decision:** January 12, 2023    **Appeal Closes at 4:00pm:** February 3, 2023

An Appeal of the above decision(s) may be made by submitting a written appeal and appeal fee (\$300) to the Office of the Secretary of the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board, Town of Whitecourt Administration Building, Box 509, Whitecourt, Alberta, T7S 1N6 prior to 4:00pm on the above noted date. Any person(s) affected by the said proposal(s), has the right to appeal prior to the above date.

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## NOTICE OF DECISION

The following development permit has been conditionally approved under the provisions of the Land Use Bylaw.

| PERMIT    | LOCATION           | PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT         | DATE OF DECISION | APPEAL DEADLINE |
|-----------|--------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 15-001-23 | PT SW 20-59-12-W5M | Dwelling: single family home | 13-Jan-23        | 3-Feb-23        |

Any person affected by this decision may appeal to the Secretary of the Development Appeal Board by forwarding a written appeal along with a \$500.00 fee, to the address listed below, prior to **4:30 p.m. of the appeal date noted above.**

Information regarding this application may be obtained by inquiring at the address noted.

Attention: Peter McKay, Development Officer  
Woodlands County  
Box 60, #1 Woodlands Lane, Whitecourt AB T7S 1N3  
Telephone: 780-778-8400  
Toll-Free: 1-888-870-6315

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL CRUSHING TO STOCKPILE

Woodlands County is seeking bids for crushing and stockpiling of 150,000 tonnes of 4:20, 10,000 tonnes of 4:40, and 20,000 tonnes of 5:8 in SML970017 located at SE 10-62-06-W5M.

Detailed information and bid packages may be obtained online at: Alberta Purchasing Connection or Woodlands County Website [www.woodlands.ab.ca](http://www.woodlands.ab.ca).

Bidders may submit sealed tenders only up to **2:00 p.m.** local time on **February 16, 2023.**

**To: Woodlands County Municipal Office  
#1 Woodlands Lane  
Box 60  
Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N3  
Telephone: 780-778-8400**

Bidders must submit proposals on the forms issued with the RFP document.

For further information contact:

Richard Twach, Manager, Field Services  
Telephone: (780) 778-8400

## REQUEST FOR QUOTATIONS

Woodlands County is seeking quotations for the supply of the following:

- **Five (5) New Crew Cab Regular Box ¾ Ton 4x4 Trucks**
- **One (1) New Diesel Crew Cab and Chassis 4x4 Truck**

Quotation documents may be obtained on the website [woodlands.ab.ca/prfps-and-tenders](http://woodlands.ab.ca/prfps-and-tenders) or at either of the Woodlands County offices.

Woodlands County Municipal Office  
# 1 Woodlands Lane  
Whitecourt AB T7S 1N3  
Telephone: (780) 778-8400

OR

Woodlands County Regional Municipal Office  
Box 33  
Fort Assiniboine AB T0G 1A0  
Telephone: (780) 584-3866

Sealed quotations shall be submitted on, or prior to **2:00 pm on January 31, 2023**, to:

Richard Twach  
Manager, Infrastructure Services  
P.O. Box 60 #1 Woodlands Lane  
Whitecourt, AB T7S 1N3

For further information, please contact the Municipal Office in Whitecourt at 780-778-8400.



**JOHN BURROWS**  
Reeve  
Councillor for Whitecourt West  
Division 2  
E-Mail: john.burrows@woodlands.ab.ca  
Phone: 780-706-4747



**BRUCE PRESTIDGE**  
Councillor for Blue Ridge  
Division 5  
E-Mail: bruce.prestidge@woodlands.ab.ca  
Phone: 780-779-3917



**DEVIN WILLIAMS**  
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Timos Division 7  
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**JEREMY WILHELM**  
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E-Mail: dave.kusch@woodlands.ab.ca  
Phone: 780-778-9337



**ALAN DEANE**  
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Phone: 780-778-0894



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Phone: 780-778-2341


**Located within the Carlan Services Community Centre**  
The Whitecourt Food Bank is operated by the Town of Whitecourt Food Bank Coordinator and dependent on volunteers to operate. The Food Bank relies on donations of cash or food from individuals and organizations. Local grocery stores drop off baked goods including bread and pastries weekly. Other corporations and schools schedule food drives throughout the year.  
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- Mondays 7:30pm
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**Preventative Education:**  
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Family Resource & Crisis Centre  
www.whitecourtshester.ca



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This can include help with parking costs for hospital visits, living expenses and unforeseen medical expenses. Applications can be made through the Drs at both Whitecourt Medical Clinics or (office hours, can leave a message): **Willow McIntyre** (Community Cancer Navigation Nurse, McLeod River PCN) **780-779-0079**, **Kim Nendsa** (President of Whitecourt Cancer & Wellness Society) **780-778-0932**  
wctcancerwellness@gmail.com

*\*\*Monthly meetings have been postponed due to COVID-19*

## Whitecourt AA Group Of Alcoholics Anonymous



Meetings three times each week

- Monday 8:00 p.m..... (12 Step Meeting)
- Wednesday 8:00 p.m...(Open Topic Meeting)
- Friday 8:00 p.m.....(Big Book Meeting)

Located at the United Church Basement on Legion St. (formerly 5201 - 50 Street )  
More info Contact: (780) 396-8777. Please Leave A Message For Our AA member or Contact Addictions Helpline @1(866)332-2322



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Crisis Text Line (Powered by Kids Help Phone) Canada Wide free, 24/7 texting service is accessible immediately to youth anywhere

in Canada by texting TALK to **686868** to reach an English speaking Crisis Responder and TEXTO to **686868** to reach a French-speaking Crisis Responder on any text/ SMS enabled cell phone.  
KidsHelpPhone Ages 20 Years and Under

in Canada **1-800-668-6868** (Online or on the Phone). First Nations and Inuit Hope for Wellness 24/7 Help Line **1-855-242-3310**  
Canadian Indian Residential Schools Crisis Line **1-866-925-4419**  
Trans LifeLine – All Ages **1-877-330-6366**

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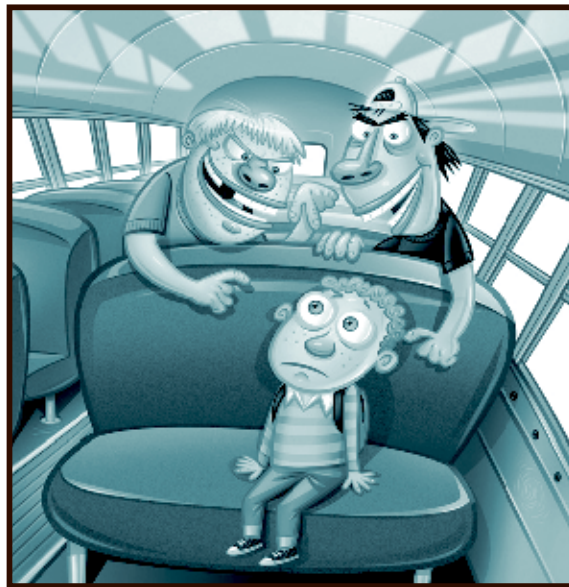


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# Pricing model review for three municipal services shows below average fees



Swimming lane rentals will likely increase .75/lane.



Groups renting the fieldhouse space could see a slight increase.

A recent review of user fees for the AJMC, Scott Safety Centre and Whitecourt Transit showed that Whitecourt is often below average compared to ten other municipalities. A recent Community Services Advisory Board recommendation is to increase group-based rentals slightly and not to change individual fees.

By Serena Lapointe

Every two years, the Town of Whitecourt reviews the fees charged to residents to use the Allan & Jean Millar Centre and Scott Safety Centre. Fees stretch from a single drop-in admission to rental of the facilities. The review compares other facilities to see where Whitecourt sits with the current pricing model.

The communities/facilities used in the most recent review were Spruce Grove/Tri Leisure, St. Alberta/Servus Credit Union Place, Fort Saskatchewan/Dow Centennial Centre, Bonnyville/Centennial Centre, Leduc/Recreation Centre, Sherwood Park/Millennium Place, Red Deer/Collicutt Centre, Grande Prairie/Eastlink Centre, Fox Creek/FCG Multiplex, Slave Lake/Multi Rec Centre, and the Allan & Jean Millar Centre.

The review looked at rates for daily admission, ten visit pass,

monthly, and annual. It also looked at rates for corporate membership, cost of child mind, use of the indoor playground, meeting room booking rates, fieldhouse rental, swimming pool lane rentals, and arena rental fees. One final category examined whether daily admission rates included access to complimentary fitness classes (yes, at the AJMC). Also, part of the fee review, but separate from the fees mentioned above, was the cost to use Whitecourt Transit, from cash fares, monthly passes, ticket books, and annual passes.

“The Community Services Advisory Board (CSAB) completes a review every two years. They had an opportunity to complete the review at their December meeting. The CSAB is recommending that a few areas of fees be increased. Those are areas where the fees could be shared across many so that it doesn’t have as

much of an impact. Also, they were the areas that were the lowest in our fee review,” explained Chelsea Grande, Director of Community Services.

Grande said that the CSAB recommended increasing ice fees, swim club rental lane fees, youth full-service and adult fieldhouse rentals, sports-field tournament rates, and day-use rates. “These fees are being recommended to come into effect on May 1, 2023, so that we can give notice and also have it in line with our Community Spectrum that goes out for the spring edition,” explained Grande.

The current price for Youth Non-Prime rental of the Scott Safety Centre is \$64.51. The proposed change would bring the fee up to \$68.36. Adult Non-Prime is currently \$127.03 and is proposed to increase to \$134.61. For primetime bookings at the Scott Safety Centre, youth is \$89.82, and adult is \$152.84. The change

for youth would increase to \$95.18, and the adult fee would increase to \$161.96.

Grande said the board chose group-related increases on purpose. “For example, Minor Hockey has 300 players. So, when you look at that, it has very little impact because that fee is spread across so many that the adjustment would be minimal. Whereas a membership, all of that is going to affect that one person.”

The cost for swim club lane rentals at the AJMC is \$12.50. The increase proposed would bring the price up to \$13.25, a difference of .75/lane. The tournament rate at the AJMC is proposed to increase from \$223.31/weekend to \$297, while the Day Use booking is proposed to change from \$54.59 to \$72.60.

The last change recommended by the CSAB affects the use of the fieldhouse space. Youth-full is presently at \$79.95 with

a recommended rise to \$84.72, while Adult Full is at \$101.24 with a recommendation to increase to \$107.28. Partial rentals are recommended to rise from \$2.34 to \$3.50 depending on the area chosen, whether half or one-third of the fieldhouse.

Councillor Paul Chauvet asked how the AJMC was doing now compared to before restrictions. “With the lockdowns and everything, we took such a beating. Where are we at as far as the percentage of people coming back?”

Grande said the Electronic Fund Transfers (EFTs) at the AJMC are lower than before. These are membership or recurring payments from patrons. “That’s where we are seeing the biggest impact. When you look at our revenue, right now we are still about \$80,000 under in revenue than what we have usually budgeted in the past at the AJMC.”

She added that they are working on a marketing

campaign to boost EFT numbers. “That is one reason that the CSAB is recommending we don’t change our membership fees or our EFT fees.” She said they would focus on ways to build memberships back up as they are at about half the numbers today compared to 2016-2018.

For daily/monthly/annual admission rates, the AJMC is under the average rate between the listed community/facilities for every area except senior. However, most facilities do not distinguish between seniors and super seniors and charge all seniors a set rate. The AJMC provides a reduced rate for those 80+. Even with the proposed increases, meeting room and Fieldhouse rental rates remain below average. If passed by Whitecourt Town Council at an upcoming meeting, the changes are expected to generate \$17,340 annually.

## Woodlands County Council discussed the following items at their recent meeting:

A public hearing was held for Development Permit Application 15-060-2022 Natural Resource Extraction and Processing (Class 1 Pit) on NE 2-62-5-W5M & Plan 092-9270 Block 1 Lot 1. Background on the gravel pit develop-

ment which is east of Fort Assiniboine was provided by Administration and both Council and the public had the opportunity to ask questions. The developer’s representative was also in attendance to provide information and answer

questions. Further information and responses will be provided to Council before a decision is made on the development permit.

Woodlands County has seven Intermunicipal Collaboration Framework agreements com-

pleted with its neighbouring municipalities which require Council members to be appointed. Members were appointed to the County of Barrhead, Lac Ste. Anne County, and Yellowhead County Intermunicipal Collaboration Commit-

tees. The committees will review their respective ICF agreements according to its schedule which varies from once every two to once every five years.

The next regularly scheduled Council meeting is Wednesday,

February 1, 2023, 9:30 am. The meeting is held in-person at the Municipal Office in Whitecourt and streamed on the Woodlands County YouTube channel. Agenda packages are available on the Woodlands County CivicWeb Portal.



Premier Danielle Smith spoke at a recent conference.

continued from page 1

and receive affordability payments by the end of this month." He also explained that the over 300,000 Albertans already receiving monthly benefits through an Alberta core support program, such as AISH, PDD, the Alberta Seniors Benefit, and Foster/Kinship Caregivers, would receive their payments without needing to apply. "All other eligible seniors 65 and up and par-

ents with children under 18 (household incomes under \$180,000) can apply for their payments through an easy two-step process," he said. Residents must register for or confirm a verified account through www.Alberta.ca or visit an office (info below). Applications began being accepted on January 18. Mickey Amery, Alberta's Minister of Children's Services, also spoke at the conference. "We know that parents

are forced to make choices they should not have to make, and we want to help. Thanks to our strong fiscal position in this province, we are doing everything we can to ease some of the burden for Alberta families."

He said that as a parent, he understands how perceptive children can be. "They can see the worry on their parent's faces and hear it in their parent's voices when they are trying to make ends meet. We hope kids

won't have to overhear those tough conversations about what might be cut in their households. Things like school activities that give children so much joy while supporting their overall health and wellbeing."

Amery said he hoped the targeted affordability payments would benefit children by reducing pressures on their parents and caregivers, allowing them to "just be kids." For a family with three children under 18, the

funding would amount to \$300 monthly from January to June, totalling \$1800. Amery also said that he is confident the payments and other affordability measures will make a meaningful difference. "This year, we want to see more families focus on what matters most, spending time with each other."

Minister Nate Glubish, Minister of Technology and Innovation, was the final minister to speak during the conference. "It is the largest initiative of its kind in Canada. As part of this plan, we are working to implement one of the biggest and most complex financial benefit programs in Alberta's history. Delivering \$600 in payments over six months to millions of Albertans to ease the pressure on household budgets caused by runaway inflation, and it's important that we get it right."

Glubish said his department had worked on the portal for the last two months. He added that they had considered using the Canada Revenue Agency's financial systems to implement it but decided not to. "If we were to use the CRA financial systems, pay-

ments to eligible Albertans would be delayed until at least April, if not longer, and this is simply not acceptable. We heard loud and clear that Albertans need help now, and that is why we have taken this approach."

When asked how the government settled on \$100, Jones explained that they looked at the "estimated incremental burden that inflation is placing on families on a per child basis." He said the cost was around \$90 per month. When asked if he felt the money would be a difference-maker, Jones said he hoped so. "Certainly, the intent is to provide children and families with as much flexibility and normalcy as possible. It's important to note that this is just one component of our Affordability Action Plan. We are providing up to \$500 per household in electricity rebates. We are providing fuel tax relief, natural gas rebates and electricity price protection, and we've lowered income tax. This is one component to our Affordability Action Plan, and a very large component for families, but there's a lot more also going out to support families."

The total cost of the payments, within the \$2.8 billion Affordability Action Plan, is roughly \$900 million and is anticipated to impact about 2.5 million Albertans. The provincial government allocated the funding in their budget. Conversations are also occurring on auto insurance rates and the rising cost of post-secondary education, with further information coming soon.

Premier Danielle Smith said though Alberta can't solve the inflation issue alone, the balanced budget and strong fiscal position allow her government to help. "We can offer substantial relief so that Albertans and their families are better able to manage through this storm."

Whitecourt and area residents who are unable to or prefer not to apply online can visit the Alberta Supports office in the Midtown Mall. Hours are extended until February 3 to accommodate those seeking to apply for funding. The office will be open from 8:15 am until 8 pm (breaks for lunch between 12-1 pm), Monday through Friday, and Saturdays from 9 am to 3 pm.

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**Saturday's mild temperatures had many community members out enjoying the great outdoors. Jeannine Steinke was one of several who laced up their boots, popped on the skis and headed out for a cross-country spin around the Whitecourt Golf and Country Club. There are two trails groomed for residents to enjoy. One is 1.86km, and the other is 3.26km, which takes enthusiasts around much of the course, including along the river. "It's awesome. The best thing ever! I love that we have this here," said Steinke. "I wish we had more!"**



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**Living Waters Catholic Separate School Division invites applications for Supervisor of Facilities**

Living Waters is looking for a highly motivated, collaborative team member to take on a challenging and rewarding position. Living Waters is a Catholic School Division consisting of seven schools in Edson, Slave Lake, and Whitecourt.

This position, based out of Whitecourt, will provide leadership and direction assisting the Corporate Treasurer within all areas of facilities and ensuring alignment to the Division's Blueprint to the Future and 3 Year Education Plan.

Significant travel throughout the Division on a continual basis to meet with staff and Administration, as well as managing multiple projects and touring of facilities to ensure our standards are being met.

**Basic Function**

- Plan and manage the daily and long-term operations of Facilities within the Division.
- Work collaboratively with the School Administration and Central Office staff to manage OH&S, Infrastructure and Maintenance programs, preventative maintenance and professional development of custodial and maintenance staff.
- Supervision of maintenance and custodial staff to ensure safe and caring environments to maximize student learning.
- Work collaboratively with Alberta Education and other agencies and companies to ensure excellence in planning and maintaining our grounds and facilities.

**Relationships**

- Ability to build positive, strong, collaborative relationships and teams.
- Ability to work within an organization that includes professional and labour unions.
- Evidence of strong leadership, organizational and planning skills.

**Education and Experience**

- A combination of education and experience that support the position, including supervisor experience.
- Knowledge of facility management, project management, maintenance and custodial practices.
- Knowledge OH&S legislation and practices.
- An understanding of financial control, accountability and target-setting systems.
- Vendor management.
- Strong communication skills.
- A strong willingness to learn more and expand capacity.

Salary will be dependent upon education and experience.

All individuals wishing to apply are asked to submit a resume, along with 3 references.

Successful applicants must submit a recent Criminal Record Check with vulnerable persons sector.

The successful candidate will be expected to work 8 hours per day, Monday to Friday, as well as be on call for emergencies.

The competition will remain open until a suitable candidate is found.

For more information, please contact Bryan Turner, Corporate Treasurer at [bryan.turner@livingwaters.ab.ca](mailto:bryan.turner@livingwaters.ab.ca)

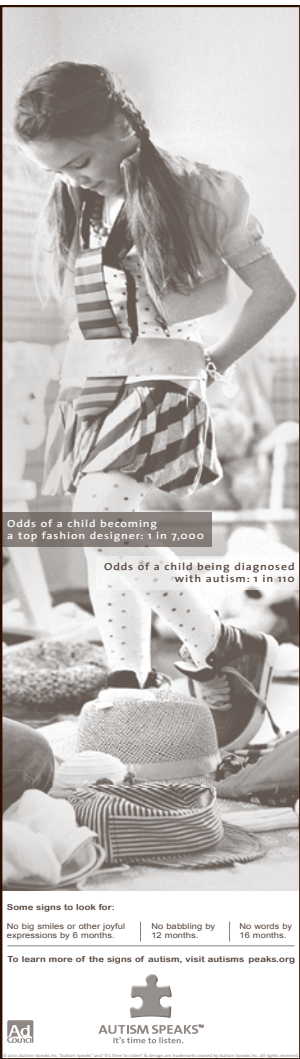




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**Letter to the Editor policy**  
The Press welcomes readers to write letters to the Editor. A maximum of 300 words is preferred but not necessary. Letters must carry a first name or two initials with surname and include an address and daytime telephone number. All letters are subject to editing. Please email letters to wctpress@telus.net.

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| A look at the local weather | Tue., Jan 24 | Wed., Jan 25 | Thu., Jan 26 | Fri., Jan 27 | Sat., Jan 28 |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| P.O.P.                      | 20%          | 30%          | 40%          | 40%          | 40%          |
| High                        | 4°C          | 5°C          | 3°C          | -3°C         | -10°C        |
| Low                         | -1°C         | 2°C          | -3°C         | -10°C        | -15°C        |
| Wind                        | NW 20 km/h   | W 16 km/h    | W 21 km/h    | NW 16 km/h   | NW 13 km/h   |
| 24-Hr Rain / Snow           | -            | -            | 1-3 cm       | 1-3cm        | <1cm         |

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nity for us. There are a few neat things that can happen, and one is that we get some really good rates so that it's affordable for families to travel. The other part is that we have some excellent connections that we've made from our travels over the years."

Rennie said one of those relationships was a key factor in visiting Koh Samui. "Koh means island, and it's pretty much on the other side of the planet as Whitecourt. It has a gym on it which offers both taekwondo and Thai boxing," he explained. "The gym is owned by a guy who was a German national champion. He was an instructor on contract in South Korea, where he met and married a Thai woman. He ended up going to Thailand with her and starting this gym," said Rennie. The owner just so happens to be best friends with one of Rennie's best friends.

"We met at a conference five years ago and discussed this opportunity to travel to Koh Samui. It took us a few years, but we did it." Rennie said that the network of

relationships throughout the taekwondo world is one of the most amazing things about the sport. "You meet people from all over the world, and you have chances to go places. I don't know if I will be able to accomplish going to all the places where I am friends with people, but I'm sure going to try."

While in Thailand, Rennie said the group had experiences they won't soon forget. "Some of our travellers had beachfront rooms, where you open your window, and there's nothing but sand and then the ocean. Other guests of ours had a swimming pool right beside them that overlooked the ocean."

Various tours took place, with some seeing temples and waterfalls or visiting an elephant sanctuary, where rescued elephants get to retire and be looked after. On the group's first night in Thailand, Rennie said he bought something exotic to kick off the experience. "I bought deep-fried scorpions for everyone, and everybody had at least one bite. That was impressive."

Every person on the trip was either a black belt or was part of a fam-



Photo by Jim Rennie

Thai boxing lessons.

ily group where at least one member had a black belt. "The consistent part of each day was that we started with training in taekwondo and Thai boxing. What was super impressive is that the entire team went and trained, even those who weren't in taekwondo," said Rennie.

The group's youngest member was a ten-year-old black belt, with Rennie being the oldest. "We

had all kinds in between. We had a mother/daughter team, a family of five, a mother/son team and a few individuals that came by themselves. It was a neat mixture of people, and I guarantee that they brought something back they will be teaching or adding to what they help teach in their own clubs."

Rennie said everyone in the group was a great ambassador of the sport and

Canada. "It was so fun to watch all these people be the right kind of tourists. We have high expectations of the people in our club and how people should behave. Our group did it fantastically."

As a coach, seeing people experience the joy of learning about a new culture or seeing a part of the world they've never seen before is exciting. "Most of the people on the trip

hadn't been outside North America, and for them to see and respect another culture was so impressive. They had the best manners, and everybody looked after each other. There were new friendships made that will last for lifetimes, with some people not having met before going on this trip."

Rennie said bringing

continued on page 11



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Photo by Jim Rennie

A happy bunch in Koh Samui.



Photo by Jim Rennie

Training at the beach.

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opportunities like the Thailand trip forward is fantastic, especially because it's within reach for everyone. "Many people might think that a trip like this is only for rich people, and that's not the case. We do a lot of fundraising in taekwondo." He explained that volunteering opportunities often pop up, allowing members to use accumulated funds for things just like the trip. "One of our

team members booked all of their hotels, training, and tours through their fundraising account. So, it's not out of anyone's reach if they want it."

On July 23, Rennie is taking a team of just over 50 people to South Korea, with 30-40 percent from the community. "In that group, some of them are children that have only been in taekwondo for just over a year, and some of them are parents that aren't in taekwondo at all, but they will all have an

incredible time." Years of travelling and making connections allow Whitecourt Taekwondo members like Rennie to create something others wouldn't easily do independently.

"We will get a chance to go to the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea. There is not another of those in the world. The teams I've taken before stand there and can look out and see North Koreans looking at you with machine guns.

They are there to patrol and make sure no one crosses into their side."

Rennie said they have another highly secretive trip coming up just after Christmas. "It will again be extremely unique and extremely easy for anyone to go to. No one has ever done anything like what we will do next time." Those interested in joining the global experience and making friends for life have no further to look than Whitecourt Taekwondo.

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Things are coming together nicely at The Manor. A big welcome sign at the entrance covered outdoor areas, and exterior finishing touches are in place. The community has closely watched the project, especially those eager to become residents once the building is complete. Back in September, Christenson Developments held an open house enabling those curious to peek inside the chance to do so. The Manor is part of a multi-phased development planned for the downtown site. An official opening date has not been set at this time.

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