



By Lynne Bereza, AMM Communications Coordinator

TO RUN...or not to run?

With a civic election coming up on October 27, the question on peoples' minds is who is going to run, and who is going to step aside. The *Leader* caught up with a few long-standing elected officials who have decided it is time to pursue other interests.

MAYOR DON PEPE, TOWN OF WINNIPEG BEACH



Don Pepe

One long-serving municipal official who won't seek re-election is Winnipeg Beach **Mayor Don Pepe**. Pepe has served 17 years on town council, including his recent two straight terms as mayor. He eked out a 20-vote win in 2006. He ran for mayor in 1998 but was defeated by **Reid Kelner** who served one term as mayor. Pepe is also well-known to members for his work on the AMM resolutions committee for the past several years.

"I had a long talk with my family," said Pepe, who battled health problems early in his recent mandate and the death of his father-in-law this year. "The town has always been in my heart."

"I'd like to think I laid some groundwork for improvements in the town," he said. He cited improved services on a variety of fronts, including the 2011 opening of a 120-site RV park, joining the Eastern Interlake Planning District and the Gateway Foundation assisted living project as among the high-water marks of the latest term.

Pepe added he's "worked toward the best interests of the community – and enjoyed every minute of it. Acting as mayor has been a true honour.

"It really came down to, I had my go at it, it's time to make room for somebody else," he said.

Pepe credited a capable staff with enabling council to get its work done. Winnipeg Beach voters go to the polls July 23.

REEVE GARNET THIEVIN, RM OF ROCKWOOD

Garnet Thievin has spent 21 years on the RM of Rockwood Council, including the past two terms as Reeve. This fall, however, he will be stepping down because, he said, "It's time for younger people to take over."



Garnett Thievin

Although many people cite following previous generations' footsteps as a reason for throwing their hats into the municipal arena, Thievin's reason was just the opposite: "Never had anyone in my family been on council, and I figured I'd try it. The term was three years back then."

While Thievin admits to greatly enjoying his time on council, he also admits there were challenges, and the one that stands out the

most will not surprise any Interlake citizen: "Drainage. We live in country full of water, and drainage has always been a problem," he stated. Progress has been made, however, as over the two decades Thievin has served on council, the municipality has created four waterworks systems where there were none before.

What is next? Thievin, who retired from farming two years ago, has no special plans for his retirement from municipal politics other than saying, "I have a cottage and I like to fish!" Sounds like a relaxing retirement for a well-deserving individual.

REEVE GEORGE HARBOTTLE, RM OF ALEXANDER



George Harbottle

Having served a total of 25 years on both sides of the desk (first as an administrator and later as an elected official), **George Harbottle** says it's time to call it a day.

He began his career as the Village of Powerview's administrator from 1963 to 1968, a job he returned to between 1983 and 1988. With the desire to "make a difference wherever and whenever," Harbottle went on to serve as Mayor of

Powerview between 1968 and 1971. Later, he became the Reeve of the RM of Alexander, a post he's held for the past 12 years.

The AMM holds a special place in Harbottle's heart, referring to it as "the envy of Canada." He served two stints as Eastern Rural Director on the AMM Board, first from 2003-2004 and again from 2007 until the present. Naturally, stepping down from elected life means giving up his AMM board seat, but Harbottle said simply, "I feel the municipality is a better place than it was 12 years ago and now it's time to move on."

Harbottle admitted there are challenges to municipal office, with weather at the top of his list. "Floods, tornadoes, tsunamis

and fire – they are forever challenging and never one and the same.” He added a society developing into one of ‘entitlement’ as a growing challenge, as well.

Fittingly his long career is matched by a long list of things he enjoyed about municipal life. Harbottle included in his list, “the staff in our municipal office, my colleagues on council, neighbouring municipalities, the Eastern District of AMM, and the many friends I came to know throughout Manitoba and Canada with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.”

You can bet George’s many friends will miss him, as well.

REEVE ALICE BOURGOUIN, RM OF ROSSER



Alice Bourgooin

After two terms as councillor followed by two terms as reeve of the RM of Rosser, **Alice Bourgooin** is saying farewell to elected life.

Bourgooin, who initially threw her hat into the ring back in 1996 because she “wanted to see some changes and progress made in the municipality,” is the first to admit elected office is not easy. “What I found challenging is dealing with people who are closed-minded and who want to maintain the status quo, rather than move ahead,” she explained.

During her tenure, Bourgooin did indeed see progress in her municipality; in fact, it will continue to progress even after she steps down. “I am sorry I won’t see the completion of CentrePort (the 20,000 acre inland port in Winnipeg, expected to be complete by August, 2012). It’s really taking off and it is something I have been very, very involved with.” She does take satisfaction in seeing a water project almost completed in her own community of Grosse Isle, something “I wanted to see since I started.”

Bourgooin will miss friends she’s made both within her own municipality and as Interlake Rural Director on the AMM board. A big supporter of AMM events, she encourages elected officials to take advantage of AMM education sessions. She also says newly elected officials should be sure to take part in the ‘newly elected seminar’ held every four years at the AMM Annual Convention. “This seminar is the first official AMM event after the election and I can’t stress enough how valuable it is,” she said.

*What you see and expect
is not really what it is.
~ George Harbottle*

SAGE ADVICE...

We asked our subjects if they had any advice for newcomers to municipal politics. Here is what they had to say:

Harbottle: “*What you see and expect is not really what it is.*”

Thievin: “*Go see the financial report of your municipality, see how much money they budget every year and what it is being spent on. Then, go and sit in on a couple of council meetings.*”

Bourgooin: “*It’s not one or two meetings a month – people need to understand it’s much more than that. Also, you are there to represent all the ratepayers, not just one or two groups.*”

Sawh: “*Get as informed as you can about an issue, and get as many different opinions about it as you can. Don’t ever go into a decision with a closed mind.*”

Rempel: “*When you are elected, you have to serve the people who elected you. Get a feeling for what the majority of the community wants and serve them. The people are your boss.*”

While her life may slow down somewhat, the mother of three and grandmother of four plans to spend more time with family, work on her golf game and travel a little. She’s not saying where, but as she’s already been to Costa Rica, Barbados, Cuba and Hawaii, it’s probably safe to say somewhere hot is a likely choice. We think she has earned some time in the sun!

COUNCILLOR ART REMPEL, CITY OF STEINBACH



Art Rempel

Affectionately nicknamed “the Senator” by the AMM board of directors, **Art Rempel** is a true believer in community. He has served a total of 32 years – 13 on the Hanover School Board (the last five as Chair), followed by 19 consecutive years as a councillor for the City of Steinbach.

From the beginning, Rempel described his decision to get involved as one of his ‘compelling interests.’

“I’ve believe we should all try to serve our community at one time or another.”

According to Rempel, meeting new people and making friends from all parts of Manitoba has been one of the most satisfying things about his career in elected office. “Now I know people in every corner of the province, and that’s a real joy.”

While seeing progress in his community has been another benefit, Rempel does admit that frustrations do occur. “Getting on the same page as the majority of the ratepayers is challenging. I am dealing with their money, not my own, so I had to put aside my own personal agenda.” He added dealing with special interest

groups can be frustrating as well, noting “those are the people who very often get the attention.”

Rempel is confident the time is right for him to step down from council. “I am getting older, and we have some very smart young people in our community,” he stated. “Besides, I’ve always felt it’s important to walk away while I can still score some goals!”

**COUNCILLOR OSWALD SAWH,
CITY OF THOMPSON**



Oswald Sawh

Oswald Sawh is not so much retiring as ‘taking a break.’ Sawh, who has only been on council in the City of Thompson for two terms, is expecting a son in October and felt the next four years would be better spent devoted to his family. After that, however, anything is possible.

Sawh decided to run for council initially because he “wanted to try it out. The City had just finished going through a fairly divisive issue and I found that very interesting, seeing just what council had to go through. It grabbed my attention.”

His enjoyment of the position hasn’t waned since. In his view, “I’ve always said that local politics is the toughest because you are closest to your constituents. But, unlike provincial or federal politics, where you have voting blocks or party lines to align with, I can vote issue by issue. It really is the most pure democratic process.”

While he will miss both his local council and also the friends he’s made as Northern Director on the AMM Board, Sawh is not leaving empty-handed. He stated, “One of the things I’m going to

When you are elected, you have to serve the people who elected you. Get a feeling for what the majority of the community wants and serve them. The people are your boss.

~ Art Rempel

take with me is this: We all have our own opinions, but when you enter a council chamber, and listen to seven other peoples’ opinions, your decision might change. You get these ‘aha’ moments where you realize there is more than one way to view a certain issue. I’ve learned to not make decisions until I’ve listened to other people’s opinions.”

Sawh also has some parting words for those seeking a council seat: “Be prepared to learn a lot.”

Winnipeg Beach information courtesy of the *Interlake Spectator*.

OUR CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT IS MORE THAN JUST TALK

As we continue to deliver valuable information through the pages of this magazine, in a printed format that is appealing, reader-friendly and not lost in the proliferation of electronic messages that are bombarding our senses, we are also well aware of the need to be respectful of our environment. That is why we are committed to publishing the magazine in the most environmentally-friendly process possible. Here is what we mean:

- We use lighter publication stock that consists of recycled paper provided by an FSC Certified supplier. This Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standard ensures that our paper comes from efficiently managed forests with proper replanting programs that make this a RENEWABLE and SUSTAINABLE resource.
- Our computer-to-plate technology reduces the amount of chemistry required to create plates for the printing process. The resulting chemistry is neutralized to the extent that it can be safely discharged to the drain.
- We use vegetable oil-based inks to print the magazine. This means that we are not using resource-depleting petroleum-based ink products and that the subsequent recycling of the paper in this magazine is much more environment friendly.
- During the printing process, we use a solvent recycling system that separates the water from the recovered solvents and leaves only about 5% residue. This results in reduced solvent usage, handling and hazardous hauling.
- We ensure that an efficient recycling program is used for all printing plates and all waste paper.
- Within the pages of each issue, we actively encourage our readers to REUSE and RECYCLE.
- In order to reduce our carbon footprint on the planet, we utilize a carbon offset program in conjunction with any air travel we undertake related to our publishing responsibilities for the magazine.

So enjoy this magazine...and KEEP THINKING GREEN.