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Egg hunt

Rebecca Bergen, who turns three this month, was all smiles as she hunted down Easter eggs at her parent's farm near Morris over the weekend.

PHOTO SUBMITTED BY
VALERIE BERGEN

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Slight increase on Altona tax bills this year

By Lori Penner

Altona town council released their 2024/25 financial plan at a public meeting on March 26.

In his financial report, Councilor Jordan Siemens says they worked hard to balance the numbers this year to keep residential and business taxes as close to par as possible.

According to this year's plan, the Municipal Tax Levy will increase by \$225,054 (4.13 per cent) from last year.

However, after factoring in the natural/supplemental tax increase of

\$106,618, the net increase in the 2024 Municipal Tax Levy is \$121,435, representing an increase of 2.19 per cent.

The 2024 municipal mill rate will increase by 2.39 per cent, from 19.24 to 19.70.

The impact on municipal taxes will vary by residence or business, depending on the change in the property assessment value as determined by the local provincial assessment branch.

The Provincial Educational Support Levy mill rate has decreased from 8.14 to 8.12, and the Border Land School

Division mill rate will also see an increase from 11.864 to 12.193.

What will this mean on your tax bill?

For a home assessed at \$200,000, residents will see a \$76 increase



PHOTO BY LORI PENNER/VOICE

Members of Altona town council during last week's public financial plan presentation.

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on their property taxes. Commercial properties assessed at the same value will see an increase of \$106.

Siemens said the town is in a healthy financial place this year.

"Due to economic growth, we were able to keep our taxes fairly consistent."

A major component of this year's budget is the capital plan that council uses to ensure that long-term spending is prioritized and focused on needs versus wants.

In 2024, the Town of Altona will be working with an operating budget of \$11,935,955, which will support a number of capital projects and initiatives.

The plan includes a comprehensive road renewal and infrastructure project of \$1,188,300. This includes a Mill and Fill roads project, targeting various deteriorating streets. Work on the southwest drainage project will continue, and McKinley Cove will get a new walking path.

Phase 1 of the Business Park expansion project will cost \$550,000.

Building an accessible washroom facility at Centennial Park is also on the list. This \$30,000 project is the result of a Walk and Roll exercise hosted by the Accessibility committee last summer.

The Aquatic Park will receive a new pump for the waterslides. There will also be pathway and trail improvements, including lights. The Buffalo Creek Nature Park will see some bridge repairs.

Council has also pegged \$150,000 for improvements and the installation of a columbarium at the cemetery south of town.

Additional focus areas for this year will include a mini pumper fire truck (\$440,000, split 50/50 with the Municipality of Rhineland), and a new Public Works wheel loader (\$212,000). The Rhineland Pioneer Centre and

MEC will see improvements such as a generator, a new electric ice resurfacer, a new floor cleaning machine, improved minor hockey storage, and new flooring for meeting rooms, offices, and the Curling Club lounge (\$258,500). Gallery in the Park will get new siding and roof repairs (\$120,000).

Long-term financial commitments will support economic growth like the Kiddie Sunshine Daycare project, the Industrial Park Expansion and tax incentive programs.

While inflation was certainly a factor in the budget planning process for this year, Siemens says they're in a solid place financially.

"The biggest challenge will be paying for the industrial park. But we've been selling a lot of lots, so right now it's more than paying for the debt that we'll have to pay this year.

"The province also increased their grants, both for policing and general municipalities, so that is helpful as well. The police grant went up by over \$100,000 last year. They hadn't increased it for eight years so we are not quite caught up to where we think we should be, but at least it's a start."

In spite of increased expenses, council was still able to put \$430,000 back into reserves.

"We've been increasing the amount we put into reserves over the last couple of years and are definitely making progress there," Siemens says.

Siemens notes that council worked hard to keep the tax increase to a minimum.

"I think it's going to be one of the lowest in the region. I credit good management from our staff. We try to be as efficient as possible. The economic growth we've been having, and the new construction has helped, for sure. We're confident that things are looking good for the coming year."

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PVWD honours two farms with 2024 Conservation Award

By Lorne Stelmach

Two farming operations that aim to be environmentally conscious in a variety of ways are sharing an annual award.

The Pembina Valley Watershed District (PVWD) in partnership with Manitoba Department of Environment and Climate has honoured both Fresh Roots Farm and Dogs Run Farm with this year's annual PVWD Conservation Award.

The Dogs Run Farm is a small family business near Clearwater operated by Katie and Colin McInnes that uses agro-ecological practices to raise cattle, pigs, sheep, broilers, turkeys and laying hens in a pasture-based system. It markets its products directly to the end consumer through online sales and farm-to-table deliveries.

Fresh Roots Farm near Cartwright is owned and operated by Troy Stozek and Michelle Schram. The duo decided to bring their shared passions for agro-ecology, social justice, and community development to Schram's home community to start a farm and food business.

PVWD manager Ryan Sheffield noted it would have been hard to choose between the two because they are both smaller farms that are creating a successful business with a smaller footprint, and they both help show what is possible by setting outstanding examples.

"They're doing the same as us—we're trying to lead by example and show people how to have an environmentally friendly farming practice and focus on communication and telling the story."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Pembina Valley Watershed District reps with this year's Conservation Award winners. From left: Ryan Sheffield (PVWD manager), Michelle Schram (Fresh Roots Farm), Troy Stozek (Fresh Roots Farm), Colin McInnes (The Dogs Run Farm), Katie McInnes (The Dogs Run Farm), Bill Howatt (PVWD board chair), and Grant Matchullis (PVWD board member).

For 11 years, the McInnes' have been working to grow their farm from its start of only a few acres and feeding a few families to a full-time farm business that provides hundreds of customers every month with healthy pasture raised food.

As first-generation farmers raised in Winnipeg without ties to a farm, they were challenged with lack of access to land, capital, and infrastructure when they began their small operation in 2013.

Through the help of mentorships with experienced farmers and support from their new communities and customers, they have been able to grow to steward 230-plus acres of land, raising five different species of

animals and offering an array of meat products.

In 2023 they were the second farm in Manitoba to be "land to market" certified—a global verification system which uses quantifiable metrics to ensure producer practices are regen-

erative.

The goals for The Dogs Run Farm centre around managing for a diverse prairie landscape with space for both native species and a robust local community.

Continued on page 5

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Pembina Counselling working to meet rising demand

By Lorne Stelmach

Pembina Counselling Centre continues to see an ever-increasing need for its services, but there may be both good and bad in that unfortunate reality.

It is a challenge for the not-for-profit organization to keep up with the demand, but one can at least be thankful that people are seeking out help, executive director Chris Derksen suggested last week as PCC prepared for its upcoming spring fundraiser.

"I try to look at it positively in that I think, by and large, the stigma around struggling with mental health is declining, and so I think people are feeling more open to the idea of asking for help. I think that's a good thing," he said. "I definitely think there are a

lot of circumstances that are stressing people. There certainly are things that are concerning to us.

"We're seeing way more youth than we used to ... again, you can see that as a negative, as they are under a lot of stress ... perhaps in the past those services weren't as available to children or parents never had that possibility or that resource to help children."

PCC holds its spring fundraiser featuring comedian Phil Callaway of Laugh Again on Thursday, April 18 at 7 p.m. at the Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church. Tickets are free, but people need to register by calling 204-822-6622 or e-mailing reception@pc-cmb.ca.

The fundraiser is vital to the organization, as half of their income comes from client fees but the other half

needs to be raised through grants and donations.

"We've grown by so much in the last four years," Derksen shared. "Our budget has literally doubled since 2019 to now, and we more than doubled our counsellors from three in 2019 to eight currently, and we might be adding another one."

"Like any business, the more we grow, the more it costs to operate, so we've having to look at other sources of funding, but this certainly is our primary fundraiser for the year, although we might be doing another one in September."

Derksen noted it is a positive that they have been able to return to doing events like this now post-pandemic.

Continued on page 7



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Pembina Counselling Centre's Chris Derksen says the non-profit is working hard to meet the rising demand for their services.

"I THINK, BY AND LARGE, THE STIGMA AROUND STRUGGLING WITH MENTAL HEALTH IS DECLINING, AND SO I THINK PEOPLE ARE FEELING MORE OPEN TO THE IDEA OF ASKING FOR HELP."

Phil Callaway to speak at PCC fundraiser

By Lorne Stelmach

The increasing demand for the services of an organization like Pembina Counselling Centre (PCC) is exactly why Phil Callaway does what he does as an author and speaker.

The host of Laugh Again is known worldwide for his humorous yet perceptive look at life, and he sees that people in this day and age increasingly need to be cheered up.

"That's essentially what I do," said Callaway, who is featured at the April 18 spring fundraiser in support of PCC at the Winkler Mennonite Brethren Church.

"A big part of what I do is storytelling. That's really where it all started,

telling stories of hope in the midst of difficulties, which is something that is what I have really built my career on ... learning to laugh when life stinks."

Callaway is the best-selling author of more than 30 books and booklets, and he is the host of Laugh Again, a ministry of The Good News Broadcasting Association of Canada.

Laugh Again is a humour and storytelling-based program that strives to engage people of all backgrounds with a message of hope and joy found in a daily growing relationship with God and the Bible. It can be enjoyed on radio, web, mobile app, podcast, YouTube and multiple print resources.

Continued on page 7

Access Credit Union Director Elections

April 8th-12th Vote for **Scott Beattie**
beattiefortheboard.com



It's important **you exercise your voting rights** as an Access Credit Union (ACU) member.

The upcoming ACU Board of Directors election chooses individuals who are tasked with overseeing the activities and strategic direction of the ACU on behalf of members. **Member satisfaction should be central to every conversation and strategic direction the board undertakes.**

To serve members best, ACU board members should have the time and capacity to fulfill the role and should provide experienced and thoughtful representation. This means board members should be:

- Prepared for meetings.
- Continually learning.
- Understand the ACU's history.
- Be an active user of the ACU's financial services.

Any **change** to the individuals who make up the ACU board of directors should be **towards a qualified and experienced individual** who understands Credit Union history **and who actively uses its services.**

I have been an active Credit Union member since 1996. I have utilized all levels – community organization accounts, business accounts, and personal accounts – of the Credit Union's competitive financial services at both the Morden and Winkler branches throughout the last 30 years. I was elected to the ACU board of directors in 2018 and participated as ACU grew to include Crosstown Civic Credit Union and then to the amalgamation of Noventis and Sunova Credit Union.

I know how important the ACU is to the membership. I believe the membership can shape the direction of the Credit Union by **electing qualified leadership** that has a vested interest in the region in which the Credit Union serves. **It is important Southern Manitoba continues to have a voice at the ACU board of director's table.**

ACU members should vote to appoint a representative who exemplifies all the required qualities. **I believe I can serve ACU's diverse membership in new and exciting ways. I look forward to listening and connecting with members!**

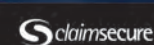
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“There’s so much more work that needs to be done”

From Pg. 3

They strive to create positive change through planting native trees, managed grazing, holding water on the landscape and creating healthy soils which sequester carbon and retain water effectively throughout the seasons.

All of these practices create habitat, provide food for wildlife, reduce erosion, and help provide resiliency to climate change while at the same time increasing their profitability by increasing the carrying capacity of their land, improving the health of animals, and lowering input costs.

They are students of holistic management, and while the direct management of their farm and farm business is incredibly important to them, what they are probably most proud of is their community-minded approach to farming and food.

They have worked diligently to help build community in the regenerative agriculture and direct marketing community in Manitoba by mentoring young farmers, creating marketing partnerships with other farmers like Troy and Michelle of Fresh Roots Farm, educating consumers, and working to advocate for farms practicing regenerative agriculture.

They also share their knowledge and strive to foster a community that helps build the local food movement in Manitoba and increase awareness about regenerative practices. They have taken many opportunities to partner with Manitoba food security organizations to facilitate donations of their meat, eggs, and handmade soap—getting them directly to the individuals who can benefit from them.

“We’re honoured to have our work recognized by the PVWD,” Katie McInnes said via email. “As new farmers, the award signifies that what we have tried to do with our farm is valued within our community and by our peers.”

“We are also honoured to be recognized alongside our friends and collaborators Troy and Michelle at Fresh Roots Farm,” she added. “Our working relationship has been meaningful to our growth as farm-

ers and as a business. It feels fitting to be presented the conservation award together.”

Fresh Roots Farm’s Troy Stozek is a first-generation farmer from Dauphin with agrarian roots, while Michelle grew up on a multi-generation family farm.

Since 2012, they have dedicated themselves to establishing a farm business on part of the family land rooted in those core environmental, social, and economic value. They raise grass-fed beef and honeybees on primarily perennial forages and floral sources.

They believe there is great value in landscapes growing a high diversity of perennial plants, which can result in a much more balanced, dynamic and resilient ecosystem. They market all of the beef and much of honey they produce directly to customers throughout Manitoba through their website and retail stores.

Their holistic management training convinced them that focusing their cattle grazing management on improving soil health and increasing biodiversity can lead to cascading positive effects ecologically and economically.

The honey business began on a whim, after bringing home two hives in 2012, but it quickly turned into a full-blown passion and scaled up commercial venture of 200+ hives and on-farm processing and packaging facility.

They now work with a number of other landowners in the area with similar land management practices to house their growing apiary during the growing season and their honey can be found in 20+ retail stores.

“It is nice when we can benefit multiple farm enterprises with the same management practices, as is the case with managing for soil health and biodiversity,” said Stozek.

“Intensive grazing with long rest periods increases desired plant species, builds soil and offers bees, cattle and other critters a more balanced diet,” he continued. “The same is true of adding more legumes and trees to the landscape. The diverse and many flowers benefit the bees as nectar and pollen sources for a longer period during the season and also provide excellent forage, shade and shelter for our grass-fed beef program.”

Stozek sees it all as coming down to focusing more on the big picture.

“We’ve always had a pretty strong compassion and commitment towards a higher purpose beyond farming. We’ve always had the motivation to try to commit to a larger environmental cause,” he said.

It would be an added benefit if they could in turn inspire others.

“That’s not ultimately what we’re motivated by, but we do see that there is a real need, and we feel a sense of urgency for the bigger

picture,” said Stozek. “Agriculture has such a huge potential to have a positive impact on things like climate change and solving some of our water woes.

“There’s so much more work that needs to be done, and there are resources now than ever before to do some of this work.”

Sheffield said they value how these two farms really connect with their customers and build awareness around the importance of producing healthy food in the right way.

“They both seem to focus on every aspect of having a very environmentally healthy farming operation. They seem to always be trying to improve and develop more beneficial practices.”

The **Voice**

getheard

EDITORIAL > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS



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OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



And then there was flavour

Like many a person, I had come to enjoy eating early in life, given its requirement for survival, but flavour was often an element that appeared to be inconsequential to the activity.

In terms of palate exposure, I was raised entirely by my mum and her Irish/Italian heritage, having known nothing of my Jewish father's heritage and its cuisine for years to come.

As far as cooking went, Mum leaned decidedly toward the Irish end of the spectrum (as she understood it). A common meal would always include one or more boiled potatoes, whole, without butter, margarine, salt, or pepper. Just an indifferent lump on the plate.

Included with this delicacy was often a strip of liver, fried plain within an inch of its life until what landed on the plate would have been a tremendously successful sole for a work boot.

Sometimes, with a bit of luck, the Italian side would show up in the kitchen, which meant spaghetti, chili con carne, chicken cacciatore, spinach and beans, etc. Foods with a modicum of flavour.

I need to cut Mum some slack. She had been kicked out of her home as a teen and being a single parent on welfare did not leave an enormous

amount of leeway for variety in terms of food.

As the years rolled on, student financial aid allowed me to go to university in Ottawa. While there I made a few friends, several of whom were girls that I was eager to impress given my lack of exposure to them growing up (other than sisters who were quite a different species).

At a certain point, my friend Nancy's parents came to visit and wanted to take her and some of her friends out to dinner.

"Where should I meet you?"

"We'll be having Malaysian food at the Chahaya Malaysia."

In my head I panicked—"What's Malaysian food? It doesn't sound remotely appetizing. How can I possibly eat something that isn't entirely potato-based?"

Out loud, eager to appear worldly, I said, "Sure that sounds awesome!" and my fate was sealed.

At dinner, varying foods I could not identify arrived and, in communal style, we dug in. I followed other people's leads and soon the plate was packed with rice, spring rolls, chicken, beef and pork dishes, along with veggies of varying types all glazed in

a multitude of sauces and grilled in varying styles.

With the first tentative bite something unfamiliar overwhelmed me: flavour. Complex, spicy, bright, powerful flavours unlike anything I had ever had in my life.

So began my lifelong love affair with South Asian cuisine. To this day the Chahaya Malaysia (now celebrating its 39th year) is my favourite restaurant of all time and every time I get to Ottawa I am required to eat there.

Without exaggeration, if I could only eat a select set of foods for the rest of my life, they would be Indian, Pakistani, Malaysian, Sri Lankan, and Nepalese. Nothing else compares.

This is one of the reasons I have been excited to see the burgeoning growth of restaurants offering Indian and Pakistani food and groceries in the Pembina Valley, including places like Chat Masala, Kitchen of Spices, Wow Indian Food, and Stop & Shop for groceries.

Flavour—it scares a lot of people who like to stick to the familiar, but I would urge you to expand your palate and try something new. You can

Continued on page 7

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

> CALLAWAY, FROM PG. 4

All of these family-friendly programs and resources feature Callaway as he focuses on real-life matters communicated through humorous stories that engage people with both practical and biblical wisdom.

He sees this career path as having its foundation in his upbringing.

"I come from a family where my mom and dad, but particularly my mom, had mental health issues, and so my start in comedy was cheering her up and getting her to laugh when I was just five," he shared. "So that was just a natural response for me to trouble and discovered it was fairly magical," said Callaway. "She would get up out of bed if I did it fairly right ... she would go to the kitchen and fix

me breakfast, so it was my first paying gig."

He continues to do a lot of fundraising events and always likes opportunities to support organizations that are doing worthwhile things.

"I used to speak a hundred times a year, but we've cut down on that," he said, noting he now wants to spend more time with family as well.

"I just love doing it. I love being around people and watching them laugh, but then to do fundraisers for organizations that are doing something substantial ... that's a bonus.

"It's a challenging time ... the statistics are rather alarming when it comes to depression," Callaway said in reflecting on the need for organizations

like Pembina Counselling Centre. "They're doing substantial work, so we need to stand behind them.

"People need wise counsel and they're not getting enough of it," he said. "We're in a culture and time where people are discouraged and down and broken and struggling, so when a place like this is over-run ... if I can help them raise some money by bringing them some hope to an audience and giving them something to laugh about then it's right in the centre of where I want to be."

PCC executive director Chris Derksen said Callaway very much fits with their vision and mission.

"We had Phil here a number of years ago, and we thought it was a good



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Phil Callaway is the guest speaker at the Pembina Counselling Centre's spring fundraiser later this month.

time to bring him back," he said. "They say laughter is the best medicine, and truly laughter is a great way to deal with whatever stress there is at the moment."

Tickets for the event are free but need people to register by calling 204-822-6622 or e-mailing reception@pc-cmb.ca.

> PEMBINA COUNSELLING, FROM PG. 4

"We want it to be a really great time of fellowship," he said. "Coming back into doing live events, we wanted to do something special with it."

The evening will also be a bit shorter than in the past, with the entertainment and a bit of an update on the centre. Though they are a faith-based organization, Derksen stressed the performance and evening overall is open and accessible to everyone.

"It's faith-based, but it doesn't make it inaccessible to people who don't hold any faith at all ... it's

open to everyone."

And he added the support of event sponsors like Access Credit Union makes a big difference.

"Every donation raised beyond that goes directly to our programming, goes directly to providing support to those who can't afford the full cost of counselling."

Looking ahead, Derksen touched on their plans to add a ninth counsellor.

"Our mission is to serve the Pembina Valley as best as we can, and with the demand not diminishing, we are in need of more people to

do it," he said. "Our waiting list doesn't seem to be getting any shorter unfortunately.

"We're doing our best to grapple with that, but really the only way to do that is to add more counsellors," Derksen said. "It's overwhelming ... we've gone from three to eight counsellors in four years, and just when you think we will start to chip away at that waiting list, it just continues to go up.

"There is certainly a big demand for counselling, and we are doing our best to help meet it."

"A BIG PART OF WHAT I DO IS STORYTELLING ... STORIES OF HOPE IN THE MIDST OF DIFFICULTIES."

Letters

A VOICE FOR THE COMMUNITY

Peter Cantelon's column *The Loss of a Voice* in the March 21 edition of the *Altona-Rhineland-Morris Voice* was poignant.

The *South East Journal* community newspaper closed in December, leaving our community without a newspaper.

The *Voice* is attempting to fill the void. That newspaper took over from the *Journal* using the post office for distribution. The newspaper is looking to develop a case to continue to extend the newspaper to Morris.

To publish a newspaper is no easy feat, and a community newspaper really is owned by the community and the people who live in it.

The *Voice* staff are willing to help coordinate the news week in and week out, but they can't do it for free. Writing, producing, printing, and

distributing all come with a cost and requires the support of the business community, the provincial, federal and municipal governments, and the readers themselves.

Newspapers need advertising dollars to tell the stories of the people who help to build our communities.

If you want to make sure that the newspaper is around to record the history of your local community, you can purchase an In Memoriam to remember a loved one, say thank you with a Card of Thanks, wish a family or friend Happy Birthday, or share the birth of a baby with an Announcement. All of these help the newspaper.

And when there is news going on, the community can do their part and take photos and share the details.

In past weeks, there have been many stories in the *Voice* about giving to the Morris community. Without a news-

paper, where are those stories recorded? The stories of school functions or kid's hockey games. The stories of fundraisers to support a fallen member of our community or raise money to create a place for kids to play.

I have yet to find a parent or grandparent that doesn't clip a picture of their offspring if it appears in the newspaper. In my home, it first appears taped to the fridge and after turning brown with age it finds a last resting place in a scrapbook.

Full disclosure: I have written stories for newspapers for 21 years*. When I first started, I attended writing for a newspaper course funded by the Winnipeg Foundation. The foundation recognized the value

of newspaper in communities and budgeted accordingly.

I ask those in any position that can support a newspaper to factor into the business case the understanding that newspapers tell stories about their community when they are budgeting for advertising. Those stories have value. They are at the heart of the community.

**Sean Conway,
Morris**

** Conway has been writing freelance stories in the Morris area for the Voice in recent months. He's now beginning a sabbatical from the job, but wanted to share these thoughts before he left.*

> CANTELON, FROM PG. 6

learn a lot about a people and their culture simply through their cuisine.

Any of the local businesses I mentioned here would gladly offer you

guidance if you tell them the food is new to you and who knows—trying a new cuisine could be the beginning of a lifelong passion.

getinformed

“We’re working hard to get back on track”



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

June Letkeman, shown in front of the Prairieview Elevator Museum in Plum Coulee, has come on board as the general manager of Central Manitoba Tourism.

Central MB Tourism getting to work promoting the region

By Ashleigh Viveiros

It's a new day for Central Manitoba Tourism with June Letkeman at the helm.

Letkeman stepped into the general manager role last fall and has set her sights on bringing back the value the tourism agency provides to its member municipalities across the region.

"It's a huge area," she says. "We go from Crystal City and Pilot Mound all the way to Emerson-Franklin, and then all the way up to Macdonald, Oak Bluff, Cartier, Headingley, west to Glenboro and Treherne."

They're tasked with showcasing what Central Manitoba has to offer, posting about events and tourism sites on their social media pages, drumming up interest in the area at trade shows, and putting together the annual visitor's guide.

The agency has had a rocky couple of years thanks in part to the pandemic but also staff turnover. So much so, in fact, that they've waived their per-capita municipal membership fees for 2024.

"We feel members didn't get the value for the fees they paid," Letkeman says. "And that's why towns were leaving us, and I don't blame them."

The Town of Altona, for one, cut ties with the agency last October, citing a lack of return on investment and frustration at the dearth of new content created to promote the region.

"It started with COVID, and then somehow it all got behind," Letkeman says. "I think when Altona left, it was a wake-up call."

"So this year we have no fees. Everyone's a member. And I'm hoping to get a rep on the board from every municipality and town and city in our catchment area."

Letkeman has spent the winter visiting municipal councils to share her vision for the agency and encourage them to get involved in shaping its future.

"I really feel it's important that they take part—we need an engaged board to be successful."

Before she was GM, Letkeman was a longtime member of the organization's board, so she's no stranger to its mission. She says they plan to re-assess the strategic plan they drafted a few years ago to ensure everyone's still on the same page.

"I want to revisit that as soon as I get my board together so we have a plan to move ahead with and do what we're supposed to do, and that's promote our area."

High on Letkeman's to-do list has been working to improve the agency's website and social media presence to do a better job promoting the various community celebrations and tourism draws.

"We're going to get it much more modern," she says of the website, "so people can see what's all in our catchment area. People don't know."

She's also been busy getting the 2024 Visitor's Guide printed. She'll be personally delivering the finished guide to communities this month.

"I have something in there about every community in our catchment area, because they all deserve to be mentioned," she says of all the various attractions and events on the schedule for the year. "I'm sure I missed stuff, but I really did try to get it all in there."

More people than ever are looking for things to do and see close to home, Letkeman says.

"With COVID, I think, because they couldn't go anywhere, people got used to it and realized what's all here. It's amazing what you can discover."

The summer ahead is poised to be a busy one for the agency, which hopes to hire a student that will head out to see the sights across the region and create social media content about them.

"I'm very excited about our plans," Letkeman says. "And I just want the public to know that we're working hard to get back on track."

Roland Town Wide Garage Sale on June 15

By Ty Dilello

The Roland Town Wide Garage Sale will be held on Saturday, June 15, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Community members will sell some items at the Roland Rink, an indoor location, and at various garage sales around the town.

"We've had scattered garage sales in previous years, but it was never the same person volun-

teering to organize it, and it was much less advertised," said organizer Janessa Davis.

Davis has been organizing the town-wide event for the past two years. Last year they had about a dozen garage sales and a fantastic turnout that they hope to replicate again in June.

"I see it as an opportunity to support one another in a rural town with lots of families," said Davis. "So please come out and check out the town-wide garage sale."

A promotional poster for a fish fry fundraiser. The background is blue with a grid pattern. At the top left is the YFC Youth Unlimited logo with the word "MORDEN" below it. The main text reads "FISH FRY FUNDRAISER" in large, bold, yellow letters with a blue outline. Below that, it says "APRIL 26, 2024" in white. Further down, it says "PICK UP OR EAT IN @ 4:45 PM - 7 PM" in white. At the bottom, it says "CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER | 605 1ST STREET, MORDEN" in white. A yellow starburst at the bottom left contains the text "*this event is by donation!".

Work on community orchard gets underway this spring

By Lori Penner

Another dream is set to become a reality for the Altona Community Action Network (ACAN).

Following on the ongoing success of the Community Garden, a local task force has been working hard for the past few years to establish a community orchard as well.

Member Joel Martin says things are slowly coming together.

“We’re finally at the point where we can start doing the work. Originally, we were going to have a pond, but that fell through, so that delayed our plans a bit.”

In 2022, Altona town council agreed to allow ACAN to develop a plot north of the garden and turn it into a community orchard. Since then, the task force has been planning and adjusting its initial blueprint. Martin says they are now ready to get to work.

Starting in spring, the task force will scrape excess clay off the top of the soil, plant a shelterbelt with a variety of trees, and seed 2.5 acres of mixed grasses and legumes.

“We’re hoping to use some of the clay to create berms that will add some topography for landscaping.”

Another acre will be dedicated to the orchard with over 100 fruit trees, and the remaining land will see bramble, shrubs, and an edible garden, with bushes that produce fruit. Whether any fruit trees go in the ground in the fall will depend on the progress of fundraising efforts.

“It will serve as an extension of the already successful Community Garden,” Martin said. “The goal, decades into the future, is for people to enjoy the space. Eventually, there will be a trail that links the orchard and the community garden, and benches placed throughout for people to sit back and enjoy the blooms.”

The new timber frame pavilion at the centre of the community will also provide a space to host food-preservation workshops.

“Unlike the garden where people can plant and grow stuff and get results right away, the orchard is more of a long-term plan because we are dealing with trees,” Martin said. “But let’s say 20 years from now, you’ll walk there in the spring and it will be full of blooms, and it will be another great green space in Altona.”

Continued on page 11



VOICE FILE PHOTO

The Altona Community Garden celebrated the opening of its pavilion last summer. A local task force now has its sights set on getting a community orchard installed at the site.

Red River Valley SD passes \$38M budget

By Lori Penner

Red River Valley School Division (RRVSD) approved a budget of \$38.81 million last month, accompanied by a notable \$1.44-million property tax offset grant.

This year’s budget leads to a mill rate increase of 1.33 per cent; a figure lower than that of neighboring school divisions. This slight uptick translates to an average increase of \$14.07 for homes valued at \$200,000.

The provincial government allocated \$17.96 million towards RRVSD’s budget this year, marking a 1.7 per cent increase in operating funds, amounting to \$264,000. However, a portion of this increase, amounting to \$140,000, has been earmarked for new nutrition funding.

In the face of inflation, board chair Heather Poirier says their biggest challenge in financial planning con-

tinues to be a growing population with less money.

“Everything costs more, especially the costs of buses and keeping buses on the road.”

This became clear with the division’s transportation budget hike, reaching \$3.36 million. It includes a 12 per cent surge in fuel budget and a substantial 29 per cent increase in maintaining the fleet of 55 buses. With 59 per cent of the division’s 2,344 students relying on these buses for transportation, spanning from Starbuck to St. Malo and covering a total of 1.48 million kilometers annually, these adjustments are significant.

Most of the budget is allocated to salaries. For instance, teaching salaries alone are budgeted at \$15.55 million this year. However, negotiations

Continued on page 10



COMMUNITY NOTICE

ANNUAL VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Each year, CN is required to manage vegetation on its right-of-way. Managing this vegetation contributes to mitigating fire risks and enhances the efficiency of inspection of track infrastructure.

To ensure safe railway operations, the annual vegetation management program will be carried out on CN rail lines in the province of Manitoba. A certified applicator (Davey Tree Expert Company Ltd., 1-800-465-6367) will apply herbicides on and around the railway tracks (primarily along the 24-foot graveled area/ballast). Product requirements for setbacks in the vicinity of dwellings, aquatic environments and municipal water supplies will be met. The names of the products are Arsenal, Detail, Esplanade, Telar, Navius, Credit Xtreme, VP480, Vision Max, Overdrive, Clearview, Torpedo, Payload, Gateway and Hasten.

CN only uses herbicides that have been approved for use in Canada and in the province within which they are applied. The program will take place from May to October 2024.

Any person may, within 15 days from today, send a written submission regarding the control program or register their written objection to the use of pesticide next to their property to:

Manitoba Environment and Climate Change, Environmental Approvals Branch, Box 35, 14 Fultz Boulevard, Winnipeg MB R3Y 0L6

Visit www.cn.ca/vegetation for more information or to make an inquiry, contact the CN Public Inquiry Line at contact@cn.ca or 1-888-888-5909.

CN.CA

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Planning underway for '24 Sunflower fest

By Lori Penner

With the Manitoba Sunflower Festival just four months away, the committee is hard at work planning the July 26-28 community celebration.

Recreation programmer Brittany Winkler says they're following pretty much the same format as previous years.

"As always, we'll have entertainment on Friday night at the main stage in the Altona Park, with the parade on Saturday morning. Another night of entertainment will take place Saturday night, with the crowning of the Manitoba Sunflower Queen. Legends Car Club will be back by popular demand. We have sent out applications for food truck vendors, and some have already responded. Those are always a big attraction at the festival."

Culture Fest will also return.

"It was a huge hit last summer," Winkler says. "It's run through Regional Connections and really adds something special to the festival."

Winkler says they've already booked their children's entertainer and are currently working on main stage bands.

"Nothing has been confirmed yet, but we're confident that our lineup will be great again this year."

There are 11 contestants running for the Queen Quest competition.

Queen Quest coordinator Adina Schellenberg is thrilled by the response.

"It's a very good group. I'm really looking forward to it. We've had a pool party so far, and now we're gearing up for speech prep, and we're bringing the mentorship program back."

That program gives Grade 6 girls the opportunity to spend time with the entrants and royalty.

"The plan is to have three or four big group events instead of a lot of the one-on-one events we've done in the past, so we can include as many girls

who are interested as possible. We'll be approaching all four schools and inviting girls to participate."

Schellenberg is hoping this will give the younger girls a glimpse of what Queen Quest is all about.

"I know some of the girls running this year were in the mentorship program years ago, so that's exciting to see them come back. We've also got a lot of new people who have moved in, who haven't had that opportunity, but still want to run in the Queen Quest, which is also cool."

This year's Queen Quest will once again feature a fashion show and speeches.

"We're already working with judges and a choreographer. We want them to have a fun, positive experience, with all the events that we do. The months are going to go by really fast now."

Contestants have already been helping at community events, such as the pancake breakfast and children's games during this year's Winter Carnival.

Meanwhile, members of last year's festival royalty are currently enjoying their visit to Emerald, Australia, Alto-



VOICE FILE PHOTO

Festival-goers enjoy a fun photo op at the 2023 Manitoba Sunflower Festival. Organization of this year's event, which runs July 26-28, is already well underway.

na's sister city, where they are getting acquainted with that community's Sunflower Queen and Princess.

The Manitoba Sunflower Festival has a new committee chair this year. Sandra Klassen has enthusiastically accepted the role, after having been involved with Queen Quest for nine years.

"It's always been my passion and I love to volunteer and help with community events," says Klassen, "so this is a good way to do that."

She's hoping to help the committee streamline a few things and take some pressure off the Recreation Department.

"I know they do a lot when it comes to the festival. They all have their own positions and jobs at that office, and it's a lot to expect them to do so much. I just want to be that helping hand,

and be that listening ear to smooth things out, if need be. It's always great to offer another viewpoint."

To raise funds for this summer's festival, the committee is hosting a Quiz Night on April 27 at the Rhineland Pioneer Centre.

"It's put on by Quiz Masters, a quiz group for Winnipeg. We're trying to get the community to bring their knowledge and sense of fun to the table," says Klassen. "There will be some healthy competition and a lot of laughs."

The evening starts at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$160 per team of eight.

"It's a night of food, fun and drinks," Klassen says. "We're hoping lots of people will come out."

To register for Quiz Night, call 204-324-9005.

> RRVSD BUDGET, FROM PG. 9

between the Manitoba Teachers Society union and the Manitoba School Board Association are underway, hinting at potential wage increases. Additionally, other regular instruction salaries amount to \$3.11 million, contributing to a total budget of \$21.8 million for regular instruction.

There have also been increases in support staff salaries, alongside the creation of new administrative positions within the division. There are also allocations for student support services, division administration, operations, and maintenance, along with fiscal responsibilities including short-term loan interest and bank charges.

According to Poirier, setting priori-

ties with an already tight allowance for expenditure was no easy task.

"As RRVSD moves forward with its budget allocations, it aims to address both immediate needs and long-term educational priorities within the community."

RRVSD conducted a public budget survey in February to gain public input. It garnered 374 responses, 28 more than the previous year.

The results of the survey were similar to last year, with educational programming supports identified in order of importance including literacy (76 per cent), numeracy (63.6 per cent), mental health support (61.2 per cent) and speech and language pathology (54.3 per cent).

Responding to the survey, Poirier said, "Our priorities, and what we have heard from our community and stakeholders, is more money and support for Speech and Language Therapy, as well as mental health support. We have added in these areas to support our community. Also keeping all programs status quo and not cutting anything was a huge priority."

As the division returns to their new "normal," Poirier noted that in-person meetings are a priority.

"And finding ways to support all of our staff from custodians to teachers so they can do their jobs to their best abilities is also a big priority."

Health expo offers a varied lineup of speakers, displays

By Lorne Stelmach

The Womens Health Expo March 23 in Morden offered a day of informative presentations aimed to both enlighten and educate participants

The annual event organized by Genesis House came just a couple weeks after International Women's Day and featured a variety of speakers and displays.

Executive director Ang Braun felt the lineup was stellar and—perhaps most importantly—engaging.

"It was relatively full for all of the speakers, and it was such a range of topics, but all of them were very interesting," she said. "The topics were bold topics because they can be hard to talk about. But people were asking questions in the room, so I think that was really interesting to see ... and some of the questions are personal, so clearly they are being impacted personally by whatever the topic has been ... and they are getting answers from people who are front line in service delivery."

The idea behind the expo, Braun explained, is that supporting women in the community to be the healthiest, best versions of themselves better our community as a whole.

The schedule included presentations from local experts on a wide variety

of physical and mental health topics. Among them was Catherine Wreford, whose talk focused on empowerment.

She touched on the variety of adventures and challenges she has faced, such as being on *Amazing Race Canada*, performing on Rainbow Stage, and being a cancer survivor.

Wreford recalled being diagnosed two days before her 33rd birthday and being given two to six years to live. She is now almost 44 years old.

"Those challenges are what make me happy, and when I'm happy, I do good stuff," she said. "I can make a difference for those I love and those I may never even know."

"I want to advocate for myself and others. I want to push barriers and challenge the impossible," Wreford continued. "Every day feels like a bonus, however every day still feels like a challenge ... how do I make the most impact? How do I lead the way for others in my circumstances?"

"How do I have hope for my future? I have to believe that something I do might not help me but will help others down the road," Wreford concluded. "This platform is my legacy ... to be able to stand behind people and help them ask the right questions or be there to understand what they're going through and to raise money to help find a cure."



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE
Genesis House hosted its annual Womens Health Expo at the Access Event Centre in Morden March 23, providing space for community groups like Central Station (above) to connect with people about their programs and a platform for speakers like Catherine Wreford (right) to present on topics of mental and physical health.

Braun said she feels the response and level of engagement shows there is a real need for an event like this in the community.

"I think one of the things I've taken out of this day is an ounce of prevention really is worth a pound of cure," she said, adding how each thing can have a ripple effect on overall health and wellness.

"All of it seems to connect to everything in some way ... all of the differ-



ent topics really tie in together," noted Braun. "Yes, you can be impacted by something terrible, but there is help out there ... I can have all this education to help me have the best journey possible."

> ORCHARD, FROM PG. 9

Boasting several varieties of apples, pears, and plums, to name a few, each row will be diversely planted, mixing up the various fruit trees. The entire orchard is based on a farm in Montreal that uses permaculture principles.

"There's no tilling so it's all mulching," explained Martin. Several members of the task force already have experience and expertise in these practices.

"This will be more than just a typical orchard. The rows won't just have apple trees. There will be a variety of trees like plums and pears. Every row will be different. And hopefully we'll have quite a few different varieties of apples that are suitable to our area. In between the trees, eventually we'll grow plants like rhubarb or currants, so all the rows will be full.

"We're hoping that once it starts producing, families can go in there and pick what they like. We'll have signage to indicate how much they can pick per family, and what's left

can be shared with the food bank and The Community Exchange. And if it's a real bumper crop, we're looking for local cider houses to take the apples."

He added that the whole idea is not to work against nature but to use it to their advantage.

"You want a lot of diversity so that it attracts wildlife like insects and birds and creates a natural habitat that has food for them. The birds will eat the insects and there will even be bees for nectar and pollination, there will even be wasps that control other insects as well."

They will also be installing a trickle irrigation system.

"It doesn't use as much water and, especially in a clay soil, most of it runs off," explained Martin. "So, the trickle system is slow, and a feeder pipe sprays the root system of the trees directly, and there's not much evaporation, so that way it's more sustainable. It's affordable and saves on labour. And once the trees are es-

tablished, you won't need to use it as much."

Martin says the orchard could become an educational site for local students as well.

"We're hoping that schools can use it. If the system works, there will be a lot of birds and insects to look at."

Once it's up and running, the plan is to collect a pool of volunteers that will work throughout the season to maintain the orchard through events like working-bees.

"We want people to be invested in the project," said Martin. "If they're involved then they'll get invested, take some ownership and they'll be proud to be caring for the orchard."

The long-term plan, he says, is to hire someone for the summer to oversee the orchard and the community garden.

But first, the task force needs to raise money to pay for the estimated \$40,000 project.

"We applied for community grants,

and the Town of Altona gave us \$8,000. And last week, Red River Mutual gave us another \$5,000, so right now, we're up to \$18,000."

Martin says they've even received \$2,000 from Southern Health-Santé Sud to purchase trees.

"They're looking at the mental health benefits of going to an orchard and being in nature."

In support of this ongoing project, a fundraising concert dubbed Fruit Jam is planned for Saturday, April 13 at The Community Exchange. Doors open at 6 p.m. and the show starts at 7 p.m.

The event will offer entertainment, refreshments, a raffle and a homemade quilt silent auction. Performers include Paul Bergman, Dejavu, Liam Martin, and The Sixagons.

"It's our first fundraising event for the orchard," said Martin. "It's going to be a full night and we're hoping for a good turnout."

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Community comes through for Lodge fundraiser



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

On March 23, the Manitou Coffee House Musicians hosted their final show of the season and raised over \$1,500 for the La Riviere Lodge seniors housing complex. Above: A captive audience filled the Manitou Opera House. Left: Lodge resident George Mitchell, James Sharpe, and Charlie Howatt performing *Waltz Across Texas*, *I'll Step Aside*, and *Old Log Cabin For Sale*.

By Voice staff

The Manitou Opera House Coffee House Musicians closed out their 33rd season with a bang March 23, raising over \$1,500 for the La Riviere Lodge.

It was the first-ever fundraising event at the coffee house for the Lodge, a community non-profit which provides affordable housing for seniors. Funds raised will go towards renovations of one of their suites.

"The call for help went out to the community one

month prior to the event," share organizers. "The community and surrounding area responded resoundingly.

"The Coffee House Musicians are part of a large group of community members within the community who have taken the responsibility of care for the Opera House, and who entertain at these events because they are musicians who love playing and making music, all the while benefitting those local charities who are willing to help promote these events."

The night featured performances from a range of musicians of all ages and hailing from across the region.

Event organizers and Lodge reps send thanks out to all who attended and donated, as well as to the many volunteers and musicians who helped put on the evening.

You can stay up-to-date on Opera House events online at manitouoperahouse.com/events-calendar.

Spring flood risk remains low across the province

By Voice staff

The province is seeing some rise in water levels on the Red River, but it is still predicting low to moderate risk of spring flooding overall, with no expectation that it will have to operate the floodway.

The latest flood forecast outlook released last week sees the flooding risk as low for the Red River and its tributaries, low to moderate for the Assiniboine River and its tributaries and the Interlake region, and generally low for the Souris, Qu'Appelle,

Rat, Roseau, Pembina, Saskatchewan and Churchill river basins and the Whiteshell Lakes region.

The positive forecast is largely due to the normal to below normal soil moisture at freeze-up and well below normal to normal winter precipitation for most Manitoba basins.

Water levels are expected to remain below dikes and community or individual flood protection levels. However, the risk of flooding could change depending on future weather conditions, including rate of snow melt and the timing and amount of snow and

rain received between now and the spring runoff.

As in most years, there is a risk of ice jam-related flooding on areas historically susceptible to ice jamming. Most Manitoba lake levels are normal to below normal.

The Red River floodway is not expected to be operated during this spring flood season based on forecasted conditions. Minimal operation of the Portage diversion may be necessary under unfavourable weather conditions to control water levels on the lower Assiniboine River, the prov-

ince says. The Shellmouth Reservoir is being operated to reduce the risk of flooding downstream on the Assiniboine River while also providing sufficient storage for water supply and recreation.

Gradual run-off has started in some southern Manitoba basins including the Red River Valley. Levels are starting to rise along the main stem of the Red River, and residents are cautioned about the impact of rising water levels as well as weak ice on the river.

Check out the Voice online at www.winklermordenvoice.ca or altonavoiced.ca

EMPATHY: How to combat bullying through kindness

Understanding and sharing the emotions of others is what empathy is all about. When it comes to bullying, you can gain valuable insight into someone else's struggles and emotions by putting yourself in their shoes. Here's how to fight bullying with empathy.

Listen. Take the time to genuinely listen to others, especially those who may feel isolated or vulnerable. By showing empathy and understanding, you can create a safe space for people to share their experiences and feelings.

Reach out. If you notice someone being bullied, offer a helping hand and let them know they're not alone. Even small acts of kindness can have a significant impact on someone's life.

Lead by example. Treat everyone with respect and understanding. Your actions can inspire positive change and create a ripple effect of kindness and compassion.

Encourage inclusivity. Embrace diversity and create an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and accepted for who they are. Celebrate differences and encourage people to share their unique perspectives and experiences.

Raise your voice. If you witness bullying, don't hesitate to intervene. Simply standing up for someone can diffuse a harmful situation and create a sense of safety and security.

This Pink Shirt Day, lead with empathy. Taking the time to understand others will lead to a kinder and more compassionate society.



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Flyers finish off Terriers

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Flyers punched their ticket to the second round of the MJHL playoffs last week.

The junior team made short work of the Portage Terriers in round one, winning the best-of-seven in five.

After an opening weekend that saw the series tied at 1-1, Winkler took the lead and kept it in games three through five.

Game three last Wednesday night in Winkler saw control swing back and forth, with the Flyers getting a 2-0 head start in the first on the strength of goals from Jayce Legaarden, and then Portage tying it up in the first minute of the second, only to have the Flyers retake the lead 4-2 thanks to goals from Avery Anderson and Trent Penner before the midpoint.

Portage's Daniel Siso started to close the gap with a third-period marker seven minutes in, but one more from Legaarden sealed the deal and gave Winkler the win 5-3.

Malachi Klassen stood tall in net for the Flyers, making 29 saves as Por-

tage outshot Winkler 32-23.

Klassen gave up just one goal in game four in Portage two nights later, while teammates Brady Craik, Anderson, and Mike Svenson lit up the net to give the Flyers the 3-1 win and a 3-1 series lead.

The Flyers then hammered home the final nail in Portage's coffin Saturday night in front of a sold-out hometown crowd, doubling up on their opponents 6-3.

Craik, Trent Penner, and Jakob Jones made it a 3-0 affair in the first 20 minutes.

Penner scored his second of the night midway through the second, following up on two from Portage to make it 4-2 for Winkler heading into the final frame.

There, the Terriers managed just one goal to Winkler's two (Legaarden, Blake Matheson), and saw their season come to an end as a result.

Klassen was between the posts once again, making 27 saves off 30 shots. His teammates fired 30 the other way.

Winkler is now awaiting the outcomes of the MGEU West Division

PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Winkler defenceman Isaiah Peters successfully puts himself in front of a shot on goal from Portage's Owen Wit in last Wednesday's playoff game, which Winkler won 5-3 to take a 2-1 lead in the series. Below: Andrew Dalton fights off the defensive effort of the Terriers' Daniel Siso.



playoffs to see who they'll face in the next round. At press time the Virden Oil Capitals were up 3-2 against the

Neepawa Knights, as were the OCN Blizzard against the Dauphin Kings.

Mordenite part of the seniors womens championship curling team

By Lorne Stelmach

A Mordenite has another curling title to her credit and now looks forward to going after a national championship.

Lynn Sandercock was third for the team skipped by Kathy Isaac which recently won the Pharmasave senior women's provincial championship in Winnipeg.

Sandercock has curled for some time with Isaac, who curls out of Charleswood. They were joined by Sheila Gregory and Sandra Cowling of Hamiota at second and lead.

This was the first time out for the four of them as a team, but they went into it being quite familiar with each other.

"Kathy and I have curled a lot together in the last few years in different events," Sandercock said. "The two girls from Hamiota, we've played against them like a gazillion times, so we knew what they were like ... and they had lost the front end of their team.

"So it's not like we didn't know them at all. We knew them well enough.

I think we just jelled really well as a team together."

There were 10 teams on the womens draw for the seniors championship. After winning their pool, Team Isaac lost the initial page playoff game but then won the 2-vs-2 to get another shot at the title.

"And the final was a close game," Sandercock said. "It went to an extra end."

Sandercock has a few curling achievements now under her belt, having won the provincial masters championship a couple of times with Isaac in 2017 and 2018. She also won the seniors title in 2012.

She has been fortunate to be on a number of good teams, she says, and it makes a difference, given how much of a challenge it can be to win in Manitoba with the quality of the curling here.

"When you look at the names in senior now, whether it be men or women, there's a lot of people there who have done a lot," Sandercock noted. "The numbers have picked up again in the seniors. For a while there, they weren't quite as strong."



CURL MANITOBA PHOTO

Team Isaac (Hamiota CC) won the 2024 Pharmasave Senior Women's Championship with skip Kathy Isaac, third Lynn Sandercock, second Sheila Gregory, and lead Sandra Cowling.

They foursome now look forward to representing the province at the national championship in Moncton, NB in December.

"Wearing the Manitoba jacket, that's

everyone's dream," said Sandercock. "You never know when you're going to get this opportunity again, especially in Manitoba. There's a lot of good curlers."

Hawks coach pleased at team's strong showing at season's end

By Lorne Stelmach

It was a rough start to the season for the male U18 Pembina Valley Hawks, but a late surge led to a strong post season showing.

The Hawks finished in seventh place, so it matched them up with the second-place Southwest Cougars, and a dramatic 2-1 overtime victory in game five gave the Hawks a 3-2 series victory.

Their championships hopes then came to an end at the hands of the Brandon Wheat Kings, but the Hawks can still hold their heads high after the three-game series sweep by a team that had only suffered one overtime loss all year.

"Brandon is a pretty special team this year," reflected coach Brendan Edie. "We got swept, but you look at game three, we were tied with them going into the third ... so we pushed them.

"There's definitely some good memories for the guys there," Edie said, citing especially the overtime win over the Cougars.

He was proud of how the team came together after having had a rough start to the year.

"We would have liked to have finished a little higher in the regular season, but we kind of got around to it

and peaked at the right time leading up to the playoffs.

"We dealt with some adversity early in the season ... and with a tough schedule as well, so we kind of put ourselves behind the eight ball a bit to start," he said. "Our last 10 games leading up to the playoffs we went 8-1-1, so that's obviously how you want to finish a season.

"There was a lot of growth, a lot of development, some learning and some mistakes along the way, but overall I think most guys can walk out of this hopefully having had a positive experience."

One thing that stood out for Edie was how the players progressed, especially into the second half of the season.

"We had some guys who we had lower on the roster to start who kind of stepped up after the holiday break, so that was positive to see. There was definitely some growth with the players," he said. "Growing up, all of these kids would have been the top players on their teams, so there's some maturity than comes with this then.

"Special teams is something maybe we could have started making some tweaks a little earlier in the season,"

he added. "Part of that as well is growing as a coaching staff as well."

Edie has some high hopes for next season, but it is hard to say what the roster might look like at this point.

"We'll have some guys who are eligible to return ... we obviously would love to have some of those guys back," he said. "We're thinking about running a spring camp just to kind of touch base and show families what the program has to offer and hopefully recruit some kids that way."

Twisters on verge of advancing to MMJHL finals

By Ty Dilello

The Pembina Valley Twisters are a game away from the MMJHL championship finals. The Twisters are currently up three games to zero in their league semifinal best-of-seven series with the St. Boniface Riels.

On March 27, the Twisters took Game 2 on the road with a big 3-1 victory over St. Boniface. Kyle Van Deynze led the way for Pembina Valley with a pair of goals, while Lucas Jolicoeur had the other tally. Owen LaRocque

was excellent in the Twisters' goal, stopping 42 shots for the win.

A few nights later, on March 30, back at home in Morris, the Twisters snuck by the Riels in a tight 3-2 win that gave them a stranglehold in the series. Merek Degraeve, Kyle Van Deynze, and Brett Bergman scored for the Twisters, while goaltender Logan Enns stopped 27 shots for the win.

"We've been digging deep, prioritizing defensive zone first, and getting in the shooting lanes," said Twisters' head coach Braeden Bernaerts. "Our

goalies have been the backbone for us, and we've been capitalizing on timely chances. We started well last game, but we got flat footed after taking a few penalties in the third period, but in the end, the boys buckled down for the win."

The Twisters and Riels were back in action for Game 4 of their best-of-seven series on Monday, April 1 at Southdale Arena in Winnipeg. No score was available at press time.

Continued on page 19

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EMPLOYMENT

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY
FOR CULINARY CREATIVITY**

Morris Area Senior Services (M.A.S.S.) is a non-profit organization seeking a Meal Coordinator for their Congregate Meal Program. The Congregate Meal Program assists to meet the nutritional and social needs of its senior participants. The meal is served to those 55 plus and older (some exceptions apply). The successful applicant will plan one month in advance, a meal program served daily to these participants.

We are looking for someone to prepare and serve nutritious meals while keeping a clean and sanitized work and eating area. We are looking for someone who takes pride in their work and has an eye for presentation, so that the quality of the food, and its visual appeal, will keep our participants coming back. All those with a love for cooking are encouraged to apply! Training is provided. Must be a minimum of 18 years of age or older.

Full job description on Facebook and Pembina Valley Online

For more information about the job or to apply please:

Mail resume: to Morris Area Senior Services,
PO Box 997, Morris, Mb. R0G1K0

Email resume: to morrisareaseniorservices@gmail.com
Drop off or visit us @#20 - 153 Montreal Ave E. Morris, MB
(Davidson Centre entrance) Phone 204-746-6336

NOTICES

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CAREERS



MAINTENANCE MECHANIC/MILLWRIGHT

Bunge Altona has an opening for a Maintenance Mechanic/Millwright. Work involves process equipment installation, maintenance and repair, lubrication, steel fabrication and welding.

Preference will be given to those candidates holding a valid provincial Millwright or Industrial Mechanic ticket. Candidates who do not hold a valid ticket will be expected to enrol in the apprenticeship program to obtain their ticket as soon as possible. Overtime and on-call duties are required. The successful applicant will possess excellent written and verbal communication skills, trouble shooting skills, and be a team player.

The following would be considered an asset for this position:

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- This is a regular full time position providing an excellent wage and benefits package. Bunge is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and rewarding workplace for all employees.

Starting Wages:

- Mechanic \$32.70/hour
- Red Seal Millwright: \$38.08/hour

A job description for this position can be found online on the Bunge website: https://obs.bunge.com/. enter "Altona" in the field "Search by Location". Click on "Maintenance Mechanic/Millwright" to read the description. Applications should be made online with an attached resume.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

CARMAN GUN SHOW

Date:

April 6, 2024

Time:

9AM to 3PM

Place:

Carman Hall

\$7 ADMISSION

CAREERS

Commodity Merchandising Intern (May - August)



Location: Altona, MB CA R0G 0B0

Company: Bunge

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- Proficiency in standard PC applications
- Full description & application available <https://jobs.bunge.com>

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CAREERS

Chief Financial Officer

The Municipality of Rhineland is accepting applications for a full-time permanent Chief Financial Officer.

A complete job description is available at our website: <http://www.rmofrhineland.com/p/employment-opportunities>

Position Summary

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the financial functions of the Municipality along with various other administrative management functions.

Qualifications and experience

Candidates are expected to have a thorough knowledge of accounting acquired through a university degree in business accounting, through a professional accounting program (CPA) or through related experience and training. Municipal experience would be considered an asset.

Pay Package

The salary will be competitive with a comprehensive benefits package.

Please submit your resume and cover letter detailing how your experience and qualifications meet the requirements. We thank all that apply, however, only candidates selected for an interview will be contacted. The position will remain posted until filled. The candidate being considered will be required to undergo a Criminal Record Check.

Michael Rempel
Chief Administrative Officer
R.M. of Rhineland
Box 270, Altona, MB R0G 0B0

Phone: 204-324-5357

Fax: 204-324-1516

E-mail - Michael.rempel@rhinelandmb.ca

PUBLIC NOTICE



MUNICIPAL NOTICE OF INTENT

TAKE NOTICE that on March 12th, 2024, the Council of the Municipality of Emerson-Franklin gave first reading to By-Law No. 2024-05 to designate as a municipal heritage site under The Heritage Resources Act, the lands and premises commonly known as the Tolstoi Heritage Centre, (formerly known as the Tolstoi Holy Trinity Roman Catholic Church) at 9 Main Street Tolstoi, Mb. The land is described in Certificate of Title No. 2898123 as follows:

SP Lot 3 Block 1 Plan 16289 WLTO Subject to the reservations and provisos contained in the original grant from the crown in SE ¼ of 35-1-5EPM.

A copy of the proposed By-Law can be inspected at the Emerson-Franklin municipal office at 115 Waddell Avenue East Dominion City, Mb between the hours of 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and on the municipal website www.emersonfranklin.com

A public hearing will be held at the Municipal Office at 115 Waddell Avenue East Dominion City, Mb on April 23rd at 10 a.m.

At that time, any person may submit an objection or other representation on the proposal. If there is no objection, council may resolve to adopt the proposed By-Law, or not to proceed with it.

Date this 18th day of March, 2024.

Tracey French
Chief Administrative Officer

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Notice

Zoning By-law Amendment NO. 23-11:

Intent of Zoning By-law Amendment 23-11: The applicant is proposing a change in zoning in the Zoning By-law from "AG1" Agricultural 1 Zone to "M" Industrial Zone for the purpose of expanding an existing truss manufacturing business.

Current Title Area: CT No: 2940774/1, Roll No: 236600 CT No: 2878468/1, Roll No: 236620

A copy of proposed By-Law 23-11 and supporting material may be inspected at our office during normal business hours, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM (excluding holidays).

Copies may be made upon request.

Electronic copies may be obtained by emailing: info@emersonfranklin.com.

When: April 23, 2024, 9:30 AM

Where: Municipality office Council Chambers
115 Waddell Ave E Dominion city, MB R0A 0H0

For More Information: Contact
Chief Administrative Officer

Tracey French
Phone: 204-427-2557

Email: info@emersonfranklin.com





SUBMITTED PHOTOS

The Winkler Curling Club held its league championships March 22. Clockwise from left: Mens club champs Marcus Titchkosky, Andy Schmidt, Devin Rachul, Kyle Peters, and Clayton Giesbrecht; mens B champs Randy Suderman, Rick Suderman, Paul Giesbrecht, and James Hildebrand; mens C champs Brent Haney, Ken Hildebrand, Derrick Klassen, and Rod Wiebe; and ladies champs Brooke Friesen, Holly Friesen, Calista Friesen, and Sonia Janzen. The Monday league grand aggregate winner was the Chris Driedger team while the Wednesday league grand aggregate winner was the Andy Schmidt team.

Winkler curling champs



Women's soccer league starting up in Pembina Valley

By Ty Dilello

A new women's soccer league hopes to launch its inaugural season this summer in the Pembina Valley.

Laura Visscher and Rhonda Vandembos are sisters who grew up playing soccer in the Carman area. Vandembos started at age five, and Visscher at age 11 through the minor soccer club in town then.

Both sisters were eventually goalkeepers for the DCS Stingers team in high school. They both went on to become involved in Carwin United FC, a women's soccer team that played in the Winnipeg Women's Soccer League (WWSL), through playing, coaching, or managing.

During the pandemic, the WWSL switched all its games to being played in Winnipeg, and they continue to play all games there to this day.

"Since COVID-19 we've struggled to get our Carwin team back up and running because every game is played in Winnipeg, and this is a large commit-

ment for many ladies, as they have jobs and families," said Vandembos. "The ladies we talked to expressed how they would love to play, but they would prefer to have at least the home games be played in town; that way, they wouldn't have to travel somewhere every week. Those comments got us thinking: why couldn't we have a rural league? Both of us have either been on or are currently on our local minor soccer board, so we have an idea of how to run a league, but we still want help."

The sisters sent a poster to all the municipalities in the area, and by sharing it with the local papers and their own contacts, they hope to get the news out there as much as possible so that the inaugural season can take place this summer.

The new women's league will have eight games plus playoffs in July and August. There will be a cap of 20 players per team, and everyone must be 18+ (born in 2006 and earlier). This will give teams extra players because

summers can get very busy with travel and family time.

"Ideally, we hope to have at least four teams, but we aren't sure what to expect at this time," said Vandembos. "We've had interest from some clubs in Morden who sounded really excited about the idea, as they also had some interest expressed to them from parents in the past about playing."

Teams can register by sending an email to pvwsoccer@gmail.com. Each team will need a manager to whom all league emails will be sent.

The new league doesn't have a cost

established at this time as the field costs differ from community to community, and they won't know until they lock in all of the teams.

"We do hope to keep costs down as we aren't in this to make money, but to share our love of the sport and to give ladies another way to stay active," Vandembos said. "We would like to start a board by using a member from every community that has a team in the league, as this way, every community gets fair representation and has a say in how things are run."

> TWISTERS, FROM PG. 15

One more victory will put the Twisters into the MMJHL, where they would meet up with the St. James Jr. Canucks, who have already won their semifinal series in four straight games.

"As we go deeper and deeper into

the playoffs the message is that: it only gets harder and harder," said Beernaerts. "Every little detail gets magnified. We hope to remain focused and keep pushing the pace in our games moving forward."

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

get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



Tuna and Rice Nicoise Salad

Prep time: 4 minutes
Cook time: 1 minute
Servings: 1
1 cup Minute Yellow Rice Cups
2 tablespoons balsamic dressing
2 tablespoons olive tapenade
1 teaspoon capers, drained well
1/2 cup halved cherry tomatoes
1/2 cup frozen green beans, thawed
1 can (3 ounces) tuna, drained and

flaked
1 hard-boiled egg, cut into wedges
Heat rice according to package directions.
In medium bowl, combine rice, balsamic dressing, tapenade and capers. Mix well.
Top with cherry tomatoes, green beans, tuna and hard-boiled egg.
Tip: Serve salad over bed of mixed greens, if desired.



Pomegranate and Arugula Rice Salad

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 5 minutes
Servings: 8
2 cups Minute Instant Jasmine Rice
1/3 cup olive oil
3 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoons minced red onion
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon honey
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1 bag (5 ounces) arugula
1 cup pomegranate seeds
1/3 cup slivered almonds, toasted
Prepare rice according to package directions. Cool completely, about 10 minutes.
In large bowl, whisk oil, vinegar, red onion, mustard, honey, salt and pepper. Add rice, arugula and pomegranate seeds to bowl; toss to coat thoroughly. Sprinkle with almonds.
Tips: For added flavor, top salad with crumbled goat or blue cheese.
To cool rice quickly, spread evenly on parchment paper-lined baking sheet.



Golden Beet and Rice Burger Sliders

Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Servings: 6
1 bag Success Jasmine Rice
1/2 can (7 1/2 ounces) white beans, drained and rinsed
1 egg, beaten
1/2 tablespoon water
4 ounces (about 1 1/2 cups) golden beets, cooked and grated
3 ounces goat cheese, crumbled, divided
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh dill
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
12 leaves Bibb lettuce
1 cup arugula
2 tablespoons Sriracha sauce

Prepare rice according to package directions. Cool completely.
In food processor, pulse beans, egg and water until mashed.
Transfer bean mixture to large bowl. Add rice, beets, 1 1/2 ounces goat cheese, dill, salt and pepper; stir until combined. Divide mixture into six portions and shape into 1/2-inch-thick patties.
In large, nonstick skillet over medium heat, heat 1 tablespoon oil. Cook patties in two batches, 3-5 minutes per side, or until golden brown and heated through, adding remaining oil as necessary.
Place two lettuce leaves together, overlapping ends to form pocket. Place patty inside lettuce pocket; top with arugula and remaining goat cheese. Drizzle with Sriracha. Repeat with remaining burgers.

Ask the money lady

Dear Money Lady Readers,
With everything that's going on in the markets today it's hard to know if you have the right investment plan for your future. Here's what all the economists say: "you need to have a well-diversified portfolio which includes bonds, cash, and high-quality stocks, one that is rebalanced based on your age, risk tolerance and future aspirations."



Christine Ibbotson

Okay, textbook – right? But what does that mean? How do you do that? How are you going to get started?
Well, you need to be build a financial team. If your car breaks down or you get into an accident, you don't fix it by yourself in your garage? You or your insurance company hires a professional mechanic to fix it and then everything is great again. Same idea with money. You need to have a professional that can help you achieve all those financial goals you want out of your life.

You want an investment "partner." Pick an advisor who really has your best interests at heart, and don't just pick the first person you talk to, or a relative that wants to help out. You want to be selective, not just with the advisor, but also the brokerage firm. Now let's talk about fees. What should you pay? There are 2 types of fee structures – transactional or fee-based.

Transactional fees are charged with every investment transaction. This is often the case when you buy fixed income investments such as bonds. A fee is charged when you purchase the bond and then again when you sell it. There aren't many advisors that still do transactional fee structures when buying securities. That was the old "stockbroker style" of buying and selling stocks on a monthly basis to generate revenue not only for the client but also the broker. Most advisors today lack the expertise to execute this style of investing properly; however, if you didn't have a good stockbroker back then, it still could be costly. We used to call this method the "pump

& dump," which was basically how a broker would make an income, moving stock around and charging a transaction fee every time. Nowadays advisors want to put you in a fee-based plan, with a fixed monthly fee designed to offer more protection for the clients along with ensuring a consistent revenue stream for the advisor and the brokerage firm.

Basically, you want to ask yourself: is this advisor a valued partner that I'm willing to pay for, and most importantly am I satisfied with the services that they provide?

Personally, I think It's always a good idea to periodically check out the competition, talk to your friends and see what they pay. When you are young you may not mind spending more for investment advice, but as you age and move investments into secure fixed income products with lower risk and smaller gains, your number one problem will be fees and expenses.

Let me leave you with this TIP: Your new advisor needs to be focused on how to secure your capital with adequate growth in the most tax-efficient manner; and if they always do that, you will always make money.

Good Luck and Best Wishes,
Money Lady
Written by Christine Ibbotson, Author, Finance Writer, National Radio Host, and now on CTV Morning Live, and CTV News @6 syndicated across Canada. Send your questions through her website at ask-themoneylady.ca

Zero-Waste Moroccan Spice Rice and Lentil Pilaf

Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Servings: 4
5 cups water
1/3 cup dried brown lentils, rinsed
1 bag Success Basmati Rice
1/2 cup fresh cilantro, finely chopped (stalks and leaves)
4 green onions, thinly sliced
2 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons Moroccan spice blend
1/4 cup raisins
1/4 cup almonds

1/4 cup preserved lemons, finely chopped
In medium saucepan over medium heat, bring water to boil. Add lentils and cook 10-15 minutes, or until slightly soft.
Submerge bag of rice in saucepan with lentils and cook 10-12 minutes, or until lentils are tender. Remove bag with fork and drain; set aside. Drain lentils and transfer back to saucepan. Cut open bag of rice and empty cooked rice into saucepan with lentils. Stir to combine.
Stir in cilantro, green onions, olive oil, Moroccan spice blend, raisins, almonds and preserved lemons. Serve.