

BRANDON SUN



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SPACE IS THE PLACE — A5



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WITH THE FOLKS — A13

Third man charged in downtown stabbing death

BY JILLIAN AUSTIN

A Sioux Valley man has been charged with second-degree murder in the case of the stabbing death of David Bronson Azure, say city police.

The 29-year-old man is the third suspect arrested in relation to the incident, which occurred in a downtown alley on May 11.

“He turned himself in because he was

aware that police were looking for him,” Staff Sgt. Wayne Balcaen said yesterday.

The name of the accused is not being released at this time.

Azure, a 24-year-old Brandon man, was found unresponsive in an alley in the 600-block of Rosser Avenue with a stab wound to his upper body.

He was taken to Brandon hospital, but died from his injuries.

Earlier this week, Bertrand Alexander Blacksmith, 25, of Rapid City was charged with being a party to manslaughter and possession of a weapon for a dangerous purpose.

Blacksmith is accused of possessing a stone inside a sock on the day of the stabbing.

However, the manslaughter charge against Blacksmith is expected to be stayed, according to Marcia Siekliski, a law student acting on

behalf of the Crown.

Twenty-three-year-old Jesse Anthony, of Brandon, was convicted last week of public mischief for supplying homicide investigators on the case with false information.

Brandon police say more details on the murder investigation will be made public by tomorrow afternoon.

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PLAYING SOME POOL

Swimmers in Souris made full use of yesterday's hot weather to enjoy the town's brand-new \$1.2 million pool, including this lazy river, where swimmers can either bob along with the current or swim against the flow.

For a story on the facility's grand opening, see page A2.

(James O'Connor/Brandon Sun)



BC blaze battle gets some help

BY MARY AGNES WELCH

Carrying overstuffed, yellow bags full of gear, about 40 Manitoba forest fire fighters boarded a plane from Winnipeg to British Columbia Saturday morning to help that province battle some terrible blazes around Kamloops and Kelowna.

“I'm expecting it to be a lot hotter,” than Manitoba's fires, said Daniel “Buggy” Danielson, a crew leader from Cranberry Portage. “I think our guys are well-prepared It's a good learning opportunity for our crew.”

Danielson said the terrain will be much steeper and rougher in British Columbia, and there won't be as much chance to use water because there's not the same plethora of lakes and streams found in Manitoba. Firefighters might end up doing more hand-tooling, like digging fire breaks, he said.

Danielson said his four-man crew is trained to national standards, just like all forest fire fighters, and that includes physical fitness requirements that will ensure they can work flat out for long periods in intensely hot, humid and dangerous



Firefighters from around the province file on board a Calm Air plane that will take them to help fight forest fires near Kelowna. (FPNS)

conditions.

Manitoba has had a few fires this summer so far, which gives the province lots of manpower to send to neighbouring provinces who aren't so lucky. Manitoba has roughly 195 firefighters on the job this summer and plenty are staying home in case conditions worsen.

“It's the neighbourly thing to do,” said Conservation Minister Stan Struthers. “When we're asked, we take part in a Canadian effort.”

Firefighter Sarah Woods, the only female among the 40 firefighters, is heading back to her home province of British Columbia after signing on to fight fires in northern Manitoba this summer. She is a rookie — the BC fires will be her first time on the job. But she's not feeling any anxiety

about the next few weeks, or about being the only woman on Manitoba's crew.

“It's no big deal,” shrugged Woods. “It's what I'm used to.”

The crews are expecting to be gone for at least two weeks.

Manitoba is paying the wages of the 40 firefighters while they're in B.C., but the province will be reimbursed for those costs through a national program.

Alyson Couch of the B.C. Forest Service said the Manitoba firefighters would be joined Saturday by 20 people from Saskatchewan. Ontario will add 150 fire specialists on Monday to bolster an Alberta team that showed up Friday.

» See 'High fire danger' — Page A4

Truancy traced to poor parenting

BY ALLISON DOWD

For some, it's an act of rebellion or the backsliding result of substance abuse. For others, it's the daily responsibilities of a regular job or parenting a small child.

But more often than not, a student's reasons for skipping school in Brandon has a lot more to do with the choices of their parent or parents than it does their own, says an attendance officer with the city's school division.

A provincial study on truancy in Manitoba, commissioned internally by the Education Department earlier this year and released recently to the public, suggested that students skipping school do so in the face of circumstances like a lack of suitable transportation, the responsibility of taking care of young kids or holding down jobs to support either their families or themselves.

However, truancy officer Sandra Pilling says “95 per cent” of her cases in Brandon can be directly linked back to the ignorance or negligence of a parent or guardian — intentional or otherwise — in the students' early years.

“A lot of our younger families where children are not coming to

school on time, it's because they stay up late at night due to the structure of the home. A lot of these young kids like being in school but don't attend because (in the morning), the parents are all sleeping,” she told the Sun yesterday.

In other cases, families are on social assistance and simply do not have the resources to bundle up smaller children and transport their school-aged children in cold weather, she said.

But students who struggle with chronic absenteeism in their senior years have, almost always, adopted the behaviour after years of being kept out of class by their parents' actions.

“With the younger kids that are not attending, not attending, not attending ... well, of course, when they start to get into Grade 7 or 8, then the educational gaps take effect. It's hard for the kids to come to school because they've got this pattern, they've never attended and they've missed too much. Academically, they can't do the grade-level work that they are expected to do. It's just this vicious circle.”

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