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A century of memories

Eastview Place residents Nettie Neufeld (left) and Katie Krahn celebrated their 100th birthdays together last week. For the full story, see Pg. 10.

PHOTO BY LORI PENNER/VOICE

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Altona MCC donating Jan. 29 sales to Pregnancy Care Centre

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Pembina Valley Pregnancy Care Centre (PVPCC) is teaming up with the Altona MCC Gift & Thrift Store next week to raise both funds and awareness for their work in the community.

MCC has committed to donate all sales they make on Wednesday, Jan. 29 to the PVPCC.

"This is a new initiative for us," explains store manager David Rempel. "We actually have five different local charities, organizations, or ministries that we support here on a quarterly basis where we have a certain number of funds that we forward to these places."

"This year the board decided that they wanted to do something extra on top of that by designating one day where all the proceeds would go to a particular organization ... giving them more exposure and also showing the connection between Altona MCC thrift and, in this case, the Pembina Valley Pregnancy Care Centre."

The PVPCC day next week will be

followed by similar days dedicated to Genesis House (March 19), Altona Youth for Christ (May 14), the Rhineland and Area Food Bank (Sept. 17), and Adult and Teen Challenge (Nov. 5).

Rempel notes this doesn't take the place of the quarterly donations each of these non-profits will receive from the thrift shop—they will still receive that on top of whatever is raised from these respective days.

"We've had long-standing support [of these agencies]. But the reality is that a lot of people just don't know about the support that we give to these different organizations," he said, noting MCC is most known for its global relief efforts. "We wanted to let the community know this is something we are doing and we want to shine a spotlight on these organizations as well."

PVPCC executive director Linda Marek says that they'll have volunteers on hand at the store that day to help out and answer any questions people may have about the programs and services they offer to families ex-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Altona MCC thrift shop manager David Rempel with Pembina Valley Pregnancy Care Centre executive director Linda Marek. On Wednesday, Jan. 29, all sales at the store will go to support PVPCC's programming.

periencing pregnancy.

"We have been blessed by the generosity of Altona MCC, and we are so glad they asked us to be a part of this special event," she says, noting that while the financial contribution will most certainly be a blessing, the awareness-raising potential is also an amazing opportunity.

"We are always grateful when people spread the word ... because you never know who might need our help," she says. "It might not be you

but a friend or family member or colleague ... if you know about us and can help someone in need, point them in the right direction, that's great. To have that awareness in the community is really important."

From its offices in Winkler, Morden, and Altona, the PVPCC provides free, confidential support to anyone impacted by pregnancy, whether it be planned or unexpected.

Continued on page 5

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“Please stay home”

Blizzard conditions wreak havoc on local highways

By Lorne Stelmach

The blizzard that swept into southern Manitoba last Friday had a bigger impact than many other winter storms in recent memory.

It led to a rare provincial emergency alert that shut down highways across southern Manitoba, with police services and emergency personnel stretched to the limit in responding to multiple serious accidents, including a number involving multiple vehicles.

It was all a result of an Alberta Clipper that even led to local emergency services setting up physical barriers to try to keep motorists off closed local highways.

The day saw winds gusting up to 100 kph, and there were not only nu-

merous multiple vehicle accidents but power outages as well.

It was followed by another wintry day Monday that saw extreme cold warnings with wind chill values that were in the -44 to -50 range as bitterly cold Arctic air remained over the region.

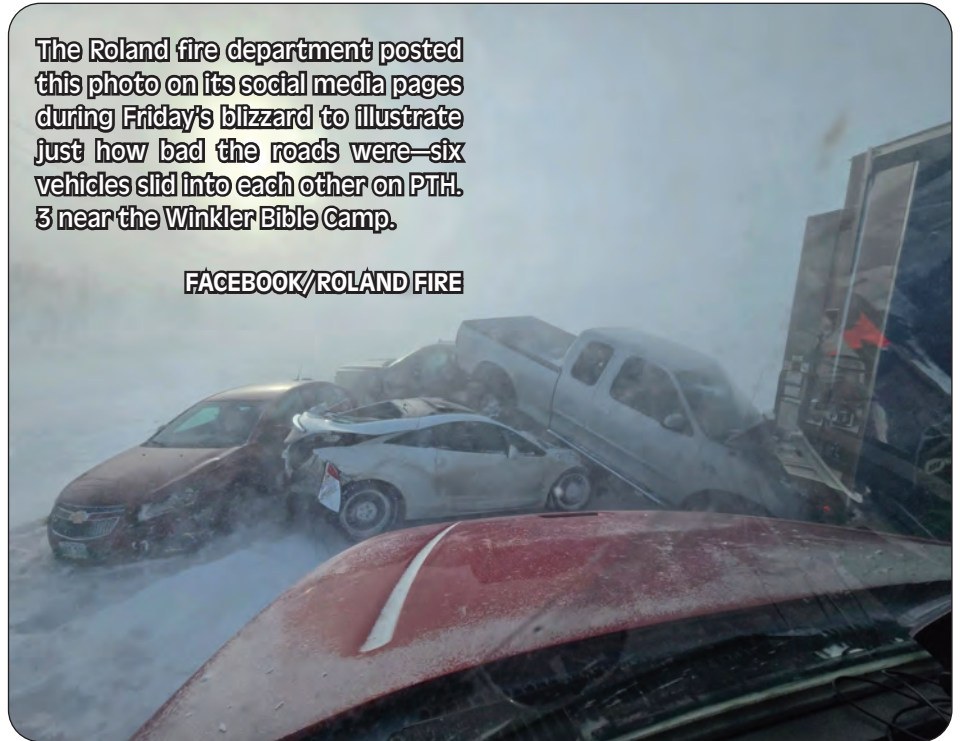
The high number of accidents across the entire region Friday included a six-vehicle collision six miles south of PTH 23 on PTH 3 near the Winkler Bible Camp.

A post at the time on social media by Roland Fire noted highway conditions were “deplorable” and urged people to “please stay home” as it dealt with multiple vehicles in the ditch and stuck on the road.

At nearly the same time, another incident involved a vehicle hitting a semi-trailer that had jackknifed across PTH 30 about a mile south of PTH 14.

There were then reports of many

Continued on page 5



The Roland fire department posted this photo on its social media pages during Friday's blizzard to illustrate just how bad the roads were—six vehicles slid into each other on PTH 3 near the Winkler Bible Camp.

FACEBOOK/ROLAND FIRE

Winkler launches new accessibility action plan

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The City of Winkler has updated its Accessibility Plan to take it through the next two years.

A public survey last fall helped identify some of the areas of need in the community, shares assistant city manager and Winkler accessibility coordinator Wendy Klassen.

“A lot of the things [identified] were things that we continuously try to improve, like facility accessibility—there’s some buildings that lack ramps, elevators, automatic doors ... as well as things like sidewalks and streets—uneven sidewalks provide a barrier for people that have mobility issues.

“Those are the kinds of things that we continue to work on,” Klassen said, “that we continue to improve,

but it is good to re-hear them.”

The survey garnered results from 155 people who, in many cases, either live with mobility challenges themselves or are friends or family of someone who does.

And while some of the issues that came up are ones the city is well aware of and working on addressing, a few new things were brought up as well. For example, the lack of adult-sized changing stations in public restrooms, making it difficult for families with older children or adults requiring assistance to make full use of the facilities.

“It was something we’d never thought of,” Klassen said, noting it came up in multiple survey responses. “That reminded us of the impor-

Continued on page 4

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Loreena McKinnett to be inducted into Cdn. Music Hall of Fame

By Lorne Stelmach

A globally acclaimed musician born and raised in Morden is receiving yet another honour.

It was announced last week that Loreena McKinnett will be inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame in recognition of her “astounding contributions to Canada’s music history.”

Now long based in Stratford, Ontario, McKinnett said she was surprised and humbled by the honour.

“You kind of go through a range of things, particularly when one considers the other people who are being inducted this year as well as the ones in the past ... it’s a pretty storied and iconic bunch. I would never have considered myself in their company.

“I am extremely honoured to be acknowledged in this way. It has been and continues to be a fascinating, enriching, and at times challenging journey,” McKinnett continued. “I am now humbled to find myself in the company of all the other artists who’ve been inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame, and I’m most grateful for the enjoyment and enrichment I’ve experienced through their creative work.”

She added seeing how there is such a diverse group of esteemed musicians in the hall of fame says something about Canadian music.

“Music has been a very strong part of the Canadian fabric ... certainly there in Manitoba, certainly there in that region [of Morden and Winkler].

“I do think Canada is pretty prominent in this way,” said McKinnett. “When I think back on my formative years in Morden, there was just mu-

sic all the time everywhere ... it just seemed like it was a very constant part of our fabric.”

A May 15 ceremony will officially induct McKinnett along with Dan Hill, Ginette Reno, Glass Tiger, and Sum 41.

McKinnett is a rarity in popular music: a self-managed, self-produced artist who owns her own record label and mounts her own tours.

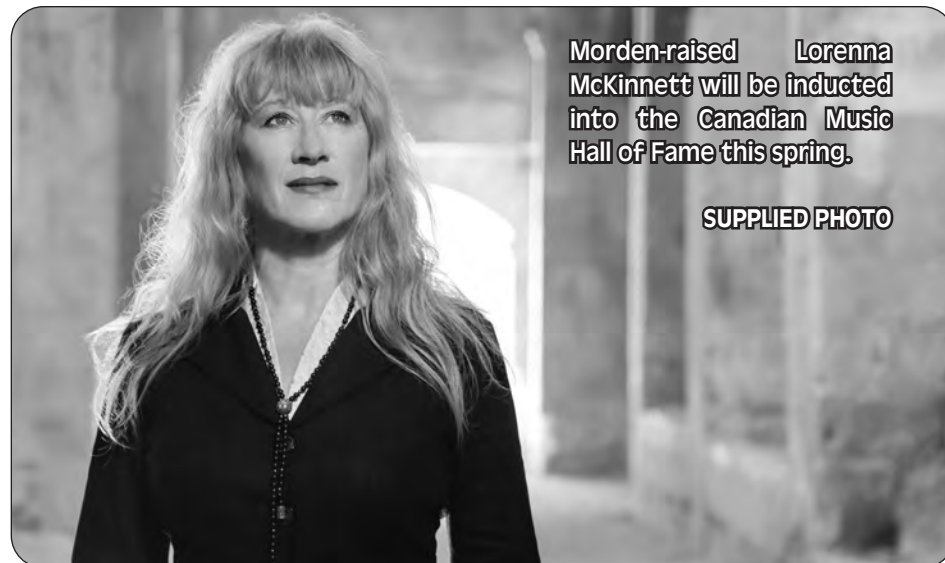
She has sold more than 14 million albums worldwide with music that crosses stylistic and cultural boundaries. Her songs, which combine elements of pop, folk and world beat styles, has often been dubbed “eclectic Celtic.”

McKinnett’s extensive catalogue includes eight studio recordings, three seasonal recordings, seven live recordings, one field recording, four compilations, a live in-concert DVD, and two DVD documentaries. Available in more than 40 countries, they have garnered critical acclaim worldwide and gold, platinum and multi-platinum awards in 15 countries across four continents.

And yet, growing up in Morden, McKinnett would not have imagined her life’s journey taking her into music.

“I wanted to be a veterinarian. I never aspired to have a career in music, and I still maintain that I’ve got the internal disposition of a vet,” she shared.

“Part of it is the way I’ve run my career and undertaken my creations, being so interested in the history of the Celts and travelling and research and then spinning that back into my music,” McKinnett said. “When I look



Morden-raised Loreena McKinnett will be inducted into the Canadian Music Hall of Fame this spring.

SUPPLIED PHOTO

back, it looks to me like kind of an act of musical travel writing.”

She started singing in small clubs in Winnipeg and then at the Winnipeg Folk Festival. She eventually made her first recording with money borrowed from her parents.

“It was \$10,000 they had saved for my veterinarian studies, and I asked if I could borrow it to make my first recording ... I’m not sure I would have,” she recalled with a laugh.

Then based in Stratford, she spent one week recording in a barn in Elora and generated 30 cassettes.

“And I went to the St. Lawrence market in Toronto and busked at the market,” said McKinnett, who gradually kept building her audience, doing a variety of small concerts and all the while maintaining her independence.

“There was an eco-system, but there was also a business model whereby you could make a decent living,” she said, suggesting the music business was the first industry to really be hit hard by the unregulated tech companies and online services and sharing sites. “If I were to start now, there’s absolutely no way that it could be built to the height and degree that it has.”

She touched on the harmful impact of social media, especially on youth and the impact on democracy, but she especially lamented the increasing loss of music programs for many youth.

“I feel immensely grateful that I grew up in that community and those people who nurtured that, who participated ... it just was there, and people loved it,” said McKinnett, who recalled having a music teacher who required her students to also participate in a choir.

Although she has largely stepped back from her musical career in recent years, she has continued to do a number of smaller tours. Her recent projects include putting together a Christmas performance called Under The Winter’s Moon with a Celtic band called The Bookends, and she hinted at perhaps touring again in 2026.

“I’m hugely blessed to have some amazing musicians to work with that just make it a pleasure every night,” McKinnett noted. “I’m just trying to find other things that if we’re not out doing international touring that there are things that we can do on a smaller and more local level.”

> ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN, FROM PG. 3

tance of doing surveys and asking the community for their input, because we wouldn’t necessarily think of that.”

Forty per cent of respondents noted that they or someone they knew had found themselves unable to participate in a municipal program or activity due to the venue or surroundings being inaccessible.

“It’s certainly not what you want to hear,” Klassen ac-

knowledged. “Definitely we would like to see that number come down, because we do try hard to make sure that our facilities and our programs and everything are something that everyone can participate in.”

The new action plan for 2025-2026 includes several initiatives designed to address a broad scope of barriers.

“We do continue to try to improve in all of those areas [of accessibility],” Klassen said, noting some projects are easier to tackle than others, given available funding and the age of some of the buildings in question.

“There’s things that are easier—like addressing our alarm systems for accessibility needs,” she said, explaining those upgrades will ensure people who are deaf or hard of hearing will be alerted with flashing lights in public spaces during an emergency when an audible alarm is sounding. “Something like that is a little more affordable, so that’s something we will be doing

sooner, or have already started doing.”

Similarly, increasing the amount of Braille signage for the visually impaired also continues to be a priority in city-owned buildings.

Other action plan items include ensuring the City of Winkler website is as accessible as possible for those using alternate ways of accessing it (using auditory readers, for example), the ongoing assessment of the accessibility of park washrooms (a wheelchair-accessible port-a-potty was installed in Winkler Park last year and more are being considered elsewhere), ensuring new city management staff have accessibility training to better identify the barriers that may exist in their respective departments, and the continued addressing of uneven sidewalks and road surfaces throughout the city.

“We’ll continue to work on these things to try and make sure that we’re improving things,” Klassen said.

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Warm Up and Ride voucher program launches in Morden

By Lorne Stelmach

A program that aims to provide transportation to those in need of the assistance launched in Morden last week.

Warm Up and Ride is being offered as a pilot project by the 500 Stephen Community Centre with the support of a \$10,000 grant from the Morden Area Foundation.

The initiative will work in partnership with Many Hands Resource Centre and Regional Connections to have those organizations select clients they see as being in need of the program.

"It's a voucher ticket system for people who are connected with Many Hands and Regional Connections," explained Jenna Warkentine, executive director of 500 Stephen, noting

> BLIZZARD, FROM PG. 3

drivers disregarding the fact highways were closed, with Miami Fire and Rescue offering this reminder to motorists thinking of braving the roads:

"May we remind you that if caught you can be fined for travelling on closed roads. Long story short, it's not worth it! Keep yourself as well as other motorists safe, as well as your first responders!"

Possible fines include \$298 for light vehicle drivers and \$672 for heavy vehicle drivers who drive on closed roads and \$672 for persons who instruct light vehicle drivers to use a closed road and \$1,296 for heavy vehicle operators who instruct their drivers to use a closed road.

For the most serious incidents, maximum fines of up to \$5,000 for drivers of heavy vehicles and up to \$2,000 for drivers of light vehicles are possible. Convicted drivers also receive two demerit points.

A vast majority of local school divisions cancelled classes both Friday and Monday, but one exception on Friday was Western School Division, where schools remained open but rural school bus service was cancelled.

"We're always looking at weather conditions, road conditions ... seeing what's going on in other divisions as well," said superintendent Stephen Ross, who noted there can be such varying conditions that also develop or change rapidly or unexpectedly.

"I think, clearly, with Discovery Trails being opened up now and it being in a wide open area, it's a very different situation," he added. "I think we're certainly reflecting on Friday, and part of considering our practices going ahead is understanding that maybe before Discovery Trails had

they have worked closely on this with those agencies as well as the Morden Handivan and Morden Taxi Service. "The staff from those organizations will decide if the person is eligible for a ticket, and then they'll be able to take taxis within Morden limits for free."

The tickets will be for one-time use, so an individual would need two to go to the food bank and back home, for example.

The initial program will run for however long is possible until the funding and vouchers run out.

"We're looking at about 800 tickets to give out during the next few months," Warkentine estimated.

She senses that there is a significant need for something like this in Morden.

opened, we could operate in town with sheltered schools without too many difficulties, but maybe that's not the case with Discovery Trails ... we may have to rethink it."

"It really, in many respects, depends on the circumstances," noted Garden Valley School Division superintendent Dan Ward on the decision to close schools. He explained they look at a combination of factors including both current conditions and the forecast, and they aim to make a decision by about 6:45 a.m. In this area though, at that time, conditions were actually still good Friday morning.

"Based on what was happening kind of northward, we made the pre-emptive decision to close schools and not to run buses," said Ward. "It's not an exact science. It's sometimes difficult. We have spotters throughout the school division ... and we do our very best to have all those reports assessed by 6:30."

As the brutal cold continues to grip southern Manitoba, Environment Canada offers some general guidelines to keep in mind when there are extreme weather or cold warnings, including how the risks are greater for young children, older adults, people with chronic illnesses, people working outdoors and those without proper shelter.

Frostbite can develop within minutes on exposed skin, especially with wind chill, and if it's too cold for you to stay outside, it's too cold for your pet to stay outside, they remind Manitobans.

And, of course, people are urged to keep emergency supplies in their vehicles, such as extra blankets and jumper cables.

"We feel like we hear a lot of people who need it, so this will give us a good sense of what the actual need is and what the demographic is that needs it the most," said Warkentine.

"We are asking for a bit of information just to give us a sense of what is the actual need. Do people need it to get to doctor's appointments, or do they need it for groceries? Are they coming from certain areas of the city ... how would they use it?"

She suggested a lot of people might be surprised to know how many people are in need of transportation assistance in the community.

"We assume that in southern Manitoba everybody has a vehicle," said Warkentine, noting winter is likely an ideal time of year to test it out. "Because we're working with Regional

Connections, we know there's a lot of newcomers who might not be used to this kind of weather who we see walking everywhere.

"We feel like the organizations we're working with, they know their participants the best, and they should have the right to determine who they feel need it," she added. "That being said, we are having a few on hand for anyone who just comes into the centre who might just need it."

She is uncertain if this could be a step towards establishing a permanent program in the community, but she is hopeful and optimistic.

"Who knows who might step up to help with this? It would be nice if we could at least run this every year as a little project to give back to the community."

> PVPCC, FROM PG. 2

They provide things like pregnancy tests, mom and baby items, parenting support, various grief support groups (including Steps in Hope for those grieving a miscarriage or stillbirth, the next session of which begins Feb. 11), prenatal learning sessions, access to a learning library, and more.

"There's never a charge for anyone

to reach out for help," Marek stresses.

The need for their services has grown in each of the last several years.

"Last year we saw about 160 different people. The year before that was 125, and the year before that was about 100," Marek says.

You can learn more by stopping by the Altona MCC next week Wednesday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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• DON'T MIND THE MESS

A century of wisdom and wit

Reaching the grand age of 100 is like becoming a member of an exclusive club—one that requires surviving everything life throws at you for an entire century.

It's not as rare as it used to be. As of July 1, 2024, there were 11,672 centenarians in Canada. This is the fastest growing age group in the country.

I recently had the honour of interviewing two of them. They were celebrating with friends, family and staff at the local



By Lori Penner

personal care home. They wore silly birthday hats and played with big purple balloons declaring, "Happy 100th"

These lovely ladies clapped and sang along, swaying in their wheelchairs as a group of local musicians played round after round of their favourite hymns and folk songs—the last century produced a lot of them.

They nibbled on cake, and smiled like little girls, savouring every bite. Their faces were like roadmaps, every line and wrinkle revealing stories of good and bad times, smiles and frowns. Their soft white hair was like a crown, and the twinkle never left their eyes. Family members surrounded them, delighted to have mom/grandma in their midst for yet another year.

When the festivities were over, I interviewed these sweet old girls, eager to hear their nostalgic tales. This long celebration and all that sugar had

made them a little sleepy, but they were happy to chat with me. I asked them their secret to a long life, and one of them simply said, "You just work hard and do the best you can."

The other lady said it was about finding the joy in everything.

There was no magic pill, special diet or family gene that got them here, with the cake and balloons. It was time and destiny, and as one of them simply noted, "God."

Aside from a few physical setbacks, they told me they didn't feel 100. They greeted the morning the same way. What made it special was the people who were celebrating with them.

Turning 100 is a mix of wisdom, humor, and a bit of marvel at the sheer audacity of time and all the changes it brings. These folks have lived through two world wars, the invention of the internet, and multiple fashion disas-

Continued on page 7

Letters

MORDEN CHEER SAYS THANKS

As the holiday season is behind us for another year, it is a great time to sit down and reflect on the season and recognize how much our community steps up to help one another out.

It may seem redundant to continually voice, but year after year we are truly overwhelmed by the generosity and support provided to ensure Christmas Cheer can continue to

operate. It invokes a deep sense of pride to call this place home.

On behalf of the Morden Christmas Cheer Board we would like to extend a massive thank you to everyone for making our 2024 season so successful! Through your generosity and community support we were able to deliver 383 hampers and provide a gift to open for 526 children (infant to 18 years old).

Thank you to everyone who organized events, volunteered their

time, promoted events in support of Morden Christmas Cheer, attended fundraising events, and/or donated items and money to go directly into filling the hampers.

It truly takes a community, and we can't express the amount of gratitude we have towards this wonderful community of ours.

Morden Christmas Cheer Board

All columns and letters published on our Get Heard pages are the personal opinions of the submitting writers. They are not objective news articles, nor are they necessarily the viewpoint of the Voice.

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View the Voice online at www.winklermordenvoice.ca or altonavoice.ca

Winkler Cornhole League begins its first season

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The bean bags have been flying at J.R. Walkof School in Winkler Monday nights.

The new Winkler Cornhole league launched its 12-week season Jan. 13 with 21 people coming out to chase away the winter blues with the popular summer pastime.

Kevin Driedger has taken the lead on getting the program up and running. So far as he knows, it's the first time the Pembina Valley has had an organized cornhole competition league.

"I've been playing with my buddies for about a year and a half now, and I've played in some other tournaments in St. Anne's and Winnipeg as well," he shares. "I figured it was something that I'd like to see here, and sometimes when you want to see something, then you've got to do it yourself. So I took the op-

portunity and went ahead with it, and we'll see where it goes."

Driedger was pleased with the couple dozen people who have come out to play each week so far, but notes they have room and equipment for twice that, so he encourages anyone pondering giving the sport a try to come on out.

"We can definitely handle more people, but if there's less some nights it doesn't matter—having it fluctuate isn't a big deal," he says, explaining people don't need to sign up with a partner since the scoring system they're using accommodates individual players.

You can register for the whole season for \$100 or pay \$10 to drop-in on any given night. The league is open to anyone age 13 and up.

Cornhole is a sport that accommodates people of all ages and skill levels, Driedger says, noting the poten-

"AS LONG AS YOU CAN PHYSICALLY THROW A BAG ABOUT 30 FEET, THEN YOU'RE GOOD TO GO."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Winkler Cornhole League runs Monday nights at J.R. Walkof School.

tial competitiveness is what drew him to it, "but also how relaxed it is ... anyone can do it, whether you're young or old. As long as you can physically throw a bag about 30 feet, then you're good to go."

And it's a great way to get out of the house during these long winter nights and meet other people, he adds.

"Summer is busy for everyone, and so for me, I like the opportunity to take it to the cold winter months, bring it indoors," he says on the decision to make this a winter league. "It works very well to play indoors."

The first night saw a good mix of experienced players and newcomers.

"I think as the sport grows in town, people will all escalate and get better as well," Driedger says. "Come down,

check it out, and see what you think."

Competition nights for the remainder of the season are Jan. 27, Feb. 10 and 24th, March 3, 10th, 17th, and 24th, and April 7 and 14th. The season will wrap up April 28 with a tournament.

Check-in is at 6:30 p.m. in the J.R. Walkof School gymnasium (800 Southview Dr.). The bags fly starting at 7 p.m.

Boards and bags are provided, but you're also welcome to bring your own ACO/ACL approved bags if you prefer.

Once the league wraps in April, the plan is to hold a few tournaments through the summer ahead of starting up again weekly next fall/winter.

Man dead after police shooting in Dominion City

By Voice staff

The Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba (IIU) is investigating after a man was killed by police in Dominion City last week.

On Jan. 14, around 8:30 a.m., Morris RCMP received a request for a wellness call at a residence in the small Municipality of Emerson-Franklin

community.

Police report that the first officer to arrive on the scene was met by a male who advanced towards them with a metal object in his hand.

The officer ordered the man several times to drop the item, but he continued to advance. The officer then discharged their service firearm.

The officer did CPR on the man until

paramedics, who were staged nearby, were able to take over.

The 33-year-old man was airlifted to hospital in critical condition. He later succumbed to his injuries.

The officer was uninjured.

Upon receiving notification from RCMP of the incident, a team of IIU investigators was immediately deployed.

Because a fatality is involved, the IIU will request the Manitoba Police Commission appoint a civilian monitor for the investigation.

Witnesses or individuals who have information or video footage that may assist this investigation are asked to contact the IIU toll free at 1-844-667-6060.

> PENNER, FROM PG. 6

ters. They've seen the world change in ways that most of us can't even imagine. When they were born, telephones had rotary dials, and now we have smartphones that can make our morning coffee. When they were born, movies were silent, there was no bubble gum or sliced bread, or even pop-up toasters.

They come from an era where milk was delivered to your doorstep, and a movie ticket cost a dime.

There's something incredibly charming about how centenarians view the world. They've seen it all,

and they've learned to take life with a grain of salt and a hearty laugh. They know that most things we fret about are fleeting. Lost your phone? They once survived without even having one. Missed a bus? They've probably hitchhiked, rode a horse, or took a steam-driven train. Before Google, they had to learn how to do things by actually doing them.

Some of their memories had faded—the good and the bad. But they were here, now, and on that day, all was right with the world. They could smile because they had every-

thing they ever really needed: food, family and fun. And maybe we can

all learn something from that.

Letter policy

The Voice welcomes letters from readers on local and regional issues and concerns.

Please keep your letters short (excessively long letters are less likely to be published), on-topic, and respectful.

The Voice reserves the right to edit, condense, or reject any submission.

Please include your full name, address, and phone number for verification purposes. Your name and city will be published with your letter. We do not print anonymous letters.

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Keep being you **Love your ears**

Access CU closing Miami, Gretna, and Lowe Farm branches

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Access Credit Union is shutting down branches in five small communities in southern Manitoba this spring and fall.

As of May 22, the Gretna, Lowe Farm, Miami, and Birds Hill branches will all close and consolidate with the nearest larger Access CU location (Altona, Morris, Morden, and 2526 Main St., Winnipeg, respectively). On Sept. 17, the Lundar branch will also close, consolidating with the branch in Eriksdale.

Access CEO and president Larry Davey says this move is intended to optimize resources to provide better service to members and adapt to the evolving banking landscape.

"It's certainly something we don't take lightly," he said. "But, as we've seen over the past number of years, members continue to gravitate to more convenient options along the electronic lines ... members are just visiting the branches far less than they used to."

In fact, Davey estimates less than five per cent of transactions at Access take place in person at its branches. The vast majority of members are accessing most services through mobile apps, online banking, or phone banking.

"We analyze this ongoing," Davey explained. "We are also able to understand the behaviour patterns of members as to where they're utilizing their debit cards ... and in most situations

members are travelling to the larger communities where we have branches."

The Gretna and Lowe Farm branches, for example, are only about 10 minutes away from the Altona and Morris branches they'll be consolidating with, he pointed out.

As well, an increasing number of staff at these smaller branches do not live in the communities they work in, Davey noted.

"So they're travelling, and there's situations where weather stops them from being able to go in, and that has an impact on member service as well," he said, pointing out the locations with just a handful of employees also come with security concerns for staff. "We're trying to consider all of these things."

All affected staff—these branches have about two to four employees each—will be offered employment elsewhere within the Access CU network.

"Nobody's losing their jobs," Davey stressed. "They're all being moved to other positions within the organization."

Access CU members affected by these closures will have the same account number at their new branches.

Davey encourages anyone uncertain about making the most of the digital banking services available to stop by their local branch to learn how to use them.

Continued on page 9

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Morden Horticultural Soc. hosting monthly educational meetings

Next talk Jan. 27 is on natural plant dyes for textiles

By Lorne Stelmach

The Morden Horticultural Society has existed in various shapes and forms for almost a century, and it is in the midst of another rebirth.

The community organization has been gaining momentum again in part due to the increasing interest in getting back to more natural and native plants, particularly those that attract pollinators.

"I think if all of us, in our yards and gardens, make it better for the birds and the bees and the butterflies, it should have a positive communal impact," said society board chair Carol Toews.

The Morden and District Horticultural Society has a long history that goes back to when it was established in 1916.

Its members have not only won numerous awards and trophies over the years locally and provincially for their vegetables, fruits, and flowers, but also advocated for the preservation of natural areas in the region, flood control of Dead Horse Creek, planting of boulevard trees, and overall beautification of the community.

The latest iteration of the organization was kick-started when a number of people were invited to sit on a committee directing Morden's involvement in the Communities in Bloom program, which honours communities for their beautification efforts.

"Since about 2022, I think we've been gathering

steam again after COVID," said Toews. "But the horticultural society has a long history here—it's been here a long time, and it's been sort of reimagined and reborn in that time."

It would seem to be a good fit for Morden, given how it is known for things like its trees, green spaces, and gardens.

"The goals were to focus on ways to make the area more beautiful and a better place to live, and that's absolutely the kind of thing that Morden is known for," Toews said.

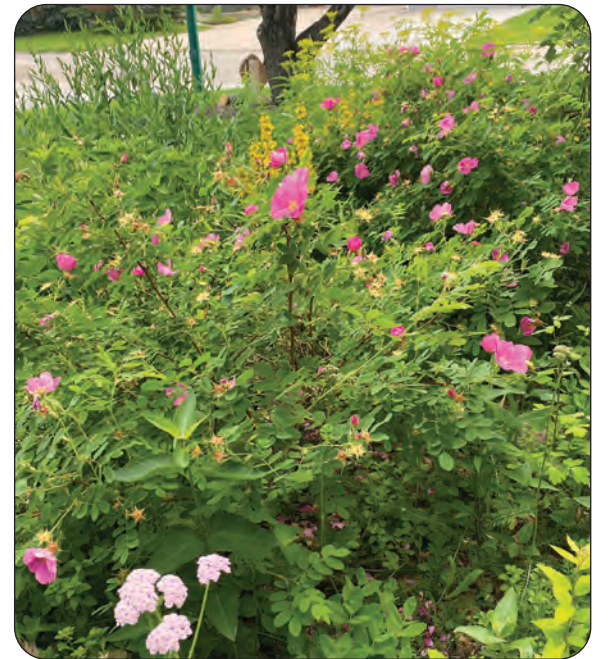
"And that's not very different from what we're saying now, which is that we want to make things more beautiful, make Morden more sustainable and also more pollinator friendly," she said. "I think that's been a big focus in the last while. A lot of us are interested in the native prairie plants and sustainable gardening. I think that's all a pretty important focus."

The society meets regularly on the last Tuesday of the month at the 500 Stephen community centre. The gatherings offer a variety of speakers on different topics such as types of plants, naturescaping, and wildflowers.

The next meeting takes place on Monday, Jan. 27 at 7 p.m. featuring presenter Jennifer De Groot speaking to the topic of natural plant dyes for textiles.

Toews noted the society also has a few ongoing projects, such as helping with maintenance and weeding at Confederation Park downtown and helping with the City of Morden's planters.

"Our other project that's really been in the last two years has been at Tabor Home. We have been involved there in assisting Tabor Home with the maintenance of their gardens," said Toews, who is a past employ-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The Morden Horticultural Society meets the last Tuesday of the month to hear from a variety of speakers on topics ranging from types of plants to naturescaping.

ee there. "A good thing about that was that we attracted some people who previously had not been involved in the horticultural society."

Anyone who is interested in learning more and getting involved with the Morden and District Horticultural Society can connect with them through its Facebook page.

> ACCESS BRANCH CLOSURES, FROM PG. 8

"We've really been asking staff to spend the time with members to outline the convenience and the availability of technology," he said.

Davey stressed these five communities are still an important part of the Access service area. While a physical branch may no longer be present, Access intends to continue to support community initiatives and offer programming there.

"It's one of our values that the credit union is helping our communities and investing in our communities," he said. "Those communities where we have members, we will continue to support those communities in the ways we have in the past."

There are no other branches cur-

rently slated for closure, though Davey noted they are always assessing the efficiency of their network.

"We have considerations both on the consolidation side and on whether we should open branches in areas that we might not be located right now," he said. "That's something else we continue to look at but, again, what type of branch you open is dependent on how much people are going to use it."

Various mergers in recent years have made Access Credit Union the largest credit union in the province.

The closure of these five locations will bring its network to 47 branches across southern Manitoba.



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Celebrating a century

Eastview Place honours two residents' 100th birthdays

By Lori Penner

Eastview Place in Altona recently celebrated a special occasion: the 100th birthdays of two of its cherished residents, Katie Krahn and Nettie Neufeld. These remarkable women, born in 1925, have each lived a century filled with love, dedication, and resilience.

Both ladies were born in the middle of "The Roaring Twenties," which was known as a time of economic prosperity. Wages were increasing, and there was a growing demand for Canadian goods. Railways were still the preferred mode of transportation for long distances, but the popularity of private automobiles was increasing. Women's fashion was dominated by the "flapper" look, which included bobbed hair, hemlines above the knees, and silk stockings. It was the dawn of equality, as New Brunswick had its first female candidate for MP.

Krahn was born on New Year's Day, 1925, in Plum Coulee. Growing up in a large family, she learned the value of hard work early on. She completed her Grade 4 education and met her future husband, Benno Krahn, in the church choir. They were married on October 26, 1950, and had four children, three daughters and one son.

Krahn's life has been a story of hard work and devotion. Along with tending to her busy household, she worked at the CVO Oil Refinery, an egg hatchery, and the Altona Hospital sterilizing medical equipment.

Service to her family and faith has always been a priority for Krahn. She taught Sunday school, helped at MCC, and was active in her church's ladies' group. She also enjoyed canning, baking, sewing, and embroidery.

A good sense of humour wove it all together. When asked about her childhood interests, Krahn replied with a smile, "Everything messy."

Today, she has six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren and wishes for them to always remember how much she loves them.

Reflecting on her life, Krahn says she's had a good one, attributing her longevity to simply working hard.

"Work for the night is coming," she said, quoting a hymn. Her faith has been a guiding force, and she hopes her family will follow her example.

"That's very important to me," she emphasized.

Neufeld, born on Jan. 29, 1925, grew up on a farm in the Gretna/Halbstadt area with her four siblings.

She fondly recalls spending many happy days playing with the dogs and cats. Nettie completed her Grade 12 and went to Normal School in Winnipeg to train as a teacher.

She met a handsome young man named Abe Neufeld at Bible College, and they were married on Aug. 25, 1951, in Rosenfeld.

"I loved him very much," Neufeld said.

The couple had three children: one girl and two boys. After their kids grew older, Neufeld returned to teaching. Her husband was a pastor, and the family lived in various communities in B.C., Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.



PHOTOS BY LORI PENNER/VOICE

Eastview Place residents Katie Krahn (left) and Nettie Neufeld (right) last week celebrated their 100th birthdays. Krahn was born on Jan. 1, 1925 while Neufeld was born on Jan. 29.

"That was difficult sometimes," she recalled. "My husband was very busy and was away a lot."

Neufeld taught music in Saskatchewan and ESL in Steinbach. She was actively involved in church activities and conducted choirs. She is currently affiliated with the Altona Bergthaler Church, where her son is a pastor. She proudly notes, "I was a teacher, and my daughter was a teacher. My husband was a preacher, and our two sons are preachers."

Neufeld is surprised to have reached the age of 100 and attributes her long life to simply living well and enjoying herself. Teaching music was one of her passions.

"I loved singing and conducting," she shared.

Her children describe Neufeld as someone who always has a song in

her head and is quick to start singing it. Her philosophy of life is captured in one of her favorite songs: "Count your blessings."

"My faith is also very important to me. I want all my children and grandchildren to know Jesus," Neufeld said.

The celebration at Eastview Place was a heartfelt tribute to both of these centenarians, honouring their rich histories and the lives they've touched. There was singing, and there was cake. There were hugs and smiles, and memories shared.

Their stories are not just a reflection of the past century but also an inspiration to future generations. Their unwavering faith, commitment to family, and love for their communities serve as a testament to the remarkable impact one can have over a lifetime.

Warm up with music and community at TCE

By Lori Penner

This Saturday, Jan. 25, The Community Exchange in Altona invites everyone to enjoy a night of free music and camaraderie. The event kicks off at 6:45 p.m., perfectly timed to follow the monthly free community dinner.

"Basically, our mandate is to provide a fun and free event while showcasing the incredible musical talent in Altona," explains co-organizer Andrew Braun.

Now in its second year, these concerts have grown into a beloved tradition.

"We hosted three shows last year,

and they were a huge success," Braun shares. "Pairing the concerts with the community meals has allowed us to feature a variety of talents and draw in a great crowd."

This Saturday's lineup promises an eclectic mix of performances from The Milt Homely Experience, Maxine Penner, and Eyasu Binchebo.

The Milt Homely Experience, a Winnipeg-based trio, brings a dynamic blend of country, blues, and punk rock. With members hailing from rural Oklahoma, southern Manitoba, and Winnipeg's Transcona neighborhood, the band is known for turning life's challenges into raw and humor-

ous rock anthems that electrify audiences.

Maxine Penner, an Altona native, began her musical journey through piano lessons, choir performances, and church gatherings. With support from her community and family, she's spent the last five years refining her songwriting skills. Her earthy, folk-inspired melodies draw on themes of nature, love, and prayer, and she's preparing to release her debut album this spring.

Eyasu Binchebo, originally from Ethiopia, brings his soulful gospel music to the stage, reflecting his deep connection to his faith and commu-

nity.

"It's something to do when it's cold outside," says Braun of the concerts, which are supported by the Manitoba Arts Council. "And because it's free, no fundraising is required."

Braun also highlights the joy of discovering and showcasing local talent.

"We've had everyone from young kids to seasoned professionals take the stage. It's important to us that musicians are both recognized and compensated for their craft."

If you can't make it this weekend, another concert night is in the works for April featuring local youth bands.

Big hearts, warm hands

Elmwood Gr. 3 students spread generosity

By Lori Penner

At École Elmwood School in Altona, a Grade 3 class recently embraced the spirit of giving, turning lessons about human needs into heartfelt action for their community.

"We were learning about basic human needs," explained teacher Lori Dueck. "The kids realized that while everyone has a right to food and shelter, not everyone gets to enjoy those basics. That realization sparked a conversation about local organizations that help meet those needs."

The class delved into the work of organizations like the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) and the Share the Warmth program at The Community Exchange. Inspired to make a difference, the students devised a plan: a candy cane fundraiser held just before Christmas.

"People could donate a dollar for a candy cane or donate winter wear," Dueck shared. "We raised over \$300 and collected four bags full of jackets, ski pants, mittens, and toques."

The initiative was more than a charitable act, Dueck said. It was an opportunity for the students to apply their learning in a meaningful way. "We discussed what happens when people don't have access to clean water, food, or clothing. The students quickly grasped the importance of community support and were eager to contribute."

Last week, the class proudly delivered their donations in person to both organizations, making the experience even more memorable.

At the MCC Thrift Shop, the students handed over their contribution to manager Dave Rempel, who was deeply touched by the kids' generosity.

"This money makes a real difference. It's life-changing work you've done," he told the students. He went on to share a story from a recent visit to Uganda, where MCC supports families in need. "A young man received a goat from MCC, which cost about \$40. That one goat changed his life. He now has five goats and dreams of trading up to buy a cow and eventually a plow for farming. This will allow him to support a family."

"Your efforts are making a difference just like that," Rempel said, emphasizing the far-reaching impact of the group's contribution.

The class then visited The Community Exchange to deliver bags of winter wear for the Share the Warmth program. Director Paul Peters was thrilled by their thoughtfulness.

"It's wonderful that they thought of us. Giving back is so important, and this experience helps kids understand the power of generosity," he said. "When you're kind and generous, you're not only helping others but also feeling good yourself. It's a win-win."

This project left a lasting impression on the students.

"It makes me feel good to help people," said Vaughn Martonito. "I'm happy for those who need it most."

Zachary Peters added, "Helping others is a fun thing to do. I'd like to



PHOTO BY LORI PENNER/VOICE

École Elmwood School Gr. 3 students last week stopped by The Community Exchange (above) and the Altona MCC Thrift Store to hand over the donations they'd collected for programs supporting people in need both close to home and around the world.

do it again sometime."

For Dueck, the project was a powerful reminder of her students' compassion and insight.

"They have such big hearts," she said. "When we talked about generosity, the kids surprised me. They pointed out that people who've experienced need themselves often have the strongest desire to help others. Many of our students come from diverse backgrounds and understand what it's like to start fresh in a new place, sometimes without basics like a warm coat."

The fundraiser also highlighted the importance of connecting lessons in the classroom with real-world issues.

"We discussed how, if our needs are

met, we have an opportunity to help others," Dueck explained. "The students took that to heart and ran with it. They brainstormed ways to make an impact, and the candy cane fundraiser was their idea. It was wonderful to see them embrace it so fully."

What made the project even more special was the personal connection many of the students had to the cause.

"We have an increasingly diverse number of kids in our school, and many of them understand on a personal level what it's like to come to a new community and need support," said Dueck. "It's amazing to see how those experiences have shaped their empathy and drive to give back."

Uncertainties delay Morris supportive housing project

By Siobhan Maas

The open houses for the Red River supportive housing project scheduled to take place in Morris, Rosenort, and St. Jean Baptiste this week were postponed due to uncertainties between Canada-U.S. relations.

Unstable construction costs due to proposed potential tariffs by incoming President Donald Trump have led to construction companies implementing protective pricing, project organizers share.

As a result, "we were not ready to give numbers to the public," explained Chris Hamblin, deputy mayor for the Town of Morris and chair of the board leading the shared initiative between the RM of Montcalm, RM of Morris, and Town of Morris.

Although it was a "difficult decision to postpone the open houses, we want the public to

know where we are at," she said. "We are looking for a more stable environment in the U.S.-Canada situation."

Postponement allows a more realistic overview of the proposed housing to be attached to the existing arena and multiplex in Morris to be presented to the public rather than a project that is beyond the scope of fundraising and building cost potential, Hamblin explained. Waiting for more accurate building costs avoids the potential and unnecessary "frustration and upsetting" of community members, she said.

The planning committee will continue to "look at a number of things over the next few months," Hamblin said. "Only once Trump is in place and the Canadian system stabilizes will we be able to come back with more certain numbers."

"We are committed to bringing this supportive housing project to the area," she reiterated, "and hope to be able to share plans by early summer

when we have greater project cost assurance."

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arts & culture

'Northern Lights' exhibition on now at Morden gallery

By Lorne Stelmach

Hugh Conacher works in multiple disciplines including lighting design, new media technologies, and photography, and he has particularly worked in the theatre world, so it is not surprising his exhibit featured this month at the Pembina Hills Gallery in Morden brings all of these things into play.

Northern Lights features photographic work that captures the flow and movement of dancers in a way that Conacher likens it to the dancing of the aurora borealis.

"For me, just looking at it made me think of the northern lights," he said. "I've also photographed the northern lights, and the patterns of the dancers and the way that I captured them ... they are pretty similar, and it kind of surprised me actually."

Conacher's practice is based in live performance, and he has collaborated with musicians, choreographers, directors, visual artists, and dance and theatre companies throughout Canada and around the world.

His love of photography and extreme climates has taken him from the Arctic to the Antarctic in order to capture the changing beauty of these unique landscapes.

"I've been doing it for years, and I work mostly in live performance such as dance and opera and theatre," Conacher said. "Because I work in the business, I have lots of access to dancers and to theatres."

Conacher put the exhibit together during the pandemic when he was looking for something to do and unearthed some of these images he had previously taken.



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Hugh Conacher tries to capture the movement of dance with his work, which is on display now at the Pembina Hills Arts Council gallery in Morden.

"I took these pictures a long time ago, in 2007 actually," he said. "I was lighting a dance piece or actually two different dance pieces, and I thought how could I capture it?"

"I've been doing photographs of dance for years, but I've never really been satisfied with them because you don't really get a sense of movement from those dance photographs," he continued. "So I thought what could I do to actually get the viewer a real sense of what the movement of the piece is like, so I then came up with this idea of doing longer exposures and capturing these dancers."

The images vary in size from small pieces to those up to 35 feet long, and Conacher feels they all capture the flow and the progression of the movement.



"Each different size shows off the ideas in a different kind of way," he said. "In all cases, I've noticed that people like to sort of get in close and notice the details and then back away again. The different sizes allow you to present it in different kinds of ways as well, which is kind of fun."

Conacher is happy with the exhibit, and he sees it as perhaps having provided some inspiration for more work and similar ideas.

"I would love to go back and do

something like this again with some new material," he said.

"I have a thing for ice, like big ice," he added. "I've been to the Antarctic and done a bunch of stuff there, and this year I went to Alaska to Glacier Bay and spent a couple of weeks photographing icebergs and glaciers."

"What happens with me is I have all these ideas, and I take all these photographs and then usually they sit for a while and eventually I figure out what to do with them."

"I'VE PHOTOGRAPHED THE NORTHERN LIGHTS, AND THE PATTERNS OF THE DANCERS ... THEY ARE PRETTY SIMILAR."

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Winkler Arts and Culture adds vocal lessons to its programming roster

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Arts and Culture Centre on Park St. is being filled this new year not just with art for the eyes but music for the ears as well.

WAC has partnered with Radiant Voices Music Studio to begin offering voice lessons in a corner of the main gallery.

Executive director Jered Hildebrand says it's a big part of living up to their mission to celebrate all forms of creative expression.

"Most people know Winkler Arts and Culture for the gallery exhibits and visual arts classes we organize. But our mission has always included more than just what we can see—it's also about expressing ourselves and connecting with others."

Enter vocal teacher Emily Hildebrand, who has been working with students in Morden for the past five years and is now expanding into

Winkler and, in partnership with the Golden Prairie Arts Council, Carman as well.

"It's kind of just been something that I've done part-time, but I want to expand it," she said. "Now that's starting to happen."

The two Hildebrands knew each other through their former employment at Regional Connections Immigrant Services (Emily currently works part-time in the local school system).

"I randomly got an email from him one day about this, and it was perfect timing," she said, noting this is the first time she's teamed up with local art galleries on programming like this. "It's nice, because it wasn't necessarily something I'd expected to do."

"Music lessons kind of get pushed around to the back burner, often," she observed, but a public art gallery, being a neutral but welcoming space for everyone, is an ideal spot for rookie



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Student Sylvia Zacharias runs through some vocal exercises with Radiant Voices Music Studio teacher Emily Hildebrand at the Winkler Arts and Culture Centre last week.

singers and veterans alike to feel comfortable coming to develop their skills. Right now, Hildebrand has a handful of students, ranging in age from young teens to older adults, signed up for one-on-one vocal lessons at the Winkler gallery. Those sessions will run through to the end of May, when she'll be accepting new students.

She had also hoped to also start up two group classes—one for moms looking to hone their skills with afternoon singing sessions and the other a Disney Singing Club for kids to learn

the basics—but registrations were slow to come in over the holidays. The plan is to offer these programs later in the year, if there's enough interest.

"I am hoping to bring those back at some point, and some other group ideas as well," Hildebrand said. "And right now the plan is to do something over spring break ... a shorter group class to give people a taste of it."

Summer day camp programming is also in the works, and the gallery is

Continued on page 14

"OUR MISSION HAS ALWAYS INCLUDED MORE THAN JUST WHAT WE CAN SEE—IT'S ALSO ABOUT EXPRESSING OURSELVES AND CONNECTING WITH OTHERS."

WFRC launches February Prize Calendar fundraiser

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Family Resource Centre's February Prize Calendar is back, giving supporters the chance to win big every day of the month.

Local businesses have stepped up to help the centre create 28 different prize packages, says executive director Chantal Human.

"We have a prize to give away every day in February," she says, "including a few crazy fun prizes that we haven't had before."

They run the gamut from gift cards to a host of local restaurants, businesses, and recreational attractions to goodies like electronic toothbrushes, active winter clothing, and even a few cases of chicken breasts.

"There's a ton of things, a ton of variety throughout the entire month," Human says. "Local businesses really stepped up to support us."

The complete prize list is available on the WFRC Facebook and Instagram pages. The winners will be drawn daily by 10 a.m. and posted

online.

Tickets are \$10 for one or \$25 for three and can be purchased until the end of January by emailing director@wfrc.ca. Payment can be made via e-transfer or by arrangement for cash or cheque.

Human is hoping the campaign will bring in at least \$2,000 for the centre's programming, which is used by hundreds of families through the year.

"The funds will be used to support the continuation of our free preschool programs," she says. These programs help kids hone their literacy, numeracy, and social skills ahead of starting Kindergarten, while also giving parents a chance to get together with other parents.

The calendar fundraiser got its start in the midst of the pandemic, Human shares, as a way to not only support the centre but promote Winkler area businesses as well.



"Maybe you get a gift card to a place you've never been before and now that's your new favourite restaurant, or whatever it is," she says. "I really like that about it."



Rosemary Siemens receives King Charles coronation medal

By Lorne Stelmach

Rosemary Siemens and husband Eli Bennett have had many honours come their way, but their most recent one was extra special.

The celebrated musician from Plum Coulee and Bennett were recently awarded King Charles III Coronation Medals.

The Jan. 9 ceremony was hosted by Senator Don Plett at the Vancouver Club in British Columbia. Siemens and Bennett were recognized for their outstanding contributions to the arts in Canada. They were among six recipients honored during the event.

"It's very special because it's the first award given by the king," said Siemens. "We had received two other medals from the queen.

"We didn't know we were even nominated actually," she shared, recalling finding out about it after a concert in Steinbach shortly before Christmas. "It was a complete surprise, and it was very special also that he nominated my husband and I so that we could receive it together ... it was a very big honour."

The awards ceremony celebrated not only the recipients' contributions to the arts but also the broader impact of arts and culture on Canadian society. Plett opened the evening with remarks highlighting the importance of recognizing individuals whose exceptional achievements elevate Canada's reputation around the world.

The event began with a rendition of "God Save the King" performed by Siemens and Bennett based on their recording of "God Save the Queen"—an arrangement that featured over 400 individual instrumental and vocal parts all performed and produced by the couple. To close the evening, Siemens and

Bennett performed their version of "O Canada."

Siemens is a five-time Gospel Music Award-winning violinist and vocalist who has graced iconic venues such as the Grand Ole Opry, Carnegie Hall, and St. Peter's Basilica. She was the first violinist to perform at the Sistine Chapel since its inaugural mass in 1483, and she has also played for two U.S. presidents and many Canadian prime ministers.

Siemens is also known for her YouTube series Sunday Hymn Serenade - Bring Back The Hymns. The show has amassed over 150 million views globally.

Meanwhile, Bennett, who is an internationally acclaimed saxophonist and film composer, has performed at prestigious venues such as the Vatican and the Grammy Awards and shared the stage with legends like Oscar Peterson. An award-winning composer, Bennett has also produced over 250 episodes of Sunday Hymn Serenade, which he co-creates with Siemens.

Both artists have previously been recognized with the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond and Platinum Jubilee Medals for their contributions to arts and culture.

"We spend so much time on our craft," said Siemens, who noted the amount of

work that goes into putting their music out on YouTube on a regular basis and creating new music every week and doing two shows a week on Sunday and Wednesday. "So to get recognition for all our hard work is awesome."

Siemens noted they are excited about their next project: a new video of a performance of "Just As I Am" with the Clearbrook Church hymn sing choir featuring about 50 voices. Somewhere in the middle of the song, there will be an altar call done similar to how Billy Graham would do it in his crusades.

"It's very special for us because we have this great



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Plum Coulee's own Rosemary Siemens and husband Eli Bennett were recently honoured with King Charles III Coronation Medals in recognition of their contributions to the arts.

following now ... and we wanted to do something to see how we could spread the Gospel through our music."

> VOCAL LESSONS, FROM PG. 13

also looking into bringing musical instrument lessons and workshops into the gallery space in the months ahead. Stay tuned to the Winkler Arts and Culture events and classes page (winklerarts.com) for details as they become available.

about her work.

"Outside of the obvious of knowledge about your voice and technique and different kinds of musical terms that have to do with singing, I really hope that they gain a deeper understanding of music that helps them love it more," she said of what she

hopes students take away from these lessons.

"Singing is a very fun thing to do, but it can also be a difficult thing because it's very personal," Hildebrand observed. "It's different from playing a physical instrument, because you are your instrument. Sometimes that can bring up some things in people, and so what I really love is when it

happens and they can work through those things and they come out more confident—not just in their singing, but because of the whole experience."

You can connect with Hildebrand through the Radiant Voices Music Studio Facebook page or via email to radiantvoicesmusicstudio@gmail.com.

"I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO SING"

Sylvia Zacharias, 17, was enjoying her second session of vocal training at the gallery last week.

"I've always wanted to sing," she said, sharing she hopes the lessons will help her fine-tune her voice so she can better sing the gospel songs she loves.

Seeing students grow in their musical ability—wherever they may start from—is one of the things Hildebrand loves most

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Flyers leap into first place

Winkler's Jacob Michelson jumps over Virden's Daniel Tokariwski in pursuit of a loose puck in Sunday's home game, which the Flyers won 4-1.

PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Flyers have moved into first place in the MJHL East Division, with two games in hand over their nearest competitors.

The advance in the standings came after a pair of wins over the Waywayseecappo Wolverines and the Virden Oil Capitals this past week.

Last Tuesday's game on the road against the Wolverines saw the Flyers keep a firm hand on things through two periods, up 4-1 thanks to first-period goals from Liam Carlone, Jayce Legaarden, and Andrew Morton and a second-period marker from Brody Beauchemin.

Beauchemin added two more goals in the final period while Dustin Bell made it seven in all for Winkler, while Waywayseecappo managed to get three

past netminder Liam Ernst in a failed attempt to close the gap. The win went to Winkler 7-4.

Friday's scheduled game against Dauphin was postponed due to the blizzard, but the roads cleared by Sunday for the Flyers to host the Virden Oil Capitals.

Ernst gave up just one goal off the 20 shots he faced that night, while his teammates fired 29 the other way, making good on four of them, all in the third period. Legaarden scored two of those while Isaiah Peters and Morton added singles in the 4-1 win.

With that, Winkler's record stands at 28-6-2 for 58 points, which puts them one point up on the second-place Steinbach Pistons, who have played 38 games to the Flyers' 36. Rounding out the top three are the Portage Terriers in third place with 55 points

in 38 games.

This week Winkler was in Neepawa Tuesday to play the Titans. Results were not available at press time.

The weekend sees the team host the Northern Manitoba Blizzard Friday and Saturday.

Next week, 10 Flyers and coach Coltyn Bates will head to the MJHL-SJHL Showcase taking place in Winnipeg Jan. 28-29.

The 20U Red team will feature Brody Beauchemin, Brady Craik, Niklas Gudmundson, Jayce Legaarden, Nicholas McKee, Will Brophy, Blake Matheson, Isaiah Peters, and Liam Ernst. Max Lavoie will suit up for the 18U White team.

Bates, meanwhile, will be behind the bench for 20U Red.

Pilot Mound hosting women's curling provincials this week

By Lorne Stelmach

Pilot Mound has mobilized for the first Manitoba curling championship ever staged in the south-central Manitoba community.

The Women of the Rings provincial ladies curling championship is taking place at Pilot Mound's Millennium

Recreation Complex this week, and organizers are keen to put on a good show for curling fans.

"We're the smallest community ever to host an arena event, womens or mens, so this is pretty exciting for a smaller community," said organizing committee co-chair Jackie McCannell.

She was looking forward to the ex-

citement it is going to create in the Pilot Mound Curling Club and in the extended community.

"From experience attending other events and talking with organizers in other communities, we know that hosting the championships provides benefits beyond the curling club," McCannell said. "Working together to

stage a successful event is important for community image and community pride."

"It is special to give curling fans in this great curling community a chance to watch their favourite sport in an arena setting close to home,"

Continued on page 16

News or sports tip? E-mail news@winklermordenvoice.ca or call 204-325-6888

Bombers, Wild, and Royal in fourth, fifth, and sixth in SEMHL

By Ashleigh Viveiros

It was a week of mixed results for the local South Eastern Manitoba Hockey League teams.

The Morden Bombers dropped a 9-5 decision to the visiting Ste. Anne Aces Thursday night and then downed the Islanders in Portage 6-5 Saturday.

Thursday's game saw the Aces up 5-0 before Morden got on the board with a goal from Mike Rey in the second period. Derek Wiebe and Collin Shirley also scored that frame, with Rey rounding things out with his second of the night in the last five minutes. Jay Fehr scored Morden's fifth and final goal in the third.

Aaron Brunn and Reed Peters were in the net for the loss, Brunn making 26 saves off 30 shots in his 40 minutes between the posts. Peters played 20 minutes and made 21 saves off 26 shots on goal.

Things went much better against the Islanders, with Morden up 3-2 and 5-3 at the intermissions thanks to goals

from Karl Fey, Logan Christensen (with two), Rey, and Jaden Townsend.

One last Bomber goal from Andrew Perrault, sandwiched between two from Portage, kept the Bombers in the lead for the win. In net, Brunn made 25 saves off 31 shots.

Meanwhile, the Red River Wild trounced Ile des Chenes 7-1 on Saturday. TJ Matuszewski and Jonah Wasylak both had two-goal nights, while Drayden Kurbatoff, Colin Baudry, and Justin Baudry chipped in singles. Jayden Catellier made 26 saves in net.

And the Winkler Royals fell to the Springfield Winterhawks Sunday night.

Goals from Lucas Ens in the first and Colton Harder in the very last minute of the third weren't enough to catch up to the three the Winterhawks managed in between. Matthew Thiessen made 55 saves in goal for Winkler in the 3-2 loss.

Red River (8-4-1, 17 points) Morden (8-5, 16 points), and Winkler (7-5-0-1,



PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Morden's Evan Weurch manages to control the puck despite the efforts of Ste. Anne's Burke Heide in last Thursday's 9-5 Bombers loss.

15 points) are currently in fourth, fifth, and sixth place in the SEMHL standings, trailing the top three teams: Ste. Anne (24 points), Springfield (19 points), and Notre Dame (18 points).

Coming up, Winkler is in Ste. Anne Wednesday, Red River plays at Ile

des Chenes Thursday and then hosts Morden Sunday, and Winkler hosts Ile des Chenes Sunday.

Next week Tuesday sees the Bombers and the Royals go head to head in Winkler.

Male Hawks on three game winning streak

By Lorne Stelmach

The male U18 Pembina Valley Hawks took a three-game winning streak into action this week.

The Hawks edged the Southwest Cougars 2-1 last Wednesday in Souris and then returned home to Morden and picked up another victory with a 6-2 win over the Norman Northstars Sunday. A home game with the Winnipeg Thrashers was postponed Friday as a result of the blizzard.

Cole Secord's 10th goal of the season at 12:07 of the third period became the winning goal after the Hawks and Cougars had each scored in the second period.

Carson Hiebert also scored for Pembina Valley, and Karsen Dyck backstopped the win with 33 saves as fourth-place Southwest outshot the Hawks 34-23.

Ryder Wolfe had a pair of goals and a three-point game as the Hawks took period leads of 2-1 and 3-1 on Norman.

Also scoring for Pembina Valley were Secord, Adrien McIntosh, Gavin Rondeau, and Parker Henderson, while Ryler Gates made 23 saves as the Hawks outshot the Northstars 39-25.

The Hawks remain in ninth place at 15-14-3-2 for 35 points, but they are eight ahead of Norman and have

pulled even with Interlake while sitting just two back of Parkland.

Pembina Valley started their week

in Portage Tuesday against Central Plains before hosting Yellowhead Friday and the Winnipeg Wild Sunday.

> CURLING PROVINCIALS, FROM PG. 15

said Curl Manitoba executive director Craig Baker.

"The Manitoba championship's new 12 team format has given us the opportunity to bring the event to new communities which have never hosted before," he noted. "We are pleased to be adding Pilot Mound to the list of Manitoba towns hosting one of our arena championships for the first time."

McCannell said they look forward to having a high level of curling on display with such top names as Kate Cameron, Beth Peterson and Hailey McFarlane. The list also includes the Carberry team skipped by Alyssa

Calvert and the Manitou foursome skipped by Cheyenne Ehnes.

"We're missing some of the bigger names, but the ones that are coming are still well known and very competitive curlers," she said.

McCannell recalled that she started working on Pilot Mound taking a shot at hosting about three years ago.

"I said to them one time what are the chances that Pilot Mound could do this? I would really like to take it on," she said, noting they were originally led to believe it would be in 2026, but they were bumped up to 2025 and then had just over a year to

pull it all together.

"It's been a lot of work, but hopefully it's going to be very rewarding," McCannell said. "Right now, we have 143 volunteers, and 28 of those people are on more than one committee, and we've got high school kids coming down to help with cleaning shifts during the day."

Ticket options included an event pass for \$150, a day pass for \$40, or the last draw of the day for \$20. Children 12 and under are free. Tickets can be purchased at the door, but it is cash only.

You can also email pmrockies25@gmail.com for more information or go to curlmanitoba.org.

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OBITUARY



Katharine Elizabeth Ritchie (nee Young)

In loving memory of Kathy, our wife, mother, grandmother, daughter and friend who passed away peacefully on January 9, 2025, at the age of 73.

Left to cherish her memory and continue her legacy of love and community involvement is her husband Glenn Ritchie of 54 years; her children Brad (Tara) and Angie (Eman); her mother Adeline Young (nee Johnston) and sister Dorothy Fox (Gerry). She will be greatly missed by her grandchildren Taylor, Evan, Avery, Kendall, Kaitlyn, Connor and Liam.

Kathy was predeceased by her father Kenneth Young. Kathy was born on March 22, 1951 to Ken and Adeline Young in Russell, Manitoba, and was raised in Virden, Manitoba. Kathy met Glenn, the love of her life, at the age of 14. They were married in Virden in 1970. They first moved to Toronto to complete Glenn's

schooling, and when presented with four options, they chose to move to Morden. What a great choice that was.

Kathy started her work career in the Morden area at Valley Rehab, working with mentally challenged individuals. After the birth of Angie, Mom went to work at the Morden airport, and then at Garden City Chrysler. In the late 1970's she started with the provincial government at the assessment branch as a clerk. She filled this role for many years but with the encouragement of her supervisor, she attained the position of property assessor. She remained there until her retirement, although she went back for a few terms to help out after that.

Volunteering and Kathy were synonymous. When she was a working parent, she gave as much time as she could to minor hockey, minor baseball, ringette and both the Morden Curling Club and Minnewasta Golf Course. As the time constraints of parenting diminished, she got even more active. She started volunteering at one of her favorite places, the Morden Library and working a regular shift at the Morden Thrift Shop for many years. She was also instrumental in organizing the first Morden Community Christmas Dinner which is a tradition that lives on to this day, again, another time where she saw a need to support others and found a way to make it happen.

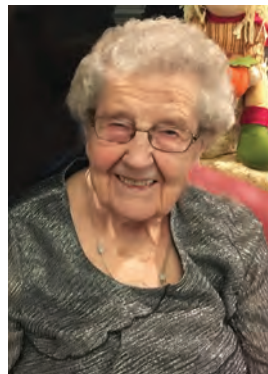
The most meaningful work she was involved with has been the Morden Area Foundation. Kathy spent two terms (2007-2015) with the Morden Area Foundation. She was chairperson as well and active director for eight years. During this time, she was instrumental with many new directions and initiatives. Kathy possessed great people skills, and she professionally led the board and the foundation's executive directors, making use of her strong leadership skills. She was instrumental in starting the "Power of the Purse", one the foundations key fundraisers, which will celebrate its 10th anniversary this spring. All of this commitment and dedication culminated in the ultimate recognition when she received the Morden Citizen of Distinction Award in 2023. We were afraid that sickness would not allow her to accept her award and participate, but instead she not only found a way to make it special for everyone attending, she also used this opportunity to encourage and challenge everyone to go out and make a difference as she had.

Kathy and Glenn enjoyed many years of good health and travel, sometimes with friends and family, to different locations including Texas, California, Arizona, and the one they found last, but both loved the most, Los Cabos in Mexico.

The family offers their deepest gratitude to the numerous health care professionals who cared for Kathy over the years, especially Dr. Woelk, Dr. Drackenberg, Community Palliative care nurse Deanne and the entire Cancer Care team at Boundary Trails Health Centre. To special friends Lori, Linda, Della, Leslie and Cathy who supported the family at the hospital over the last few weeks. To Reverend Diane Guilford for being present with Kathy and family through the last two weeks including conducting the family service. To Scott Bell for his music at the private service and to the Pembina Colony Choir for performing for Kathy at her home, at the hospital and most recently at her service.

In lieu of flowers, Kathy would love for donations to be made to the Morden Area Foundation. A private family service was held January 18, 2024. A Celebration of Life will be planned for the spring. More details will be shared at a later date.

OBITUARY



Anna Heinrichs (nee Voth)

Anna Heinrichs (nee Voth) passed away peacefully at Tabor Personal Care Home on Thursday, January 9th, 2025.

Mother was born in Neuhoffnung, Manitoba to Cornelius and Justina Voth (nee Rempel), on October 16, 1918. She, the youngest, grew up in a large family with five brothers and three sisters. Her mother (Mrs. Justina Voth) passed away in 1932 just before mother's 14th birthday.

She married our father (Benjamin J. Heinrichs) on September 10, 1939 just before her 21st birthday. Sometime in 1941 our parents moved to a farm near Lowe Farm. Here they farmed for some 30 years. When the farm was sold in 1974 our parents moved to Morden, Manitoba.

She became a widow August 18, 1990, and lived 35 years as a widow in Morden.

She leaves to mourn five children, Joyce, Vernon, Dianna, Carol (Willy), Gerald (Sandy), many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren, also nieces, nephews and friends.

She was predeceased by her husband (Benjamin J. Heinrichs), two grandsons and one son-in-law and a great-granddaughter.

The family thanks Tabor Home staff for the care our mother received for the last four years of her life.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Alzheimer's Society of Manitoba, 10 -120 Donald Street, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4G2.

Funeral Service was held on Thursday, January 23rd, 2025 at 1:30 p.m. at the Wiebe Funeral Chapel in Morden.

Wiebe Funeral Chapel, Morden
in care of arrangements
www.wiebefuneralhomes.com



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OBITUARY



Ernest Allen (Ernie) Kehler

July 19, 1943 – December 22, 2024

Ernest Allen (Ernie) Kehler was born on July 19, 1943 to Frank and Henrietta Kehler. He grew up on the family farm in Kronstal, where he attended school and church, fostering a passion for farming from a young age.

In the summer of 1965, Ernie met Helen, and their love story quickly unfolded. They married on September 10, 1966 and began farming together with Helen's father and brother in the Thames district.

In 1968, Ernie and Helen welcomed their first son, Kevin. Their second son, Ken, was born the following year. In 1980, their family grew with the arrival of their daughter, Leala.

A turning point in Ernie's life came in June 1984, when he committed his life to Jesus Christ and was baptized upon confession of his faith. In 1990, Ernie and Helen moved to Winkler, which became their cherished home for the next 34 years. During this time, Ernie became a successful equipment dealer, working alongside his brother Glen and sons Kevin and Ken.

After Helen's passing in September 2014, Ernie found companionship and love once again with Dorothea (Dee) Christian. They married on November 17, 2016, bringing joy and renewal to his life.

Ernie passed away peacefully on December 22, 2024 in Phoenix, Arizona, surrounded by his beloved family.

Ernie will be deeply missed by his wife Dee; his children, Kevin (Keri), Ken (Vika), and Leala (Marlon); and his eight grandchildren, Jessica (Keith), Ryan (Shayna), Cole, Brookelyn, Nolan, Keira, Deanna, and Olivia; great-grandchildren, Max, Georgia, Cade, Scarlett and Cassie. He is also lovingly remembered by his siblings Ruth (Sig), Harv (Jeanne), Glen (Sheila), and Rob (Sherry); sisters-in-law Margo, Verna (Don), Marlene, and Karen; as well as many nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends.

Ernie was predeceased by his parents, his wife Helen, brothers-in-law Wayne and Larry, sister-in-law Donna and his great-grandson Easton.

The family extends heartfelt gratitude to the staff at Mercy Gilbert Hospital, Wiebe Funeral Home, Winkler MB Church and everyone who has supported them with prayers, visits, calls, and food during this time of loss.

Ernie's life was a testament to faith, family, and a legacy of love that will continue to inspire all who knew him.

Memorial donations in Ernie's memory can be made to OneBook, 700-1816 Crowchild Trail NW, Calgary, AB T2M 3Y7.

Funeral Service was held on Saturday, January 11th, 2025 at 11 a.m. at the Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church with Burial at Westridge Memorial Gardens.

Wiebe Funeral Home, Winkler
in care of arrangements
www.wiebefuneralhomes.com



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> MEAL IDEAS



Baked Spaghetti

2 cups shredded cheese
 French bread or breadsticks, for serving
 Heat oven to 350 F.
 Brown and drain ground beef. Cook noodles according to package instructions. Drain noodles; add alfredo sauce and mix well.

Add marinara sauce, garlic powder and onion powder to ground beef. Season with salt and pepper, to taste.

Place noodles in 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Spoon beef mixture on top but do not mix in. Cover with shredded cheese then cover with foil and bake 30-40 minutes.

Serve with French bread or breadsticks.

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"
 Servings: 4-6

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 pound spaghetti noodles
- 1 jar (16 ounces) alfredo sauce
- 1 jar (24 ounces) marinara sauce
- 2 tablespoons garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons onion powder
- salt, to taste
- pepper, to taste



Cranberry Bars

1 1/2 cups chopped walnuts
 2 cups chopped white chocolate chips, divided

Heat oven to 350 F.

Mix cake mix, eggs, butter, cranberries, walnuts and 1 cup white chocolate chips. Spread into 7-by-11-inch baking dish and bake 35-40 minutes until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.

Let cool then melt remaining white chocolate chips and drizzle over bars.

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

- 1 box white or yellow cake mix
- 2 eggs
- 1 stick melted butter
- 1 1/2 cups dried cranberries



Egg Tot Muffins

2 teaspoons onion powder
 1 package (2 1/2 ounces) real bacon pieces

salt, to taste

pepper, to taste

Heat oven to 350 F.

Grease muffin tin with butter. Place three tots in each muffin hole and smash down.

In bowl, whisk eggs, cream, cheese, garlic powder, onion powder and bacon pieces. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Fill each muffin hole completely with mixture.

Place cookie sheet under muffin tin to contain messes and bake 20-25 minutes.

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"
 Servings: 12

- Butter
- 36 thawed tater tots
- 10 eggs
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream or half-and-half
- 1/2 cup shredded cheese
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder

Ask the money lady

I wanted to know if there is anything else I should be considering for the future other than just RRSPs.

Bernie

Bernie – there definitely is more than just RRSPs!

When you are planning for retirement, it is advisable to accumulate and consider separate buckets, accounts, or as we like to say, "pools of capital" to properly diversify your future. Of course, many people may not be able to do them all, but at least you can now see what we ask clients to consider when determining an achievable retirement lifestyle, and RRSPs will always be one of them. There are typically six common ways to divide your savings towards future retirement capital. These are the things that your Advisor will want to review with you. Plan to use as many as you can when saving for your future. Remember, if you are not planning for a comfortable and secure retirement, how can you expect to have one. Here we go.

Number One: Your employment pension, government pension or both. If you're lucky enough to have both – you are definitely in the minority these days. On these paid into investments, income will be received and taxable when you receive it in retirement but there is no taxes payable at death. Many employers have savings plans where they will match part of your contribution, and some may offer proprietary pension plans that you can also pay into. Please consider these options. They definitely add up over time and many can be moved to registered plans like a LIRA or LIF if you leave your employer.

Number Two: Your registered investments. This would be RRSPs converting to RRIFs once you reach the age of 71.

These investments are limited by minimum and maximum deposits and of course withdrawals will be taxed by the CRA.

Remember any funds left in your estate at death will be taxed as income on your last tax return unless participating in a spousal rollover. Consider purchasing Deferred Annuities with your RRSP contributions – these are great products to offer a guaranteed income once you retire, (guaranteed annual income for life).

Number Three: Tax-Free Savings
 Always a good option to supplement RRSPs with no taxation at death.



Christine Ibbotson

This should be considered by every Canadian over 18 even if RRSPs are not part of your savings plan.

Number Four: Non-Registered Investments

This could include various types of investment vehicles to diversify your portfolio. If you choose investments that earn annual interest, like bonds or debentures, you will be responsible for the tax each year. If you choose other investment products, such as securities, they will have taxation only on the growth and subject to capital gains tax when withdrawn. Non-registered investments may also be subject to probate and other estate fees upon death.

Number Five: Investment Property +/- Primary Residence

Investment properties may be subject to capital gains tax when sold or as a deemed disposition upon death unless there is a spousal/other rollovers. Always consider upsizing your primary residence throughout your life since this is a great non-taxable asset.

Number Six: Tax Exempt Insurance

Limited tax-exempt life insurance policies, (for example, Participating Whole Life) are a great tool for asset accumulation and wealth preservation. They add diversification to your investment portfolio and provides tax-exempt growth over your lifetime. Participating Life insurance also provides a tax-free death benefit and will by-pass probate if a beneficiary is named.

*Good Luck and Best Wishes,
 Money Lady*

Written by Christine Ibbotson, Author, Finance Writer, National Radio Host, and on CTV & BNN, syndicated across Canada. Send your questions through her website at askthemoneylady.ca

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