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## Residents make plea for area museum

North Kildonan

East Kildonan

BY JOLIE TOEWS

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Two area residents are calling on the city to build a museum east of the Red River to help ensure the history of the area can be properly preserved and displayed.

Jim Smith of North Kildonan and Sam Hrushovetz of East Kildonan submitted a proposal for a local museum to the East Kildonan-Transcona community committee earlier this month.

The two men claim that while other communities throughout Winnipeg have city-funded museums, there is nothing similar in Elmwood, East Kildonan or North Kildonan.

"It's probably the least-known area to the general public. Basically, most parts of Winnipeg have their own historical societies or museums. In this area, there's nothing. That's one of the biggest reasons why it's not well known," Smith said.

That's a shame, said Smith, who has spent the past seven years researching the area's rich past dating back to the early 19th century when the first settlers arrived.

Smith estimates he has spent hundreds of hours at the City of Winnipeg Archives and various libraries during the past several years, reading through old council books prior to the Unicity amalgamation in 1972, recording notes and photocopying thousands of newspaper articles on local issues.

See REQUEST on page 2



Photo by Jolie Toews

North Kildonan resident Jim Smith has spent the past several years researching the area's history and has 60 binders of notes and old newspaper articles that he wants to preserve in a local museum one day.

# Request for museum referred to city board

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The proof of Smith's work can be seen in the 60 or so five-inch binders filled with pages of notes and photocopied articles inside his home.

A fraction of that work can be found on the Miles Macdonell Collegiate Alumni

Association's website by clicking on the history link. The site includes dozens of newspaper articles on local history, including the 1950 Red River flood and the opening of the Disraeli Bridge 50 years ago.

"When you start getting into something, you just keep getting more and more. I like history. Period," said Smith, adding he was surprised to learn about a drive-in theatre that operated in the 1950s near the Curtis Gordon Motor Hotel and an oil refinery in East Kildonan in the '30s.

Hrushovetz, who practiced medicine in East Kildonan for 25 years before retiring as a family physician in 1999, said he hopes his community will have a museum to call its own.

"I think it's important to record the names of the farmers that did market gardening in the area at that time. I would like to see their names preserved," said Hrushovetz, 82, whose father farmed in the area decades ago.

"If we can budget and support a Canadian museum of human rights for several hundreds of millions, surely we can have financial support for a local museum to collect artifacts and historical informa-

tion from residents and families who have lived in the area and who may still be alive — priceless material that eventually would be lost," Hrushovetz wrote in a recent email addressed to local politicians.

The community committee referred the museum request to the city's museums board for comment on its feasibility and potential sites.

Smith and Hrushovetz said they would like to see a city-owned building at 755 Henderson Hwy. that is currently for sale converted into a museum.

Wendy Molnar, the museum board's coordinator, confirmed there weren't any city-funded museums in Elmwood, East Kildonan or North Kildonan.

"I think if a community has the will to do the hard work it takes to start the museum, I think that's a very laudable and important community service," Molnar said.

Smith, vice-chair of Miles Mac's alumni association, said he thinks a museum filled with items and articles from the area's past will help youth gain a better understanding of the place in which they live.

"If you don't understand the past, how can you understand the present?"