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# Morden History & Archives finds a new home

By Lorne Stelmach

A devoted group of volunteers are not only working on reviving a Morden historical society but now also have at least a temporary space to store and develop an archive they hope to eventually make available online.

The former Morden Historical Society had its ups and downs over the years, and while it is not necessarily coming back in the same way, the volunteers behind the effort are committed to collecting and preserving historical documents and materials.

"It was felt we needed to focus on the archives in particular because it's the basis of all history. Any kind of historical writing or exhibits," said Nancy Stunden.

"So we began to go through the records that had been collected by the historical society over time ... and some of them even coming from the old Morden museum. We then inventoried all of the written records as well as the photographs."

Their effort now has been boosted by a couple things, including getting a grant from the Morden Area Foun-

dation.

"So with that, we are kind of up and running again," said Stunden. "And now the City has been able to provide us with space at least for the foreseeable future in the old land titles building."

Fellow volunteer Lenore Laverty, chairperson of what is now known as Morden History and Archives, noted they had been using a very small bit of space at the library, but it offered no room for them to go any further with their efforts.

"For years, we couldn't collect any more documents or photographs because we had absolutely no space," she said. "Now that we've got the space, it enables us to reach out to the community ... probably first to see if people have records, minutes or financial records, photographs and so on from organizations from over the years.

"Some people have been holding on to old records of organizations and clubs they were involved with, often because they didn't know what else to do with them; others may have inherited them from grandparents or found them in their old houses," she



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Lenore Laverty and Nancy Stunden in Morden History & Archives' new space in the old land titles building downtown.

added. "The archives will inventory the documents and provide them with safe storage to ensure that they are preserved for future generations.

"We'll be able to take in some new records and materials now and expand our collection," added Laverty,

who noted in example that Mayor Nancy Penner recently contributed a couple boxes of documents and materials from the local horticultural society.

Continued on page 4

## PUBLIC OPEN HOUSE

### RPGA Planning District Development Plan Review and Update

You are invited to attend Open House events hosted by Landmark Planning & Design on behalf of the RPGA Planning District.

The RPGA Planning District is comprised of the Municipality of Rhineland and the Town of Altona. The RPGA Planning District is updating their Development Plan. A Development Plan provides policies and objectives that guide development within the Planning District as it relates to:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic Growth
- Infrastructure & Servicing
- Subdivision
- Development Standards

The purpose of these Open House events are to share the draft development plan and discuss next steps. Those in attendance will be encouraged to provide verbal or written feedback and project team members will be in attendance to receive your input and address any question or concerns you may have.

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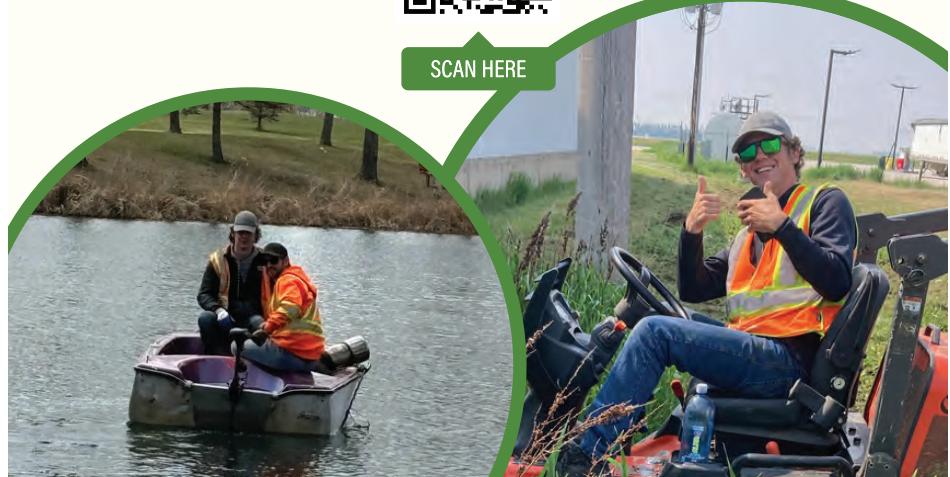
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# Manitoba 55+ Games is coming to Morden-Winkler-Stanley

Organizers put call out for athletes, volunteers, and sponsors

By Ashleigh Viveiros

It's the biggest sporting event of the year for older athletes, and it's coming to Morden-Winkler-Stanley this spring.

The 2026 Manitoba 55+ Games will bring hundreds of athletes to the region, shares sports co-chair Dale Ready.

"It could be between 1,000 or 1,200 people," he said. "We have 14 events that we're hosting between the communities."

Curling—two-person stick and four-person team—will be first up, taking place at the Winkler and Morden rinks March 17-19. The other events run June 9-11 with competition in five-pin bowling (at the rink in Carman), bocce ball, disc golf, 9- and 18-hole golf, horseshoes, pickleball, predicted walk/run, slo-pitch, pool, swimming, contract and duplicate bridge, and cribbage.

It's going to be a great opportunity to highlight all three communities, Ready noted, and the region as a whole.

And if past Games are any indication, it's also going to be a blast for everyone taking part.

"I've competed twice, in pickleball, and while

there is competition, there is also just a huge amount of fun and social pieces to the Games," he said. "It's about being active, whether it's physically, mentally ... at 55+, we want our seniors to remain engaged and vital."

The Manitoba 55+ Games have been in operation since 1983, growing from 365 participants that first year to over 1,600.

Morden-Winkler's last time hosting the competition was back in 2002 (in Morden) and 1995 (in Winkler).

As always, an event of this size requires a lot of community support, and local organizers are working hard to get the word out.

"We're really in the beginning stages of promoting and getting people thinking about it," Ready said.

"We have a number of people that have stepped forward already as volunteers for different areas ... but we will be looking for more people that are interested in helping out, whether it's one day, whether it's an afternoon, whether it's all three days," he said. "Volunteers are a huge part of the Games."

The organizing committee has also begun reaching out to area businesses to discuss sponsorship opportunities.

"Hopefully people



VOICE FILE PHOTO

Local athletes are invited to take part in the Manitoba 55+ Games, which this year take place in Morden-Winkler-Stanley. It's been decades since these communities hosted the event, but there are always a host of local athletes participating, including this group from several years ago.

will get behind the Games and see this as a real value for the communities that are involved," Ready said.

Registration for curling and volunteering is available now online at [activeagingmb.ca](http://activeagingmb.ca). Registration for the other events in June should open shortly.

Head to the website above or contact Active Aging in Manitoba at 204-632-3947 or [info@activeagingmb.ca](mailto:info@activeagingmb.ca) for more details.

## Winkler council extends Headstart to a Home project

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Winkler city council has voted to extend the Headstart to a Home program by another two years.

Ten families have made use of the program since it launched in late 2023 as a partnership between the City of Winkler, Lux Construction Inc., and Access Credit Union.

Under the agreement, Lux committed to building nearly 50 new homes on Yellowstone Trail in north Winkler and providing a discount on the purchase price for each one purchased through the program, Access provided insured mortgages to qualifying home buyers and an interest-free loan for the down payment of five per cent of the purchase price for five years, and the City of Winkler provided security to Access to make those down payment loans possible. Choice Realty handled the sale of the homes.

"We initially didn't have as much uptake on it as we anticipated," shared Mayor Henry Siemens, noting the Winkler housing market has been so competitive that some of the houses sold incredibly quickly—sometimes before they were even built—without the need for Headstart support.

"But after a slow start, we were able to gain some momentum and get

some people into home ownership who wouldn't have been able to otherwise, which is a big part of the reason that we're extending it.

"When people want to be [home] owners, we believe it creates a healthier, more stable, less transient community," the mayor noted. "So when people are in a position that they can't find their way on their own, if there's a way that we can help without risk to the rest of the community, we certainly want to be involved in those discussions."

The City of Winkler has set aside funding in a GIC account for the program, which allows them to commit to cover 50 per cent of the five per cent down payments should any of them go into default.

That hasn't happened on any of the loans so far, and, based on the success of these types of programs in other communities, Siemens isn't worried that will change.

"Historically, as we've looked at these types of programs, usually when people who wouldn't be able to find their way to housing ownership in any other way, the chance of there being a default is extremely low," he said. "People will prioritize

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Continued on page 5



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Karen Mah with some of the documents Morden History & Archives is in the process of digitizing.

## > ARCHIVES, FROM PG. 2

With the grant from the community foundation, the archives has acquired the supplies needed to identify and store the photograph prints and negatives. They have also purchased the equipment and supplies needed to receive larger documents such as minute books and financial records.

Morden has over the years had a strong tradition of heritage preservation. The Pembina Hills Historical Society, led by Adolph Dack, was founded after the Second World War, and the Morden His-

torical Society spearheaded the production of the history book in 1982 to mark the community's centennial.

The Morden and District Museum collected and stored many photographs and other historical items until it closed to make way for the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre.

Darryl Toews has also been digitizing Morden newspapers for several years and was recently working up to 1954 editions of the *Morden Times*. At the present time, all digitized newspapers from Morden, Nelsonville, and Mountain City are available through the Pembina-Manitou Archives.

The longterm goals of the society now don't necessarily involve reestablishing a local museum, but having a place to store and sort material is certainly a welcome start.

"We hope at some point it gets a more permanent home. We're very happy to be in this space and to be able to expand," said Laverty. "Really, the goal for us is to digitize all of the records so that they are very much more accessible to the public."

The group agreed that there seems to be renewed interest in the history of the community and area, and that is reflected through the Vintage Morden Facebook group.

"We started with just a few hundred members last year and we're up to just over 1,700, so there is a lot of interest," said Karen Mah. "Before, nobody in the community knew that we existed, so now we're trying to get our name out there so that people know we exist."

"Having an online presence is really important, so we're going to be starting an Instagram account as well. That should be coming in the next two weeks or so," she added. "It's important for us to be able to be seen online so that people can learn about Morden history from the comfort of their own home."

"It's actually kind of interesting to see the back and forth on the Facebook page ... as we go through the photographs from what was left over from the museum and the historical society," Man added.

"Some of them aren't labeled, and we have no idea what they are, so it's really helpful to be able to put that on Facebook and say to people who have been long-term residents of Morden what is this, who are these people and when was this taken."

"I think it's really important to kind of foster a sense of community between people who have just moved here and people who have been around for perhaps decades."

The group plans to expand its digitization work to include many of its photographs and make these available through the City of Morden website.

## Our mistake

Our Pg. 12 story last week on author John Warms' new book, *The Girl Who Met Sasquatch*, repeatedly included an error when referring to one of his earlier books.

His second book is *Strange Creatures Seldom Seen*, not *Stranger Creatures Seldom Seen*.

We regret the error and any confusion it may have caused.



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# Second annual Seedy Saturday coming up

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The first annual Seedy Saturday was such a success last year that this year's event is moving to a larger location to allow for more participants.

"The energy we had there [at the library last March] was great, it was a really neat vibe," shares Yolanda Friesen of Prairie Harvest Flowers, who is heading up the day alongside Tiffany Hemphill of Hemphill Seeds. "Everyone was so excited to be there, just talking and sharing, and all the gardeners were itching to start on their planting. It was a lot of fun."

But the unexpectedly robust turnout did make for cramped quarters, which is why this year they're setting up instead at Winkler Arts and Culture on Saturday, Feb. 21 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

They're all set to fill the larger space with local vendors of honey, flower and vegetable seeds, and other gardening products—they already have a wait list for vendors interested in filling a spot if one becomes available.

The day will also feature three speaker presentations, with Hemphill presenting at 10:30 a.m. about beginner seed saving, botanist Laura Reeves discussing native plant gardening at 11:30 a.m., and biologist Bruce Friesen-Pankratz presenting "Closed Systems, Open Minds: Lessons from the Plant Kingdom on how to Survive the Anthropocene" at 12:30 p.m.

Another big part of Seedy Saturday is, of course, the free seed swap—simply bring along a package of labelled seeds to contribute.

"People are welcome to bring seeds, either that they've saved or that they

bought and maybe didn't use the whole package," Friesen says. "It's always interesting to see what other people might bring ... you do get some neat stuff."

"It's really special when you get a seed that somebody has saved, especially if it has a story behind it and they're able to share that story—maybe they've saved seeds that their grandma grew in their garden and now they're sharing them with other people."

"I had one experience where I was chatting with a woman and she ended up giving me Honey Drop tomatoes and they were one of the most prolific producers in my garden last year," adds Hemphill. "So every time I was harvesting them or eating them, I thought of this woman, that connection."

But even if you don't have extra seeds to part with, you're still welcome to check out the swap table.

"Last year we had more than enough seeds, so even if people don't have seeds to share they can still come out and take part," Friesen says.

The entire day is completely free to attend, and Friesen encourages gardeners of all experience levels to stop in to connect with other green thumbs.

"It's free for anyone to come. It's free to come and talk to the master gardeners, free to attend the presentations."

"It's so hard to wait until it's warm out to start talking and thinking about plants, so I think this is a great opportunity to get together when it's still so cold and get your mind in the zone to start preparing for spring," adds



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Tiffany Hemphill (left) and Yolanda Friesen are looking forward to Seedy Saturday at Winkler Arts and Culture Feb. 21. It'll be a day of connection and education.

Hemphill.

For more information about Seedy Saturday, check out the event page on

Facebook (Winkler Seedy Saturday 2026) or contact Friesen at [prairieharvestflowers@gmail.com](mailto:prairieharvestflowers@gmail.com).

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## > HEADSTART, FROM PG. 3

this payment over almost any other payment, so these types of loans, whenever they're made available, the default rate is exceptionally low, and that's what we've seen here so far ... there's been no default whatsoever."

And people making use of the Headstart program still need to meet all the usual income requirements for securing a mortgage, Siemens noted.

The program right now is linked to Lux Construction and the Yellowstone Trail development, but Siemens said the City would be

open to hearing from other developers who may have similar ideas for helping get more people into their own homes.

"The demand for home ownership is still through the roof," he pointed out. "We think that there will be continued interest in this program."

"This program right now is specifically for this developer, this project, but we're open to conversations with other developers and other realtors ... we're very interested in helping people find their way to home ownership."

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## OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



# get heard

EDITORIAL > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS

## Welcome to spring eve

**T**here was once a time when I dreaded February as the absolute worst part of winter.

While not the darkest part (that's late December) it was just "one more month" and the feeling of "is this ever going to end" definitely creeps in and makes itself at home.

You know what I mean: February is the bleak, deep midsection of the season.

Now I should say there are numerous unfortunate people who, having gone mad with winter insanity, claim to actually love the season and wish it were winter all year long. I for one do not trust such people and try to avoid them at all costs.

But back to the point ... here we are in February, but this year I am not dreading the month nearly as much as I used to. Why, you ask. Good question.

It occurred to me that there is power in words. I, as a writer, should know this but it is remarkable how long it takes me to realize some things.

For instance, consider this: February is the shortest month of the year. A mere 28 days (sometimes 29) until March. March is the month of spring. March 21st—the spring equinox—is the first day of the season.

February gets us to March much faster than if it was December. Logic.

Given that February is so short and practically March already when

you think of it, we could in fairness call it Spring Eve. Yes, we could call it Spring Eve in the same way some people are now calling Thursday Friday Eve. It has a much better ring to it. It feels much closer to the weekend than Thursday.

In the same way, Spring Eve feels much closer to warmer months than simply February. Heck, at this rate we'll be sunning ourselves in the yard with a beer in hand next week.

With all of this in mind, it seems al-

most ridiculous not to start getting excited about spring being literally around the corner. It's a whole heck of a lot better than dreading February.

Come to think of it, February's not so bad really. I mean, you have Louis Riel Day to celebrate the founder of our great province. You've got Valentine's Day, which is great depending on your partnered status (perhaps terrible though for others and so best

Continued on page 7

## letters

### NOT A CARNEY FAN

Regarding the column "A leader for the times" by Peter Cantelon [Voice, Jan. 29, Pg. 6]: Mark Carney had no problems recommending using the Emergencies Act to Trudeau and company, the use of which two courts have now found to be illegal.

We should have no trouble seeing that the same will have no trouble breaking Canadian laws to inflict tyranny on us.

**Joseph Sparrow,  
Rosebrook**

### GET BACK TO OUR ROOTS

I read the column by Peter Cantelon entitled "A leader for the times" and could not be more in disagreement with him. We only need to consider what has occurred in the latest period of our Canadian history.

Starting with Liberal prime ministers and going back to Pierre Elliott Trudeau we have seen the downward path. The first Trudeau brought in the metric system to lead us toward something new. Then we had the is-

Continued on page 7

## Letter policy

The *Voice* welcomes letters from readers on local matters.

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.

Send your letters to us by e-mail at news@winklermordenvoice.ca.

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The *Voice* is published Thursdays and distributed as a free publication to 21,141 households. Republishing in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Printed in Canada by Prolific Printing. The *Voice* received financial support from the Government of Canada in 2021.

View the *Voice* online at [www.winklermordenvoice.ca](http://www.winklermordenvoice.ca) or [altonavoice.ca](http://altonavoice.ca)

# Decor Cabinets receives Innovation Excellence Award

By Lorne Stelmach

Decor Cabinets received special recognition at last week's Morden Chamber of Commerce awards gala.

The Morden-based company was presented with an Innovation Excellence Award in recognition of their expansion, investment in training and developing staff, and the professionalism that their team consistently demonstrates.

Decor's Stan Pauls said it was a very special honour.

"When we run our businesses ... we don't do it to get awards. We do it to make a difference. We do it to create employment for great people and to build a great strong community and a sustainable company," he said. "We're honoured. We're honoured that the chamber would recognize that, and we appreciate the chamber and what they are doing in highlighting businesses because we know strong businesses in the community can grow and we can provide employment to a bunch of great people and make a difference."

Pauls said innovation has always been a priority for Decor.

"And I think it should be for all of us, for all of our companies, because the world is changing so fast," he said. "The needs of our customers are changing and how our customers want to do business is changing and how our employees need to work or want to work."

Their employees are at the heart of everything they do, he stressed.

"In order to build a sustainable com-



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Decor Cabinets' Stan Pauls says they strive to provide a great place to work for their employees, one that provides opportunities for growth. Right: Cutting-edge equipment has improved capacity and productivity at the Morden plant.

pany, we need to be aggressively looking at ways that we can make a great place so that people don't have to leave Morden and Winkler. They can get really good jobs here where they can use the skills that they have learned and that they want to use.

"I think the big thing for us is just giving people an opportunity here to have a job where they don't have to move away. Young people don't have to move away. They can get really good jobs."

"One of the big things we did here ... firstly is to give employees first opportunity to advance and improve ... take advanced training and build their skills," he continued. "It will allow our company to grow and to meet the future needs of our customers."

And with the recent major expansion to their Morden plant, there is increased opportunity and potential, Pauls said.

"We did a big investment ... we know that was needed for the future," he said. "This was definitely a big step for us."



A key part of their innovation of late has included looking at what was being done elsewhere with the most current technology and equipment in the industry, particularly in Europe, and giving local employees the opportunity to learn from that and make it work at Decor.

"It definitely increases our capacity, and it gives opportunity for more employees who are trained," Pauls said, noting the new equipment has led to increased productivity and quality while also reducing production times and costs.

## > LETTERS, FROM PG. 6

sue of bilingualism which gave us two official languages, namely the tail Quebec now wagging the dog. Following this we had the other Trudeau and the mismanaged ten years of his government with all the high taxes, etc. Regarding bilingualism we need to note there have been many other people than those of French dissent that have become loyal Ca-

nadians. Now however we have PM Carney delivering a speech at the World Economic Forum to an organization intent seemingly to put said nations into a New World dictatorship. This would destroy all that has ever been accomplished in the past. The idea of leaning towards China to solve our issues is certainly in the wrong direction considering what the history of world communism has

been in both Russia, China, and other entities. Canada as a nation with both its resources and people does not need to join into a dictatorship intent on that type of rule with its population under that heavy handed dictatorship with world population control.

Let's become the Canada we were at one time and that was the Dominion of Canada from Sea to Sea, a nation that was Christian at its founding. Psalm 72:8 He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from river unto the ends of the earth.

Cornelius Fehr,  
Winkler

## > CANTELON, FROM PG. 6

not to talk about it).

The month is named after the Roman festival Februa, a month-long festival of atonement and purification—how much more fun can one person have?

Abraham Lincoln was born in February ... though come to think of it he didn't have the cheeriest of ends. We can think about someone else born this month ... like the actor Brandon Lee ... no wait ... let's focus on February birthday boy Harry Styles. There we go, a nice, happy, alive, February birthday.

It also contains Groundhog Day, the Super

Bowl, and Canada's National Flag Day. I didn't even know we had a national flag day. I suppose it's pretty Canadian to not realize we have a national flag day. We're not as fond of wrapping ourselves in it and flying it from every corner of the house or truck as certain other countries.

All in all, February could be a great month with the right frame of mind.

In fact, February is so close to spring it could almost feel like summer is literally just around the corner. But then comes fall and ... oh heck ... winter is right there ...

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# “She was very involved in everything that she did”

By Lorne Stelmach

Three close friends of a longtime dedicated member of the Morden community shared their thoughts and stories recently about Jane White.

Born in United Kingdom in May 1940, White, most recently of Cochrane, AB after having spent a significant portion of her life in Morden, passed away on Dec. 3.

Three of her close friends—Marilyn Skubovius, Catherine Evenson and Pat Gibson—felt it was important to acknowledge and pay tribute to what White did for and meant to Morden.

“She was dedicated to the community, but behind the scenes she was also a very kind woman,” said Gibson.

“As a newcomer [to Morden], she just embraced the community and really became a part of it,” said Evenson.

“She was very involved in everything that she did, and health care especially was kind of her focus,” added Skubovius.

“She really worked at services and services closer to home,” she said, noting White played a pivotal role in helping bring about the Boundary Trails Health Centre. “The government at the time would not expand either Morden or Winkler [hospitals]. It had to be one.”

White and her cousin Maureen travelled to Canada in 1961, planning to work their way across the country. White’s journey ended in Alberta, where she met and married Ed Wiebe.

After some time working in the mines in Saskatchewan, the couple and their sons moved to Wiebe’s hometown of Morden, where they purchased and operated Morden Florists.

White’s list of community involvements was extensive, ranging from the Morden & District Chamber of Commerce, St. Paul’s United Church, Meals on Wheels, and The Company theatre group to the Morden Corn & Apple Festival, Big Brothers Big Sisters, the Morden Historical Society, and the South Central Regional Library.

She and Skubovius were the first women ever elected to Morden town council in 1989. White went on to serve as councillor for 10 years and was the first woman to serve as deputy mayor.

Recalling their days on Morden council, Skubovius remembers White always being fully engaged.

“She was active, and she was always concerned about the budget,” she said. “If there was a new project, okay, what was going to be the cost, and she looked into the background of it; not just ‘I like that’ or ‘I don’t like that.’

“And she was just always positive,” added Skubovius, recalling when a group went on a holiday to the United Kingdom and White was even then being curious about things such as checking out low-flow toilets and water systems.

“She was always trying to be progressive rather than just going with



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Jane White was one of Morden’s first female town councillors, serving the community in that role for a decade, among many other volunteer involvements. She passed away Dec. 3.

the flow. Even the width of sidewalks was important,” Skubovius recalled. “The older sidewalks in Morden were very narrow.”

“My overall impression about Jane was that she didn’t just say, ‘I’m in charge’ or ‘I’m a councillor and get on with it.’ She was part of it all,” reflected Evenson.

“As a member of the hospital board, she did whatever was required of board members,” she recalled. “On the library board, she worked at the book sales.”

“She was a really active participant, and she knew what was going on,” Evenson added, noting that hasn’t always been the case with all local elected officials. “It was an eye-opener, I think, for some of the committees to have somebody that active and interested.”

They recalled many other examples

of White’s dedication and commitment to the community and to other people, wherever she was and whatever she was doing.

While living in the U.K., White worked for the queen’s milliners and had the opportunity one time to deliver a hat for Queen Elizabeth to Buckingham Palace.

And while working in Morden at the florist shop, Skubovius noted that White was always ready to help “any group that needed flowers or decorations.”

Gibson commented on White’s “commitment to the community from an overall perspective ... I know that at council, she would always push an agenda, not just for today but thinking for the future.”

White’s approach to service to health care and especially to bring more services closer to home was “where there’s a will, there’s a way,” Evenson said.

“That’s how and why the Morden hospital had the first cancer treatment, had the first dialysis, and was one of the first to break away from therapy services being provided out of Winnipeg, and she was there through all of it.”

Finally, on a personal note, Gibson offered an example of White’s kindness to others.

“My son was burned, and a water therapy was required for burn therapy,” she shared. “White had a pool at the back of her house, and usually, for the winter, they turned off the temperature. But that winter, she kept it heated that whole winter so that David could get in there.”

“I know for a fact, if he hadn’t done that, he would have required further surgery. So that’s the kind of person that she was throughout her life.”

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Pick up days: Friday, Feb. 27th &

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# Inaugural Prairie Connect conference looking for exhibitors

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Central Manitoba Tourism has come up with a new way to shine a spotlight on what the region all has to offer.

The first annual Prairie Connect 2026 is taking over the Access Event Centre in Morden on Saturday, March 28.

CMT is inviting all its member municipalities—which encompasses 16 different communities across southern Manitoba—as well as tourism-related businesses and community organizations out to connect and promote local attractions.

"We're hoping it will bring together a wide range of organizations from across the Central Manitoba region,"

said CMT general manager June Letkeman. "We really want to showcase local organizations, encourage regional collaboration, and promote tourism activities."

There will be music from the Beer Jammers and food available on site throughout the day. Admission is free.

"We want it to be a fun day for everyone," Letkeman said, noting it'll be a great way for people to learn more about the tourism treasures that exist right in their own backyard, including potentially connecting with organizations looking for volunteers to get more involved.

"This is for business owners, volunteers, and anyone who loves their town," she said.

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If the day is a success, Letkeman hopes to hold Prairie Connect annually, rotating it to communities throughout CMT's coverage area.

If you'd like to register as an exhibitor, head to [centralmb.ca](http://centralmb.ca) for details or connect with Letkeman at 204-362-0501 or [gm@centralmbtourism.ca](mailto:gm@centralmbtourism.ca).

## Focus on FINANCE



### Thinking of switching financial institutions?

Are you feeling dissatisfied with your current financial institution and considering moving your money elsewhere? If so, consider these factors before making your next move.

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Before making any changes, assess your finances. If you have substantial assets, you'll be in a better position to negotiate attractive deals with a new financial institution.

It's also crucial not to overlook the importance of your credit rating. If your credit score has declined in the past few years, it could impact the benefits you're eligible for with a new institution.

#### THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PROCESS

The idea of switching to a new bank may be appealing for the prospect of better interest rates, waived transaction fees and enticing

rewards programs. However, changing over isn't a quick and easy task. You'll have to notify your employer, the government, your service providers, creditors and anyone else who automatically deposits or withdraws money from your account.

#### POTENTIAL FEES

Some banks charge fees and withhold taxes when they release funds to be transferred. The amounts vary based on the nature of your accounts (whether they're investments or savings accounts, for example). Keep a few hundred dollars as a buffer in each of your accounts so you have enough to cover any pre-authorized payments you may have overlooked. Defaulting on payments could result in penalties, so it's important to stay on top of your financial commitments. Once your move is complete, be sure to close your old accounts. Many institutions charge fees for inactive accounts, so it's best to tie up loose ends.

#### ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

If switching financial institutions seems too tedious, there are other ways to improve your satisfaction with your financial services. For example, you can speak up about your dissatisfaction with your current institution. By expressing your willingness to switch institutions, you could negotiate better terms or a more attractive transaction package. Your feedback can make a real difference.

**Tip:** Before starting a conversation with your financial institution, review the fees associated with each of your accounts. These fees could be silently eating away at your money, adding up to hundreds of dollars a year. Don't be afraid to negotiate!

Consider doing business with more than one institution. You could keep your current accounts with one and let another handle your investments. This way, you might snag advantageous rates without having to completely switch everything around.

Do you need help finding a new institution or renegotiating with your current one? Contact a financial expert in your area.



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It is RRSP season, and you will see many ads suggesting you should make your contribution. Before making any decisions, there are some important questions to ask:

- Should I contribute?
- How much should I contribute?
- Are there other options?

That is where a certified financial planner, like myself can help you figure out how to make the most of your RRSP.

March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026 is the deadline to make an RRSP contribution that is deductible against your taxable income for the 2025 tax year. If you have questions, reach out and together we can help guide you to the best decision.

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# getinformed

## Olympic theme adds new energy to Altona Winter Carnival

Day of activities planned for this Saturday

By Holly Thorne-Wiebe

The Town of Altona is inviting residents to embrace the Olympic spirit this winter as the Altona Winter Carnival returns with an Olympic Edition this Saturday, Feb. 7.

This one-day event will feature a mix of long-standing favourites and new Olympic-inspired activities, timed to coincide with the start of the Winter Olympics the day before.

"With the Olympics starting the same week, we thought it would be a fun and exciting way to incorporate the spirit of the games into our event," said Altona recreation programmer Brittany Winkler. "We've kept some of our traditional, well-loved activities while adding a few new ones inspired by the Olympics."

Several activities are designed to mirror the winter sports seen on the international stage. Among the highlights are the Curling Button Challenge, where participants test their accuracy by trying to hit the button; the Hockey Shootout Challenge, hosted by the W.C. Miller Aces and complete with a goalie in net; and the Snowshoe Dash, which challenges participants to race through a course wearing provided snowshoes.

"These events are meant to be fun, accessible, and interactive," said Winkler. "You don't need any experience, just a willingness to try something new and enjoy the day."

While new activities are drawing attention, one of the carnival's most

anticipated events remains a familiar one. The Cardboard Toboggan Races will once again take place, continuing a tradition that has been part of the carnival for decades.

"This event has been part of the carnival for as long as I can remember...I even participated when I was younger," Winkler said. "It's always a crowd favourite."

Participants are required to build their toboggans entirely out of cardboard, with no tape on the bottom and no pre-made sleds allowed. Prizes will be awarded in three categories: fastest, most creative, and longest run.

"Over the years we've seen everything from dragons and Red Bull cars to school buses and simple cardboard designs," Winkler said. "That creativity is what makes the event so special."

Winter Carnival events are drop-in and do not require pre-registration, making it easy for families and individuals to participate throughout the day. The only exception is the Cardboard Toboggan Races, where participants are asked to arrive early to sign in before racing.

New this year is a Winter Carnival Passport, designed to tie the entire event together while encouraging participants to explore all activities.

"Passports can be picked up starting Wednesday, Feb. 4 at the Recreation Office, or at the event itself," said Winkler. "They'll be available at the pancake



VOICE FILE PHOTO

The popular Cardboard Toboggan Race returns as one of the many activities happening at Altona's Winter Carnival this Saturday.

breakfast in the morning, and later at the pond."

Participants can collect stamps at each activity they attend. Completed passports will be entered to win a 2026 family swim pass for the Altona Aquatic Centre.

"It's a fun way to encourage people to try as many activities as possible, and really take in everything the Carnival has to offer," Winkler said.

With food, games, family-friendly entertainment, and a strong commu-

nity focus, Winkler hopes the Winter Carnival continues to be a highlight of the winter season.

"It's about bringing people together," she said. "Whether you come for one activity or stay all day, there's something for everyone, and we're excited to welcome the community out to celebrate winter ... Olympic style."

For the full Winter Carnival schedule, head online to [altona.ca/p/winter-carnival](http://altona.ca/p/winter-carnival).

## Altona councillor steps down, no by-election planned

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Altona town council will be finishing out its term one member short.

First-term councillor Cheryl Dueck has stepped down from her role.

Mayor Harv Schroeder shared a statement on the matter last week:

"On behalf of council and the residents of Altona, I want to express our sincere appreciation to Councillor Cheryl Dueck for her service to the community," he said. "At the end of 2025, Councillor Dueck shared her decision to resign

for personal reasons, and we respect her privacy.

"Over the past three years, she has dedicated her time and energy to council and to our community, and we are grateful for her contributions. We wish her all the best."

Given that the next municipal election takes place this October, council has opted not to hold a by-election to fill the seat.

Council now consists of Mayor Schroeder, Deputy Mayor Jordan Siemens, and councillors Craig Smiley, Donna Rosling-Wolters, Tammy Braun, and Perry Batchelor.

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# Manitoba Merv predicts six more weeks of winter

By Lana Meier

Manitobans may need to keep their winter gear handy a little longer.

Manitoba Merv emerged on Groundhog Day Sunday and saw his shadow, signalling six more weeks of winter according to the annual tradition.

Merv made his prediction from a viewing platform at Oak Hammock Marsh, just north of Stonewall.

The forecast aligns with classic folklore, which holds that a shadow sighting means winter conditions will linger, while the absence of a shadow

points to an early spring.

Despite the light-hearted nature of the prediction, Manitoba Merv's annual appearance has become a familiar winter tradition, offering a moment of fun — and a reminder that prairie winters are not quite ready to loosen their grip.

In Manitoba in 2026, the astronomical first day of spring — the vernal equinox — falls on Friday, March 20, 2026. That's the moment when day and night are nearly equal in length, marking the start of spring in the Northern Hemisphere.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

## RPGA Planning District reports on continued growth across region

By Lorne Stelmach

The past year was one of continued recovery in terms of new development across the RPGA (Rhineland, Plum Coulee, Gretna and Altona) Planning District.

Building activity was continuing to rebound across the district post pandemic, suggested planning manager Lucie Maynard.

"It was a year very similar to 2024. The numbers are rebounding," she said. "Because of the economic worries of the last couple of years and the high building costs, there seemed to be a bit of a lull in building, but that's been rebounding quite well ... everything's doing well."

Highlights from the RPGA building permit statistics show Rhineland experienced a rise in permit applications, whereas Altona continued on a similar path as in 2024.

Notably, despite the increase in Rhineland's permit applications in 2025, the total permit value declined. Conversely, although Altona issued slightly fewer permits than the previous year, their total value was higher.

Total combined building permits in Rhineland increased from 87 to 109, while Altona declined from 49 to 46. However, the development of the development saw Rhineland decrease from \$35.6 million to \$31.6 million, while Altona increased from \$12 to

\$13 million.

This discrepancy is attributed to the implementation of the MSTW fee calculation, which establishes a square foot value for projects instead of permitting applicants to estimate the project's value themselves.

A couple other highlights include the fact that the Altona numbers include 42 new residential units. There were 85 new residential units in the overall region and seven new businesses, including 43 new residential and six businesses in the RM of Rhineland.

"It's continuing very well," said Maynard. "I know a lot of the lots in Plum Coulee and Rosenfeld for the Rhineland side of things, I believe those have sold off. There's only a couple empty lots left to be built on."

Maynard added a number of de-

velopment areas in Altona have also been starting to fill up nicely.

"And I guess now that the town is working on the Millennium Drive area, we should see a lot more of those permits coming in for this year for that area."

She suggested it is encouraging to at least see residential growth seems to be holding steady.

"The demand is there for sure," Maynard said. "Everybody in all the regions, probably even MSTW, is seeing the need for more housing, which in turn creates the need for jobs and such. They kind of play off each other for sure."

She has also been encouraged by seeing several new businesses in the region.

"We've seen the more significant

commercial growth there," she said. "Hopefully, as the town puts in more of the infrastructure and the roads, I'm hoping to see a lot more development come from that way."

Looking ahead, Maynard noted they have collaborated with Landmark Planning and Design to conduct a review of the development plan.

While there are no significant changes in the policy section of the document, some adjustments have been proposed in the mapping designations. The document is currently undergoing an information review by provincial departments prior to the scheduling of public hearings.

In addition, the RPGA has revised its building by-law and developed a new fee and charges by-law along with a comprehensive permit guide.

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WEDDING SPECIAL

## 6 essential elements for planning a successful wedding

Just got engaged and ready to start planning your big day? Organizing a wedding is exciting, but it also requires you to make a lot of decisions. Here are five key things to keep in mind.

### 1. SET A BUDGET

Start by deciding how much you're willing to spend on the event. You don't need an exact figure right away, but you should try to estimate costs for essentials like the venue, cake, dresses and suits.

### 2. CHOOSE AN OFFICIANT

Depending on whether you want a civil or religious ceremony, you'll have to hire someone who is legally authorized to declare you married. This could be a priest, a notary or even a family member who obtains the proper authorization.

### 3. SEND OUT INVITATIONS

Whether you send your invitations by post or email, get them out as soon as possible. Ideally, you should do this at least four months before the wedding. This will help you confirm the number of place settings, chairs and other arrangements that need to be provided on the big day.



### 4. PLAN THE MENU

One of the keys to a successful wedding is undoubtedly serving good food. Take the time to explore your catering options. Some caterers, for example, offer complete buffet menus that include vegetarian or lactose-free dishes.

### 5. BOOK AN ENTERTAINER OR MUSICIAN

Music sets the tone for the celebration. Depending on your budget and preferences, hire a DJ or live band to play appropriate music at the ceremony, cocktail hour and reception. Always ask for references from satisfied customers before booking.

### 6. PLAN THE HONEYMOON

When planning your honeymoon, consider booking a private cabin or lakeside stay, exploring nearby resorts or boutique hotels, and choosing a destination that allows time to rest and reconnect. Prioritize comfort, privacy, and a pace that suits you both.

Planning a wedding involves many details, but careful preparation will ensure nothing gets overlooked as you create a magical moment that reflects who you are. Hire a specialized company in your area.

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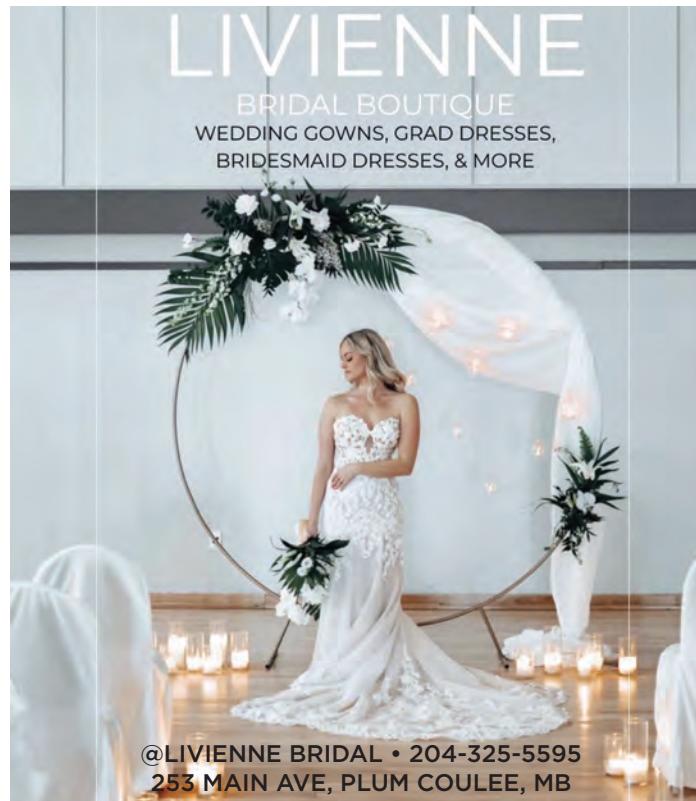


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# sports&recreation



PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

The Winkler Skating Club hosted the 2026 Prairie Regionals last weekend, welcoming synchronized skating teams from across Manitoba and Saskatchewan. The Winkler and Morden clubs were well-represented at the event, with the Pembina Pizazz from the Morden Figure Skating Club and the Precision team from Winkler hitting the ice. Clockwise from above: The Pizazz Star 4 group, Pizazz Star 8, Pizazz Adult II, and Pizazz Star 6.



## Flyers down Blues, fall to Pistons and Terriers

By Ashleigh Viveiros

It was a week of mixed results for the Winkler Flyers as they downed one team below them in the standings but then were handed losses by two above them.

Last Tuesday the fourth-place Flyers squared off against the second-place Steinbach Pistons.

Niklas Gudmundson got Winkler's lone goal of the night, tying the game at 1-1 midway through the second period. But the Pistons retook the lead minutes later and then fired home the final nail in the coffin on an empty net late in the third to take it 3-1.

Liam Ernst made 24 saves off 26 shots before he was pulled for the ex-

tra man. His teammates sent 38 the other way.

Winkler's offensive lines had a better go of it a few nights later in Winnipeg against the Blues, who are in second last place in the MGEU East Division.

Goals from Riley Fequet and Tanner George at both ends of the first had Winkler up 2-0 after 20 minutes. William Lyons made it 3-1 midway through the second before the Blues finally got themselves on the board. Kam Thomas rounded things out with Winkler's fourth of the night in the third, giving the Flyers the win 4-1.

The Flyers once again dominated the shots battle, this time 49-24, with

Ernst making 23 saves.

The next night they found themselves in Portage facing off against the third-place Terriers.

The back-and-forth game saw the home team up 3-2 after 20 minutes, with Winkler's goals coming courtesy of Fequet and Lyons.

Period two saw Portage grow their lead by one midway through, though a goal by Ethan MacTavish with minutes left before the buzzer kept Winkler within one of tying.

Two more Portage goals widened that gap 6-3 in the third, and while MacTavish and Fequet did their best to close it in the final five minutes of the night, the Flyers couldn't get the tying goal to force overtime, giving

the win to the Terriers 6-5.

Ernst was between the posts again, making 30 saves off 36 shots. Winkler had 33 shots on goal.

At press time, Winkler remained in fourth place in the MJHL's East Division with a record of 23-16-1-2 and 49 points. They trail the first-place Niverville Nighthawks (who have clinched their playoff spot already) by a full 28 points, Steinbach in second by 17 points, and Portage in third by six. Ten points behind the Flyers in fifth place are the Selkirk Steelers.

This week the Flyers hosted the Blues Tuesday (results were not available at press time) and welcome Niverville Friday and Swan Valley Saturday.

# Male Hawks maintain place in standings

Blanked by Brandon, best Central Plains

By Lorne Stelmach

The male U18 Pembina Valley Hawks at least maintained their position in the middle of the pack in the standings this past weekend with a loss to Brandon and a victory over Central Plains.

After falling 5-0 to second-place Brandon on home ice Saturday, the Hawks rebounded to pick up a 5-1 win against Central Plains Sunday, with that game also in Morden.

Goaltender Koen Bleznuk was under fire against Brandon and made 48 saves as the Wheat Kings outshot the Hawks 53-27.

Brandon did all of their scoring in the second period, grabbing a 3-0 lead just 2:21 into it.

Carson Hiebert led the way with a pair of goals Sunday to help the Hawks earn the win over the Capitals.

Pembina Valley led 2-1 after one and then put it away with three more unanswered goals in the last period



PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Above: Pembina Valley Hawks goalie Koen Bleznuk does the splits to stop one of the 53 shots he faced Saturday night against Brandon. Right: The Wheat Kings' Benjamin Sveistrup and Hawk Paxton White battle for the puck. Brandon won it 5-0.

Mason Leite, Cole Secord and Ragnar Gillis also scored for the Hawks, while Bleznuk made 30 saves as Pembina Valley outshot Central Plains 43-31.

The Hawks remain in eighth place at 22-15-1-1 for 46 points, which leaves them just one back of Parkland and Southwest while sitting a comfortable 13 points ahead of Yellowhead.

The team was set to visit the Winnipeg Wild Wednesday before starting a five-game homestand beginning with Kenora Friday and then Brandon Sunday.



# Female Hawks 1-1 in close weekend games

By Lorne Stelmach

The female U18 Pembina Valley Hawks were on the opposite ends of two close one-goal games this past weekend.

They got back in the win column Saturday by edging the Yellowhead Chiefs 2-1 in overtime, but they then came up just short Sunday in being edged 4-3 by the Westman Wildcats.

Against Yellowhead, Chase Braun's first goal of the season with just over four minutes remaining in regulation time forced overtime, where Casey O'Brien connected for her 11th goal of the season early in the period.

Shots on goal were 26-25 in favour of the Hawks, and Hannah Bannister got the win in net with 24 saves.

Madison Froese kept Pembina Valley in the game against Westman, as

she made 41 saves as the Wildcats outshot the Hawks 45-17.

The Hawks trailed 2-1 after the first period but then led 3-2 after 40 minutes. They got goals from O'Brien, Makayla Warnick, and Clare Boyd, but Westman evened it up early in the third with a power play marker and then got the winner with just over five minutes remaining.

Pembina Valley remains in seventh

place at 8-15-0-1 for 17 points, which has them tied with Central Plains but with a game in hand.

The Hawks visit Shoal Lake Friday to take on Yellowhead before moving on to Hartney to face Westman Saturday. They return home to Morden to meet Eastman Monday.

# Mudbugs rebound with back-to-back wins over Aces

By Annaliese Meier

The Red River Mudbugs picked up four points in a busy three-game stretch of Hanover Tache Junior Hockey League action last week, rebounding from an overtime loss with

back-to-back wins against Ste. Anne.

Red River opened the week with a 5-4 overtime loss to the East St. Paul Gators on Wednesday, Jan. 28, at St. Jean Arena. The Mudbugs trailed 3-1 after the first period but responded with goals from Owen Fehr and

Traeton Peters in the second to take a brief lead. Eli Bergman added a third-period marker to give Red River a 4-3 advantage before East St. Paul scored twice late in regulation to force overtime. Tyler Blanchette made 24 saves in the loss.

The Mudbugs responded emphatically Friday night with an 8-3 home win over the Ste. Anne Aces. After a 1-1 first period, Red River scored six unanswered goals over the final two

Continued on page 15

# SEMHL roundup: Royals surge, Bombers split, Wild rebound

By Annaliese Meier

The Winkler Royals continued their strong push near the top of the South Eastern Manitoba Hockey League standings with a decisive home win before stumbling on the road, while the Morden Bombers earned a dramatic comeback victory and the Red River Wild bounced back with a third-period rally of their own.

## Winkler Royals

Winkler skated to a 7-4 victory over the Red River Wild on Jan. 27, building a 5-2 first-period lead and never relinquishing control. Aaron Lewadniuk led the offence with a hat trick, while Cody Fowlie added two goals, including a power-play marker. TJ Matuszewski chipped in with a goal and an assist as Winkler went 1-for-

2 on the man advantage. Goaltender Matthew Thiessen turned aside 38 shots to earn the win.

The Royals were unable to carry that momentum into Notre Dame on Jan. 31, falling 6-1 to the Notre Dame Hawks. Max Collet scored twice for the Hawks, who jumped out to a four-goal first period. Lewadniuk netted Winkler's lone goal late in the third, while Thiessen made 39 saves in the loss. Winkler sits second in the SEMHL standings with a 12-3-1 record.

Winkler is scheduled to visit Carman on Feb. 6 before travelling to Warren on Feb. 7.

The Bombers erased a two-goal third-period deficit to edge the Warren Mercs 6-5 on Jan. 29 at home. Michael Hlady and Jay Fehr scored early in the third to swing the game, with

Fehr's power-play marker standing up as the winner. Collin Shirley finished with two goals and an assist, while Reed Peters made 36 saves for the victory.

Morden followed that effort with a narrow 5-4 loss to the Ile des Chenes Northstars on Feb. 1. The Bombers scored three goals in just over six minutes midway through the third to tie the game, but Josh Beauchemin's second of the night restored the Northstars' lead. Tyler Campbell scored late to keep Morden within one, but the equalizer never came.

The Bombers sit sixth in the standings and are set to host Notre Dame on Feb. 7.

After the loss in Winkler, Red River responded with a 4-3 comeback win over the Carman Beavers on Jan. 31.

Trailing 3-1 entering the third period, the Wild scored three unanswered goals, capped by Troy Lehmann's game-winner at 15:18. Jonah Wasylak recorded two goals and an assist, while Jayden Catellier stopped 18 shots to secure the win.

Red River remains third overall in the SEMHL standings and will face Springfield on Feb. 6 before hosting Ile des Chenes on Feb. 7.

Springfield leads the league with 26 points, followed closely by Winkler (25) and Red River (22). Ile des Chenes (19) and Warren (16) round out the top five, with Morden (15) and Notre Dame (15) battling in the middle of the pack. Carman sits ninth.

# Twisters split weekend at home, fall 5-4 to Charleswood

By Lana Meier

The Pembina Valley Twisters earned a home victory Friday before coming up short in a high-scoring loss Sunday as they continued Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League play at the Morris MultiPlex.

Pembina Valley opened the weekend with a 4-2 win over the St. Vital Jr. Victorias on Friday, Jan. 30, outshooting the visitors 42-32.

Darby Olson scored twice, including an empty-net goal, while Josh Guilford and Owen Vanrobaeys also found the net. Guilford's power-play goal early in the third period proved

to be the game-winner. Rowan Cherka stopped 30 of 32 shots, and the Twisters killed off all five St. Vital power plays while going 1-for-4 with the man advantage.

On Sunday, Feb. 1, Pembina Valley fell 5-4 to the Charleswood Hawks, despite holding a 37-33 edge in shots.

Tyson Sperber led Charleswood with a hat trick, with Nathan Glavina and Kaelan Briggs adding singles. Ethan Wilde, Cohen Thomas, Carter Unger and Dominic Rooney scored for the Twisters, who received goals in all three periods but could not complete the comeback. Special teams were even on the night, with no pow-

er-play goals recorded by either side.

With the split, Pembina Valley sits at 5-25-1 on the season, remaining 10th in the MMJHL standings.

The Twisters return to action Thursday, Feb. 6, hosting the Ft. Garry/Ft. Rouge Twins for an 8 p.m. puck drop at the Morris MultiPlex.

# Aces, Thunder win Zones



[FACEBOOK.COM/ALTONACURLINGCLUB](https://www.facebook.com/AltonaCurlingClub)

Local teams clinched the banner at the Zone 4 curling championships in Portage last weekend. The W.C. Miller Collegiate Aces team of Ellie Friesen, London Friesen, Myla Froese, and Emily Hiebert downed Miami Marlins 9-3 in the final to win the girls championship. On the boys side, the Morden Thunder beat the Garden Valley Collegiate Zodiacs 8-1 to bring home the banner. The team includes Jesse Fehr, Jakob Harder, Andrew Rothenburger, Tommy Rothenburger, and Birch Evan Froese. The two teams will now represent their schools at the 2026 MHSAA Provincial Curling Championships in Winnipeg Feb. 12-14.

**Voice**

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# getinformed

## Recovery of Hope hosting educational workshop Feb. 25

By Lorne Stelmach

Recovery of Hope is launching a new series of free, community-sponsored mental health workshops aimed at expanding access to mental health education across southern Manitoba.

*Roots of Anxiety: Nurturing Wellbeing in a Worried World* running in Winkler later this month focuses on an issue which they feel has become an increasing concern for more and more people.

Program director Kim Thiessen sees the session as "focusing a lot on just providing people and clients ... with life skill tools ... focusing on stress and anxiety."

"I think we're very much aware that, in our current economic reality, there is some significant stress out there for employers, employees, families ... all of those things like cost of living," she continued. "And quite apart from all of those things that impact us every day, there's also kind of the global reality that we live in a world that just feels kind of uncertain now."

Thiessen sees a key thing here as being how stress and anxiety work their way into our lives and wellbeing both

physically and mentally, and they have seen that through an increase in their client numbers.

"It's not that it wasn't there before, but it feels different," she said. "It feels a little bit more pronounced than it has been in the past."

The workshop is open to all adults, parents, caregivers, educators, faith communities, workplaces, and community members seeking practical tools to better understand anxiety and support emotional wellbeing.

The session will be led by Andrea Dyck, a certified counsellor, in Winkler on Feb. 25 from 7-9 p.m. at 545 Industrial Dr.

The evening will focus on understanding why anxiety is increasing in today's world, how it presents in both adults and children, and practical attachment-safe strategies to support emotional wellbeing.

This workshop series also represents a new approach for Recovery of Hope, which has historically offered educational workshops on a fee-based model. Through a community-sponsored framework, Recovery of Hope is intentionally removing financial barriers for potential participants, Thiessen noted.

"We've learned over time that the people who could benefit most from this kind of education aren't always able to afford the one-time workshop fee," she said. "This shift allows us to respond to that reality in a way that aligns with our values—ensuring an accessible space to learn, reflect, and grow without cost being a deciding factor."

The community-sponsored model also creates opportunities for local organizations, businesses, churches, and employers to play an active role in supporting mental wellbeing.

In addition to supporting the workshop itself, any excess sponsorship funds raised through the series will support Recovery of Hope's sliding fee scale, ensuring individuals and families can access counselling services regardless of income.

"Community sponsorship allows the impact of this workshop to extend well beyond a single evening," Thiessen said. "It supports ongoing access to counselling for those who need it most, while also giving organizations a meaningful way to invest in mental health within their own communities."



**SUPPLIED PHOTO**

Counsellor Andrea Dyck will be leading the Roots of Anxiety workshop in Winkler later this month.

ties."

While the workshop is offered at no cost to participants, advance registration is required as seating is limited.

To register, head to [edenhealthcare.ca/events/recovery-of-hope-roots-of-anxiety-workshop-2/](http://edenhealthcare.ca/events/recovery-of-hope-roots-of-anxiety-workshop-2/).

## Central Region Crop Meetings in Carman, Portage and Austin

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Manitoba Agriculture's 2026 Central Region Crop Meetings are coming up in three locations this month.

Specialists will be sharing information on pest, weed, and disease issues and management at talks in Carman, Portage la Prairie, and Austin.

"Winter is a key planning time for producers, and these meetings provide an opportunity to hear directly from extension experts, ask questions, and discuss challenges and opportunities with others in the region," said Callum Morrison, crop production extension specialist with Manitoba Agriculture. "The focus is on practical, research-based information that farmers can apply on their own operations in the coming year."

Morrison's own presentation will

provide pest monitoring updates and share a bit about the recently launched Prairies and Ontario cover crop survey.

Also speaking will be entomologist John Gavloski, who will provide updates and forecasts on the insects producers can expect to deal with this year, as well as scouting and management tips.

Rounding out the morning will be weed specialist Kim Brown with her tips on what weeds to watch out for and how to control them.

This is the third year these meetings have been held, Morrison shared, and past sessions have been well-received.

"We try to switch it up a little bit every year so it's different topics," he said, noting two of the meetings rotate between different locations across the region as well, giving all producers



**SUPPLIED PHOTO**

The annual crop meetings draw good crowds of producers eager to get the latest information as they draft their spring planting plans.

easy access to them.

"The meetings are open to farmers, agronomists, and others in the agricultural community," Morrison noted.

The Carman meeting takes place on Tuesday, Feb. 17 in the Legion Auxiliary Hall (28 1st St. NW), the Portage one is Wednesday, Feb. 18 at the MASC Portage office (50 24th St.

NW), and the Austin meeting is at the community centre (60 1st Ave.).

All the meetings run from 9:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m., with Morrison speaking at 9:30 a.m., Gavloski at 10 a.m., and Brown at 11 a.m.

No registration is required and there is no cost to attend.

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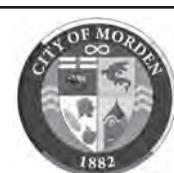
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## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE CITY OF MORDEN 2026 FINANCIAL PLAN

Pursuant to Section 162 (2) of The Municipal Act, Council of the City of Morden invites all ratepayers of the City of Morden to a Public Hearing in respect to the **2026 Financial Plan** (Budget) for the City of Morden. The purpose of the Public Hearing is to allow any interested persons to make a representation, ask questions or register an objection to the Financial Plan.

A presentation of the Financial Plan will be made in **Council Chambers** at the City of Morden Civic Center, 100-195 Stephen Street, Morden, Manitoba on **Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 7:00 P.M.** Copies of the Financial Plan will be made available to the public on **March 10, 2026**.

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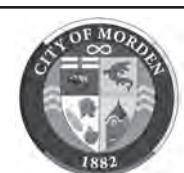
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## PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE CITY OF MORDEN 2026 FINANCIAL PLAN

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On the date and at the time and location shown below, a PUBLIC HEARING will be held to receive representations from any person(s) who wish to make them in respect to the following matter:

THE RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF STANLEY  
BY-LAW 2-26 Being an AMENDMENT to the R.M. OF STANLEY ZONING BY-LAW 8-18, AS AMENDED.

HEARING: R.M. of Stanley Council Chambers

LOCATION: 1-23111 PTH 14, SW 7-3-4W

DATE & TIME: February 12, 2026 at 10:05 a.m.

GENERAL INTENT: To amend Appendix 1 Use Table within Zoning By-law 8-18 to allow for the use of "Heavy Equipment Sales, Service, and Rental" as a conditional use in the Agriculture Limited Zone

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Melissa Groening, Planning and Development Officer  
Rural Municipality of Stanley  
1-23111 PTH 14,  
Stanley MB R6P 0B1  
Phone: (204) 325-4101  
Email: [mgroening@rmofstanley.ca](mailto:mgroening@rmofstanley.ca)

A copy of the above proposal and supporting material may be inspected at the location noted above during normal office hours, Monday to Friday. Copies may be made and extracts taken there from, upon request.

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**CAREERS**



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Contract - 1,200 hours approximate

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**Key Responsibilities**

- To execute the strategic initiatives of the Corn and Apple Board
- To be financially efficient in the day to day operations of the Corn & Apple Festival
- To provide administrative responsibilities on a day to day basis, including preparing reports, answering phones, etc.
- Coordination of grants, lotteries and other sources of revenues
- Social media execution and website maintenance
- Maintain a positive public image with all levels of stakeholders
- Recruit and supervise Corn & Apple Festival staff
- Responsible for Volunteer relations

**Qualifications**

- Administrative and/or public relations experience required
- Well-developed leadership skills
- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Ability to build rapport across all generations
- Proven ability to work independently

The Morden Corn & Apple Festival offers a competitive negotiable rate of pay and flexible work life balance.

**Please email your resume and cover letter to:**  
[admin@cornandapple.com](mailto:admin@cornandapple.com)

**This posting remains open until the position has been filled.**

*We thank all applicants; however only those invited for an interview will be contacted.*



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# \*MORDEN\* CHRISTMAS

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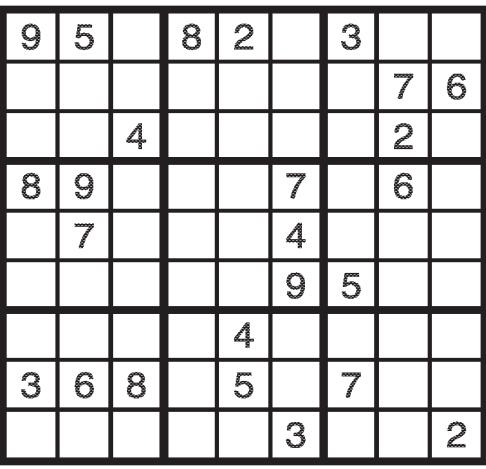
Thank you to everyone who donated to *Morden Christmas Cheer*, volunteered your time and/or planned a fundraising initiative. You are the driving force behind our organization and without community and people willing to step up - it simply would not be possible. Every single donation, every single minute volunteered, gives back to local families in need over the holiday season. *Whether this was your first season helping out Morden Christmas Cheer- or your 30th - thank you for making our community truly feel like a community.*

*We can not do this without all of you!*

# take a break

> GAMES

## SUDOKU



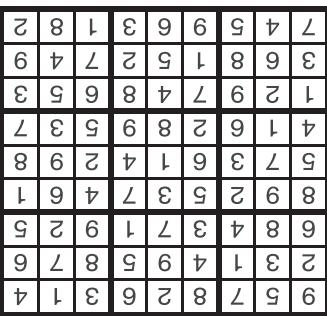
#### Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

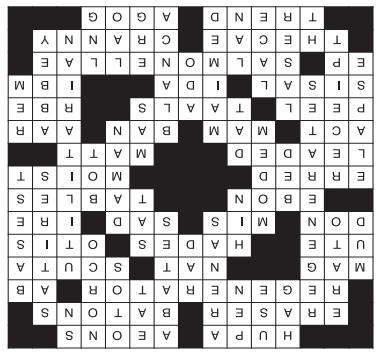
Level: Intermediate

#### Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!



Sudoku Answer

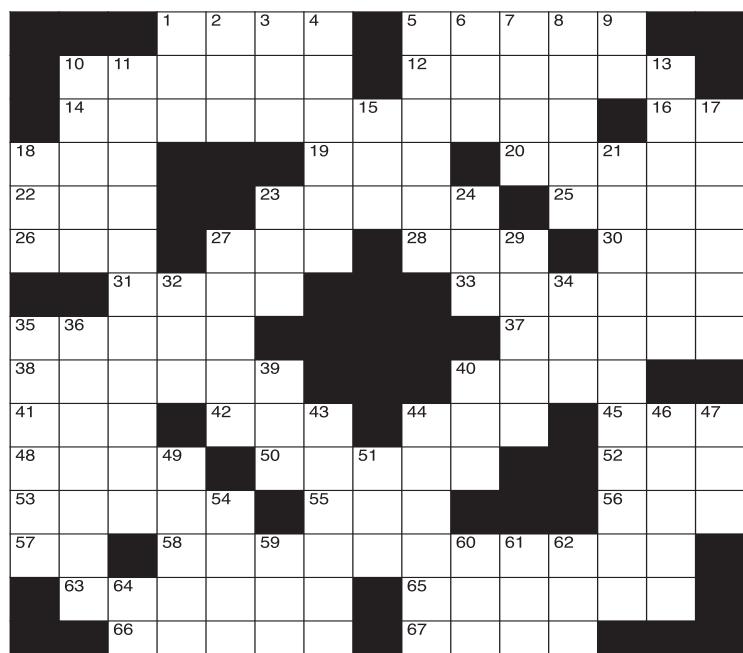


Crossword Answer

## X CROSSWORD

#### CLUES ACROSS

- Native American group of N. California
- Geological times (Brit. sp.)
- Tool to remove
- Rods
- One who renews
- They precede C
- Chatter incessantly
- King Cole, musician
- Insect parts
- One from Utah
- The world of the dead
- Singer Redding
- NBA legend Nelson
- Indicates wrongly
- Unhappy
- Anger
- Dark brown
- Some are in kitchens
- Made a mistake
- Damp
- Type of fuel
- Actor Damon
- What thespians do
- One's mother
- Disallow
- Swiss river
- A banana has one
- Philippines lake and volcano are two
- Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
- Agave
- Journalist Tarbell
- One-time tech giant
- Indicates upon
- Intestinal bacteria
- Loose sheaths around the spinal cord
- It goes with nook
- A fashion
- Very eager to hear or see



#### CLUES DOWN

- Witch
- Utilize
- Writing utensil
- Where rockers go to work
- Subsides
- Consume
- Greek mythological figures
- California mountain town
- Tin
- Muse of lyric and love poetry
- Animates anew
- Humorous criticisms
- Cool!
- Worst
- Wet dirt
- Designed to be useful
- Hebrew unit of liquid capacity
- High schoolers' test
- Computer device
- Indian territory \_\_\_ and Diu
- A place to sleep
- AI tool
- Pass or go by
- Indicates a purchase
- A digital tape recording of sound
- More (Spanish)
- Disfigured
- White (Spanish)
- Church building
- Georgia rockers
- Type of surgery
- Much \_\_\_ about nothing
- Make by braiding
- Local area network
- Unit of work or energy
- Member of indigenous people of Thailand

# Love to sing? Check out Pub Choir Feb. 20

By Ashleigh Viveiros

If you've ever watched a musical where a big group of people spontaneously burst into song and wished you could be part of it, Prairie Soundscape has just the event for you.

The choir is hosting its latest Pub Choir night at Winkler Arts and Culture (547 Park St.) on Friday, Feb. 20, and everyone—of any age or experience level—is welcome to join in on the fun.

"Our goal with Pub Choir is just to have a casual evening where people can sing together," explains organizer Hannah Franz. "You don't have to have previous musical experience, you don't need to be able to read music, and you don't need to have been part of a choir before."

"You show up, we've got bar service—whether that's for alcoholic beverages or non-alcoholic soda, whatever you like—we have tables set up and you can sit with your friends, we have a band come in, and one of our choir directors will teach a couple of different parts for each song."

They keep things pretty simple, Franz says.

"Here's the higher harmony, here's a lower harmony, male, female, whatever part—pick your favourite. We go through it a couple of times and then we put it all together."

"At the end, you've got a piece of

music that we have taught without a single piece of sheet music, something that everyone can sing together."

Past Pub Choir events in Winkler and Morden have proven to be a big hit, reaching an even wider range of singers than Prairie Soundscape's spring choir program usually does.

"We've had people come who are in the choir and we've had people come who've never been in a choir before," Franz says. "We don't want any kind of barrier—if you want to sing, please come and sing with us."

Tickets are \$10 in advance online at [prairiesoundscape.ca](http://prairiesoundscape.ca) or at the door for \$15. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the singing begins at 7:30 p.m.

The evening coincides with the start of registration for Prairie Soundscape's adult choir, middle years choir, and small ensemble, which are slated to begin eight weeks of rehearsals in April.

"We meet once a week on Wednesday evenings," Franz explains, noting they practice in the Northlands Parkway Collegiate choir room. "And we do one big concert at the end."

All are welcome, she stresses.

"Our goal is to be as accessible as possible," Franz says. "We ask for a donation [to register] and we do have a specified amount that we suggest, but if you're not able to pay that it's not a requirement. We always have people coming in saying, 'Can I spon-



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Last fall's Pub Choir at Winkler Arts and Culture was a hit, and organizers at Prairie Soundscape are hoping for the same at the upcoming event, taking place on Friday, Feb. 20 at the gallery.



sor someone else, or can I donate extra so that if someone can't afford it?' So we're never going to stop someone from singing because they can't afford it."

More details are available at the website listed above.

## Thornhill, Manitou youth clinch first at Ag Days speech competition

By Lorne Stelmach

Two area youth made an impression at the recent Manitoba Ag Days through their speaking competition entries.

The Manitoba Young Speakers for Agriculture (MYSA) had both junior and senior students take part in their competition held in conjunction with Manitoba Ag Days for the first time.

A total of 30 young people shared their speeches via Zoom to a panel of judges. The final four in each of the two categories then presented their

speeches to another panel and an audience at the Keystone Centre in Brandon.

A top speaker in the junior category was William Derksen of Thornhill, while coming first in the senior category was Lillian Seward of Manitou. Neither could be reached for comment at press time.

Each of the top four finishers received a cash prize and the first-place winner of each age category has the opportunity to move on to the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto in November.

Derksen is a Gr. 7 student from Morden's Prairie Crossroads School. The 12-year-old made the claim Manitoba should be allowed to purchase raw milk—unpasteurized and non-homogenized—in stores seeing as technology and food handling has evolved significantly since this law was passed, making it safer to drink.

Derksen had requested to present his speech to Manitoba Ag Minister Ron Kostyshyn and his colleagues in the Manitoba Legislature, and he was able to speak with Kostyshyn after the winners were announced at Ag Days.

Meanwhile, Seward, who is a Gr. 10 student from Nellie McClung Collegiate, won first place in the senior category. The Seward family are cattle producers raising purebred limousine cattle in the Manitou area.

"Each of these individuals has a unique connection to agriculture and public speaking, but they all have a common interest in advancing the next generation of leaders," said MYSA committee member Leanne Sprung.