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VOLUME 5
EDITION 14

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The Pylons—from left, Chris Siemens, Bob Schroeder, Josee Voth, and Harv Schroeder—took the stage Saturday night for ACAN's Fruit Jam in support of the community garden and orchard. For more photos, check out Pg. 10.

news > sports > opinion > community > people > entertainment > events > classifieds > careers > everything you need to know

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Future docs see what rural medicine has to offer

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Boundary Trails Health Centre welcomed a group of future doctors to town last weekend to give them an idea of what rural medicine is all about.

The University of Manitoba's Rural Interest Group—about 40 students strong, all in their first and second years of medical school—stopped by the regional hospital Saturday.

They spent the morning rotating through several interactive skills stations led by local health care professionals and then enjoyed lunch and a tour of Dead Horse Cider near Winkler.

Second-year medical student Kyla Goulet-Kilgour, who grew up in Winnipeg, says it opened her eyes to what a medical practice beyond the Perimeter Hwy. has to offer.

"We started with a presentation from one of the doctors, just setting the stage for what a rural practice can

look like," she shared. "That was really inspiring. He emphasized the dignity of the person and the importance of providing patient-centred care. That's always a good reminder for us medical students to be learning.

"What was really cool as well was we toured the Boundary Trails facility, which has a lovely new facility," Goulet-Kilgour said, referring to the new community services building and in-patient unit that opened at BTHC this spring. "So that was really nice to see."

The hands-on workshops proved to be a highlight of the day.

"That was probably one of my favourite parts," Goulet-Kilgour said. "We started off with a session where we learned intubation from one of the doctors who works in the field of anesthesia. Then we had suturing sessions, learning how to do different stitches. And then we had a pediatric session where we went over how to evaluate a newborn baby."

"FOR SOME OF THEM, THIS MAY BE THEIR FIRST RURAL EXPOSURE IN MEDICAL FACILITIES."



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

On Saturday, the University of Manitoba's Rural Interest Group medical students got the opportunity to tour BTHC and take part in hands-on training in everything from intubation to suturing (above).

Other stations touched on procedures related to lung capacity and women's health.

"We learned how to do things like endometrial biopsies, IUD insertions, Nexplanon insertions, those sort of things," said Goulet-Kilgour, noting that session was especially interesting to her. "I had a really good conversation with the doctors who were running it, particularly the obstetrician

gynecologist, hearing what it's like to work rurally as an obstetrician ... I've never really had the chance to talk with a rural obstetrician who's doing many surgeries a week and dealing with some oftentimes high-risk, high-stakes cases. So it was really cool to talk with her.

Continued on page 6

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Pictured are Brian Nedohin, Joey Mutcheson, Nancy Rach, Ray Kirk & Diane Guilford

The Morden Senior Curling Club would like to thank the following businesses in Morden, Winkler and the RM of Stanley for the generous donations to the Farmers Bonspiel/Haze Shore Memorial Bonspiel. As a result, the Senior Club is able to donate \$4,000 toward the extensive accessibility project the Club has undertaken. Funds raised in this year's bonspiel will be used for the accessibility entrance.

Congratulations to the event winners and thank you to all the curlers for participating in the bonspiel.

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“Although you cannot go back, you can still grow”

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A father and son shared their family’s story of overcoming fear with a rapt crowd at the Pembina Counselling Centre’s spring fundraiser last week.

The April 9 event, dubbed *When the Heart Trembles*, filled the sanctuary at the Winkler MB Church with PCC supporters eager to hear about Daren and Abishai Redekopp’s journey of hope and healing.

Two years ago, Abishai suffered a heart attack while playing with his brothers at Emerado Park. Staff at the nearby school sprung quickly into action, performing life-saving measures on the teen until emergency crews arrived.

It was a harrowing experience, shared Daren, one that was followed by additional heart attacks in the months afterwards. It left Abishai afraid to overexert himself for fear of triggering another incident.

“It’s like he has a bomb in his chest, and he doesn’t know what might set it off,” Daren recalled. “And neither do we. It’s terrifying. How far can he walk? How fast can he climb the stairs? How often? He doesn’t know, and not knowing paralyzes him.”

The once active youth struggled to leave the house, fearful of what could happen. He quit his job and stopped playing the sports he loved.

“His world keeps getting smaller and smaller, shrinking each week until he’s every day in the house, touching his chest, checking for that feeling [of an impending attack], always afraid that something’s going to happen,” Daren said.

The situation left its mark on Daren and his wife Renee as well, as they relived the terror of nearly losing their son multiple times, including one attack in which they had to perform CPR on him in the backyard while waiting for the device doctors had installed in his heart to begin working.

“During the day, Renee jumps at every little sound in the house, keeps running to see that he’s okay,” Daren shared. “At night, I have nightmares about him falling, trying to grab at his hand.

“Our whole family felt maimed,” he said. “Like a great limb of a tree had been lopped off. How do you fix that? All we could do was pray.”

The family found strength in their faith in God and in the outpouring of support they received from the community.

About a month before the first heart attack, Daren had left his job as a pas-

tor of a church in Morden. He planned to take a few months off before pursuing what might come next, and the family was living on their savings in the meantime.

“So there we were: no job, no family [in the area], and I had just left our church, facing the greatest crisis we’d ever known. We had nothing. Nobody. And then this community showed up, literally at our door. Gifts of food, meal cards, gifts of money, prayer, phone calls, visits in the Winnipeg hospitals.”

It was an overwhelming experience to be on the receiving end of so much kindness and generosity, Daren observed, but Abishai still struggled to find his way back to some sense of normalcy.

“Chris Derksen [PCC executive director] suggested we have Abishai try counselling. It sounded like a good idea, only we didn’t have the money,” he said. “That’s okay,” Chris said. “We have a program for that.”

Thanks to community donations, the non-profit is able to offer individuals and families who need help a sliding-fee scale based on their income or circumstances—no one is turned away because they are unable to pay.

Abishai’s sessions with his PCC counsellor helped him learn how to overcome the fear that had gripped him. Today he’s pursuing post-secondary education, and has made the dean’s honour roll. He’s slowly reclaiming the things he loves to do in life.

Abishai shared a reading of Isaiah 61:3, which speaks of divine comfort and healing, of God’s ability to transform something that has been destroyed into a thing of beauty and joy.

“That passage ... uses the metaphor of a tree for people who have suffered loss,” he said. “When a tree loses a limb, no one expects that it will grow the limb back. It cannot. What the tree can do is grow around its wound, making the best of its situation, taking account of itself and its environment. It is resilient. So while it may never again be what it was before, that tree can still grow. That tree has a future.

“In the same way, as I grow beyond the person whose heart seized up that day, my focus isn’t to try to go back and become who I was, but to continue to grow as the soul I am now, to listen to my gardener and the direction He has for me.

“Sometimes, when bad things happen to us, the people who love us want more than anything to see us go back to the way that we were. But that may not be what God wants for us—may-

be what God wants for us is to keep growing despite our lost limbs,” Abishai said. “If you’re experiencing deep loss, emotional abuse, physical abuse, or even a disease, what I want you to know is that does not make you a forever broken person. Although you cannot go back, you can still grow.”

Daren and Abishai’s full presentation will be available to watch on the Pembina Counselling Centre’s YouTube page.



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE
Daren and Abishai Redekopp shared their family’s mental health journey at PCC’s fundraiser April 9.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT MAKES IT POSSIBLE

Hearing stories like this directly from PCC families highlights the importance of the work of the non-profit, reflected executive director Chris Derksen.

“I can talk to you about stats and numbers ... I can share with you that

in the last five years we’ve gone from just over 2,000 appointments per year to nearly 6,000 appointments at the end of 2025,” he told the assembled supporters. “I can share with you that we’ve gone from three counsellors to nine in the last five years.”

But the centre is about so much more than numbers, Derksen stressed.

Continued on page 4

SPRING IS IN THE AIR!!



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NPC hosting Wave of Light Pop Concert May 5

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Northlands Parkway Collegiate is joining bands and choirs across the province next month to raise funds for CancerCare Manitoba.

The Manitoba Band Association has commissioned a song called “Wave of Light” that will be performed by a mass choir/band on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature on Music Monday, raising both money and awareness for the work of CancerCare in supporting patients and medical research.

The campaign also calls on music programs outside the city to host an event of their own, and a trio of NPC teachers are taking the idea and really running with it.

The Winkler school is hosting a Wave of Light Pops Concert on Tuesday, May 5 from 6-9 p.m. featuring entertainment from their band, choir, and visual arts students.

They had originally been eyeing May the 4th—Star Wars Day—as the date for the show to coincide with the Winnipeg performance, but conflicting events at the school that night pushed it back a day.

Still, they’re sticking with the original Star Wars theme, shares organizer Eric Skoglund, who is heading up organizing alongside choral teacher Ben Kroeker and art teacher Kerwin Froese.

“We’re moving it back a day, but it’ll still be a pop concert, still themed Star Wars,” he said.

Froese, who designed the event’s poster filled with Star Wars images, has his senior arts students creating pieces inspired by the sci-fi series. They’ll be on display that night, with several of the pieces going into the raffle auction, which will be filled with prize packages courtesy of a host of local businesses.

The night will feature several school bands and choral ensembles singing a host of popular music, including, of course, a few pieces from Star Wars.

“Another piece that we’re doing too



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

From left: NPC teachers Eric Skoglund, Kerwin Froese, and Ben Kroeker with the posters for the upcoming night of entertainment at the school, which is raising funds for CancerCare Manitoba. Right: A link to the event’s donation page.

is the Avengers theme and the Lion King, things like that,” Skoglund said, noting they’re also welcoming back a few former students to perform. “Cade Zacharias, he’s in his fourth year of university for music education, he’s coming back to conduct the Lion King. And I have two students that were here in the first two years of the school opening, they’re going to come back and play clarinet in there too.”

“It’s going to be pretty epic,” noted Kroeker. “We’re getting all the different groups involved—all the bands, the guitar groups, the garage band, and then the choirs, the vocal jazz groups; there will be five vocal groups singing through the night.”

The festivities will also include snacks made by the NPC culinary arts department, a 50/50 draw, and, from 4-8 p.m., buzz cuts and express manicures for donations of \$10 or more courtesy of the cosmetology program (you can book an appointment by calling 204-325-9708, though walk-ins

are also welcome).

The night will culminate with a performance of “Wave of Light.”

“It’ll be something pretty magical,” Skoglund said. “We’re really hoping that the audience will get involved—it’s a multifaceted piece.”

“It’s a really cool arrangement that incorporates band, choir, and the audience, so everybody will be part of it,” noted Kroeker.

It’ll be a great night with an important cause at the heart of it all.

“For myself personally, I’ve had students come through my program that have had cancer. To have them come out the other side of it and survive it, it’s an inspiration,” Skoglund said. “So when this came up and we were talking about what we wanted to do, we thought let’s make a celebration out of it.”

“And it’s a good way for all the arts students at our school to collaborate,” added Kroeker.

“We don’t really have a goal in terms of how much money we want to



raise,” noted Skoglund. “But we want to do our part to help fight against cancer.”

“It’s a good cause to get behind,” agreed Froese. “And a real-world application for students to take what they’re doing in school and apply it.”

Tickets are \$10, available in advance at the school office or from students, or at the door that night. Your ticket covers the costs of admission and snacks, though you are encouraged to bring some cash along for the prize raffles. And donations above and beyond are, of course, most welcome.

The evening will be come and go, with performances running the entire three hours and plenty of opportunity to sit and chat.

“The whole goal is that you come in and you socialize,” Skoglund said. “It’s not just sit and be quiet and listen to the music.”

“Walk around, take a look at the art pieces, take a look at the raffle draw,” said Kroeker. “Go get your head shaved or your nails painted.”

If you can’t make it but still want to contribute, you can scan the QR code above to make a donation online.

“Every donation—no matter the amount—makes a difference,” Skoglund said.

> PEMBINA COUNSELLING CENTRE, FROM PG. 3

“What hasn’t changed since the beginning of time is people’s need for hope,” he noted. “We see it every day at PCC. People wrestling with their marriages, anxiety, fear, and all kinds of personal struggles. And that’s really why Pembina Counselling Centre exists.

“We’re here to walk with people through these moments, to help them find direction, and to bring hope into situations that feel overwhelming.”

PCC’s staff do that from a Christian perspective, but Derksen stressed the centre “is a place where everyone is welcome. We don’t discriminate,

and we do not impose our beliefs on those that we serve. Our role is to meet people where they’re at, to care for them, and to create a safe space where they can process their story and move forward.”

“What makes PCC possible is the uniqueness of the Pembina Valley,

a community marked by generosity, by compassion, by faith, and a genuine care for others,” Derksen said. “It is because of this community that we are able to serve as we do, ensuring that people can access support regardless of their financial situation.”

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

Brenda Klassen running for mayor in Morden

By Lorne Stelmach

A current member of Morden city council is hoping to move over to the mayor's chair in this fall's municipal election.

Councillor Brenda Klassen last week announced her candidacy for mayor when Morden voters go to the polls in October.

"I ran for council in 2023 based on a platform of advocacy, transparency and efficiency, and I worked tirelessly towards that end since winning," Klassen said. "I also realized I could be more effective in promoting this platform as mayor."

She enters the race after having received over 60 per cent of the votes in the 2023 by-election.

"I'm so humbled and honoured by the support I received from the voters of the city of Morden," Klassen said. "I believe that show of support was fuelled by an urgent and collective sense that those key values, my values that I share with many in our community, were of critical importance to the future of our city."

A 38-year veteran of the nursing profession, Klassen brings a career's worth of dedication and advocacy to her leadership. She and her husband, Ken, are long-time Mordenites who chose the community as the place to raise their family.

"Managing the status quo is no longer sufficient to meet the evolving needs of our community," said Klassen. "We are at a critical juncture. My vision is to shift our focus toward proactive, modern solutions that prioritize transparency and efficiency."

Key priorities of Klassen's campaign include:

- Advocating for creative solutions to complex issues such as waste water: engagement and collaboration with partners and experts to find solutions to the challenges Morden is facing.

- Cultural shift: establishing a tone at the top that values respectful debate, fresh perspectives, and efficiency in council decision-making.

- Transparency and accountability with more frequent and relevant communication from council along with increased accessibility to the work of council.

Klassen said there were a number of people who encouraged her to consider running for mayor, but it wasn't an easy decision to reach.

"I looked at what it takes, looked at where I've been," she said. "I've had many years of health care experience doing a lot of advocacy work for individuals and families, so to think about advocating for my city isn't a big stretch for me. It's kind of a natural evolution."

Why not just continue as a councillor?

"I'm imagining some people could think that," she said.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Morden Councillor Brenda Klassen has announced her intention to run for mayor in this fall's election.

"There could be some turnover this next time if not everyone seeks re-election ... I debated that for awhile, and my husband and I sat down together and kind of looked at this whole situation, and it was just that it was time to take that risk."

Klassen feels she is well prepared for the role.

"There's always more one can learn, but I've tried to take every opportunity to learn from my fellow councillors, other councils. I ask lots of questions of other people," she said.

"I'm passionate about our community, so to think about stepping up for my community, that's not hard, and I see some opportunities for perhaps a culture shift in council and more transparency and accountability with more frequent and relevant communication from council along with increased accessibility to the work of council. I think those are things I have heard from people including maybe a tone at the top that values respectful debate, fresh perspectives and efficiency in council decision making."

"So I see an opportunity for a more collaborative team approach to leading our community."

Coin show returns with collectibles, youth focus

By Lana Meier

The Manitoba Coin Club is set to host its annual Spring Coin & Collectible Show on April 25 at the East Selkirk Community Centre, offering a full day dedicated to numismatics and collecting for enthusiasts of all ages.

The event will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will feature a wide range of dealers from across Manitoba showcasing collections that span centuries — from ancient coins to modern currency, along with paper money, stamps and other unique collectibles.

A highlight of this year's show will be the presence of the Royal Canadian Mint, which will offer its popular coin exchange. Attendees will have the opportunity to obtain newly released collectible circulation coins directly from the Mint's production line.

"We're excited to welcome collectors and the public back for another great show," said Larry Dalman. "Whether you're a seasoned numismatist or just curious, there's something here for everyone."

Organizers say the show continues to grow, with an increased focus on youth engagement to help foster the next generation of collectors.

"One of our biggest priorities is growing interest among young people," Dalman added. "By expanding our youth programming, we're helping ensure the hobby continues for generations to come."

Coins have long played a role in documenting history, from marking major world events and Olympic Games to commemorating cultural icons. Today's collectible coins often feature themes ranging from pop culture, including Marvel and Disney, to significant national milestones.

In addition to browsing dealer tables, visitors can look forward to door prizes and educational opportunities throughout the day. Admission will also include a chance to obtain passes for a tour of the Royal Canadian Mint, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary since opening its Winnipeg facility.

The show also comes ahead of a major event for collectors, as the Royal Canadian Numismatic Association prepares to host its national convention in Winnipeg from July 14 to 18.

"This show is about more than just coins — it's about history, storytelling and community," Dalman said. "Every item has a story behind it."

Organizers encourage collectors, families and curious newcomers alike to attend and discover the stories behind coins and collectibles from around the world.

Fish fry raising funds for CCI

By Lorne Stelmach

An organization that helps thousands of children around the world is holding a fundraising event in Winkler later this month.

Children's Camps International (CCI) is putting on a fish fry April 24 from 5-7 p.m. at the Winkler Mennonite Church (31 Willowdale Crescent).

It is a by-donation, dine-in event with a menu featuring walleye, coleslaw, baked potato and desserts. Organizers are hoping to serve up-

wards of 1,000 people and possibly raise as much as \$15,000.

This kind of fundraising is vital to the CCI camps program, which has its roots right here in Winkler, noted marketing manager Cindy Salinas.

"We are going to share some of the news about what we are doing," she said. "All of the funds are so that we can send millions of children to Bible camps. We want the community to be aware of why it is so important that millions of

Continued on page 9

Manitoba Coin Club

SPRING COIN, STAMP & COLLECTIBLES SHOW

Sat. April 25th, 2026 • 10am-4pm

Royal Canadian Mint Coin Exchange

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OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



Morden tech program picked up by RRC

By Lorne Stelmach

A technology training initiative that had been well received in Morden will continue under a new educational institution.

The shutdown of the Winnipeg-based Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology had a ripple effect earlier this year, with the future of the network and system administrator program based in Morden up in the air as a result.

Last week, though, Red River College Polytech announced the Morden program is among several former MITT programs it is taking on to continue.

In a news release, RRC Polytech and MITT stated they had been working diligently to complete an academic program review of all MITT programs as they worked collaboratively on the transitional process to RRC Polytech.

“Our focus throughout this work has been on students and on ensuring the in-demand training Manitoba’s economy depends on continues without disruption,” said Fred Meier, president and CEO of RRC Polytech. “Earlier today, we provided an update to stakeholders, including staff and students of both institutions, that MITT programs with strong enrolment and labour market demand will continue under RRC Polytech beginning this fall, preserving critical training capacity and supporting workforce needs today and in the years ahead.”

Nineteen MITT programs will be offered as RRC Polytech programs beginning for the 2026-27 academic year, including Morden’s network and systems administrator program.

MITT had introduced it in Morden this past year. Its aim was to provide hands-on learning in information and communication technology and practicum experiences with local employers.

MITT’s decision to close its doors stemmed in large part to changes made by the federal government over the past two years to the international student program. Those changes resulted in a 55 per cent drop in interna-

tional students at the school, making its ongoing operations fiscally unfeasible.

“MITT has a proud history of meeting the labour market needs of the province, and we are pleased that the programs that have made MITT unique will continue to be available to Manitobans long after we wind down operations,” said Neil Cooke, MITT president and CEO. “We are grateful for RRC Polytech’s partnership and collaboration through this transition, which continues to focus on the success of our students as they complete their programs and ensuring that in-demand pathways remain

strong, relevant, and available for future students.”

The collaborative work will continue to successfully prepare students and programs for the fall 2026/27 academic year.

“While today’s results have set the groundwork for our next steps, they are just the beginning of the process. What comes next will be supporting students’ academic journey with the sharing of this information, and the assessment of staffing requirements, which will be undertaken with great consideration in a fair and transparently articulated process,” said Meier.

> RURAL INTEREST GROUP, FROM PG. 2

“I’ve got to say, the doctors and all the facilitators across the board were super keen to share their knowledge and really excited to have us there learning and to answer any questions that we may have,” Goulet-Kilgour said, sharing it’s definitely given her food for thought as she moves through her training and prepares to begin a career in medicine. “Everyone I interacted with was very welcoming and excited to have med students out and proud of their community, which was really nice to see.”

The day was organized by Southern Health-Santé Sud in partnership with the C.W Wiebe Medical Centre in Winkler and the Menzies Medical Centre in Morden.

Menzies clinic executive director Nicole Walske said events like this are a great way to showcase what an area like Morden-Winkler all has to offer.

“It was a fantastic opportunity to have med students join us for the day and see a little bit about the work that’s available in rural medical practice and see our facilities and meet some of our fantastic physicians and support teams,” she said. “It’s a great opportunity to build connection with these stu-

dents as they begin this journey and give them a place to land when they have questions.

“For some of them, this may be their first rural exposure in medical facilities,” Walske noted.

Programs like the Rural Interest Group (RIG), in addition Rural Week, which also sees first-year medical students spend time in Morden-Winkler health care facilities, are making a difference when it comes to physician recruitment.

“I just signed my very first physician who was one of my RIG attendees,” Walske shared, noting she came on board at Menzies clinic four years ago. “She’s just going into residency and she will be joining us when she’s done residency in two years. She was a RIG trip person, so it’s kind of cool to see that connection come full circle and realize that the work that we do, sometimes years prior, makes a difference—it just takes time.”

Hands-on educational sessions led by current doctors and medical staff show future physicians “they’re allowed to build the practice that works for them” in a rural setting, Walske said. “When they see that, it’s a big part of the appeal.”

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Morden Community Garden plot registration April 23

By Lorne Stelmach

Preparations are underway for another season at the Morden Community Garden, which is overseen by the Many Hands Resource Centre.

The garden had been re-established last year at the 40-acre parcel of land purchased and being developed by the City of Morden north on First Street.

Many Hands executive director Mariyam Tsygankova noted the number of plots and sizes will all be the same as in previous years, and registration is set for April 23 starting at 7 p.m. at the 500 Stephen Community Centre.

People will need to be there to choose their plot and make their payment of \$30. An application form can be found in advance online at manyhandsrc.com, but paper copies will be also available that evening.

"If people had a plot last year and want to keep it, they needed to let us know back in October. If that didn't happen, they will still be able to pick from the available plots," said Tsygankova.

There will also be a short information session where organizers will go over the basic rules for gardeners and answer any questions.

"We will also have some fun door prizes, including gardening tools. This year, actually, we are really excited because we received funding from the Healthy Together program," noted Tsygankova. "We work closely with the City of Morden. They support the gardens with things like water, tilling, and compost.

"We are also planning some improvements to the garden space, possibly adding picnic tables or small gazebo so that the gardeners could have a place to rest and connect," she added, noting as well that they may offer some workshops throughout the season.

They get a lot of people who sign up every year, but it is also nice to see some new faces, Tsygankova said.

"Everyone is welcome, whether you are experienced or just starting out. It's a great way to learn and to connect and grow your own food.

"And we try to encourage food bank clients to use this program," she added. "If you are a food bank client, you will get 50 per cent off [a plot]. We had a number of food bank clients who participated in the community garden program, so hopefully, we will get more people interested.

Tsygankova sees the garden as being a good tie-in to the Many Hands food bank, which also hopes to again makes use of a few of the plots itself.

"I think we had three or five left last year, but we used those ones for a Many Hands garden. We were growing food for the food bank," she said. "We believe in helping people to become more self sufficient, and a community garden is a simple but powerful way do that while also building a stronger and more connected community.

"We see how important the access to healthy food is and how difficult it can be for many families to afford it. That's why a community garden is such a valuable part of our work."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Many Hands Resource Centre's Mariyam Tsygankova at the Morden Community Garden last summer. Plot registration for the season ahead takes place at 500 Stephen April 23.

RM of Stanley council passes \$11.9M budget

By Lorne Stelmach

The RM of Stanley last week approved a 2026 budget that they see as being a responsible financial plan with relatively minor increases in spending and taxes.

The budget forecasts revenues of \$11,940,194, which represents a 3.3 per cent increase from the 2025 budget, while total expenditures come in at \$11,988,503, also a 3.3 per cent increase.

The majority of the expenditures fall under operational spending at \$8,873,942, which is an increase of 5.7 per cent from \$8,395,261 in 2025. The remainder includes \$1.7 million in transfers to reserves and debt servicing costs of just over \$1 million along with almost \$260,000 in transfers to capital.

Reeve Ike Friesen believes the rise in both spending and taxes is reasonable in the current economic climate.

"As we know, everything is increasing in cost, and it has been in the last four or almost five-year period, and we see very well how it has been increasing," he said. "It includes things like our fuel costs being higher and gravel, and of course gravel also includes freight expenses which is fuel again, and there are also the labour costs. In general, everything is up.

"Our mill rate has increased just 3.02 per cent, which is what we were hoping to stay at, not more than that," he added. "And that's even with putting some money into reserves. That is something important to us that we try to do just to keep up with our asset management moving

ahead so that we don't find big expenses in certain years ... we build for it.

"And if we look at our borrowing, our lending is down by the end of the year. We'll be down by \$700,000," Friesen noted. "Our borrowing capacity is a lot more than we are using, and we don't ever want to be using that much either.

"So I think we're in a good place," he said. "It's not a reassessment year, so we don't have new assessment. It's just the growth of our municipality where our revenue has increased slightly."

The municipal mill rate has been set at 9.402, which is an increase of 3.02 per cent from 2025.

The impact on the municipal taxes will of course vary, but here are a few examples:

- A residential property assessed at \$319,900 will pay \$40 more with a total of \$1,354.
- A residential property assessed at \$389,700 will pay \$49 more with a total of \$1,649.
- Forty acres of farmland assessed at \$528,800 will pay \$38 more with a total of \$1,293.
- One-hundred and sixty acres of farmland assessed at \$828,500 will pay \$59 more with a total of \$2,025.
- One-hundred and sixty acres of farmland assessed at \$2,001,700 will pay will pay \$143 more with a total \$4,893.
- A commercial property assessed at \$984,200 will pay \$177 more with a total with a total of \$6,015.
- A commercial property assessed at \$4,221,400 will pay \$930 more with a total of \$25,798.

On the revenue side of the budget, 74 per cent

comes through municipal taxes at over \$8.7 million. Another 24 per cent comes from other revenue sources at \$2.99 million—the main source here is government grants, which are budgeted at about \$1.6 million, a 2.8 per cent increase from 2025. Another two per cent is from reserve transfers at just over \$259,000.

Expenditures on the operational side of the budget include:

- Transportation services: 51 per cent of the budget with a six per cent increase to \$4,592,000.
- General government services: 17 per cent of the budget with a 11 per cent increase to \$1,522,000.
- Protective services: eight per cent of the budget with a four per cent increase to \$762,000.
- Planning and engineering: seven per cent of the budget with an 11 per cent increase to \$635,000.
- Recreation and culture: almost seven per cent of the budget with about a two per cent increase to \$596,000.
- Health and welfare services: five per cent of the budget with a five per cent decrease to \$433,278.

Continued on page 8

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'People Art' on now at Pembina Hills Gallery

By Lorne Stelmach

Titling his exhibit of work *People Art* seemed absolutely appropriate to artist and musician Scott Bell.

The show, which is on now at the Pembina Hills Gallery in Morden, features Bell's paintings, drawings, and gig posters as well as a small sampling of his ceramic work, all very much along a common theme.

"Most of my artwork is focused or centred on capturing people," Bell said. "The figure drawing and portraiture is a huge part of my work, and I think anyone who checks out the show will see that is quite evident."

He noted the pieces that make up the show have been done both recently and further back in time.

"It's a bit of a retrospective. I would say the oldest art work in the show is about 20 years old, but the majority of the show, I would say the work's been done in the last five years."

Bell is well known in the area for a number of roles including not only as an artist and Winkler art teacher but also as a musician and president of the Back Forty Festival.

He says visual art is likely his first and foremost passion.

"It's something I do every day, and it's a necessary part of my daily life. For me, it's relaxing, it's fulfilling," Bell said. "I do a lot of drawing. I draw every day, but I also paint, so I usually have a fairly large scale painting project on the go while I'm working on smaller drawings."

"I also love doing gig posters for friends and musical acts that I'm in-



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Scott Bell's exhibition *People Art* is on display at Pembina Hills Gallery in Morden this month.

involved with, so I do some digital art work in that regard," he added. "I also do some ceramic work with the students I teach, so I'm getting a little more into ceramics and enjoying that now as well."

He gave credit to one of his teachers for really inspiring him to pursue art.

"I've been drawing for as long as I can remember ... but in high school I had an excellent art teacher, Marcel Dubreuil, who

just really opened up the world for me in terms of art, and he was a great mentor to me," said Bell. "I think most people who were privileged enough to either have him as a teacher or spend time with him benefited from it."

"He encouraged me to pursue art in university, and I then eventually considered teaching art. I studied art intensely in university, and I've kind of made it my life at this point, teaching art in school but also out in the

community when the opportunity is provided."

Having the chance to see a collection of his work through the years on display is a good opportunity for reflection, Bell noted.

"It allows me to kind of take stock of what I've done, but it also encourages me to keep going ... there's more things I want to do," he said. "I don't know if you ever look at your work with a hundred per cent satisfaction."

"I think it's okay to be motivated to keep working at it," he said, adding "to keep learning and working and refining and expanding what you do is important."

Bell then added a thought on what he hopes people who come to see the exhibit will take from it.

"It's largely positive works. It's all based on the human figure ... and I hope people visually enjoy it," he said. "If it makes them feel something or it touches on a memory or they can draw comparisons to their own life or own creative work, then that's nice. If a connection or positive feeling can come from it, that would be wonderful."

As for what lies ahead, Bell said he "just want to keep doing what I'm doing ... I've got more paintings on the go right now, so I'll see those through to completion."

His daughter got him set up with an Instagram account where people can see the many results of his artistic efforts.

"It's been my goal to post a new piece of art every day, so I think I'm at 667 days in a row now, and I want to keep that going."

"IT'S A BIT OF A RETROSPECTIVE."

> STANLEY BUDGET, FROM PG. 7

- Environmental services: three per cent of the budget with a nine per cent increase to \$247,000.

- Economic development: one per cent of the budget with a 41 per cent decrease to \$91,000.

In terms of capital projects, the RM's to-do list includes hard surfacing of 200 metres of Road 26W in the Stanley corridor at \$170,000 and hard surfacing of 800 metres of Icon Drive, with the work being cost shared with City of Winkler at \$433,000.

Other 2026 capital projects include a regional marketing project, Pembina Valley regional airport master plan, concept development plans for Reinfeld and Schanzefeld, public works costs including a grader, loader, mower and trucks (\$1.042 million).

In terms of infrastructure, there is a Friedensruh sidewalk and the final half of the contribution to the Stanley pathway. Water utility

projects include the annual water meter replacement program, Reinfeld water infrastructure study, and rural water line extensions.

"There's nothing big that we're doing," noted Friesen. "There's just small road upgrades that we're planning to do, so we're not taking on any big initiatives right now."

"Maintenance is our big one. We know that the roads will get soft again this year, as they have the last couple years. We're in a bit of a wetter time on the cycle of weather, and that's how roads get soft, so we do need to do more to maintain them, so we put a bit more into the gravel and road maintenance. But other than that, it's a basic operating budget with nothing big."

"We have some longer term commitments that will be coming off in the next year or two," he added. "One would be the Pembina Valley Water Co-op contribution that we have committed to, and there is also the hospital expansion, support for the clinics."

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Back 40 Folk Festival shaking things up this year

Music moving to Morden's Suncatch Plaza for two evenings in late June

By Lorne Stelmach

Organizers of the annual Back 40 Festival are optimistic about this year's event as they prepare to host it with some significant changes from past years.

Not only is the festival being moved from Morden Park to the Suncatch Plaza in downtown Morden, but it is also going to be held over two days at the end of June rather than the first weekend of the month. Admission this year will also be free.

Financial and other considerations led the festival board to decide to shake things up this year, said chair Scott Bell.

"People have enjoyed the setting in the park, but downtown Morden is a nice spot to hold an event as well," he said, noting that "the Suncatch stage has been put to good use with live music" with other events through the summer months.

"I know change like this is always a bit jarring for people, but for us it was born of necessity," Bell said. "Things needed to change just so that we could sustain the festival ... it just seemed to be time to try something new. So we're just looking to create a couple of great evenings of music for the community. And it's free to attend, and we're really pleased to be able to offer that to the community."

Shane Falk, who has stepped into a leading role in organizing the festival, noted they will be watching closely how things go with the new location and dates.

"I'm very excited about the changes, and if it comes down to, after a couple years, people want to go back to the park, and we can find a way to make

it feasible to go back to the park, then that's not out of the question," he said. "We took the cost savings and we were able to spend it on making it free, but we've also gotten really great support this year from local businesses, so that's really helped."

Falk shared a few other factors that came into play as planning for the 2026 festival got underway.

"We started to look at even doing sound—out in the park is a lot harder to make the sound sound well because it's just such a big wide open area," he said. "And even just the work involved in setting it up in the park just for one day.

"We thought how can we make this both easier on the volunteers and the board but also cut costs and benefit the community as well by increasing the number of people coming by making it free?"

Falk also pointed out some people might only want to see a certain band or two but don't necessarily want to pay for a whole day pass.

"And we have that great stage area down there already set up," he said. "I've also seen the success of some of these street festivals in the city where it gets the whole community or neighbourhood out ... so I thought why not do that here?"

"And even with the businesses, we are showcasing that we have such a beautiful downtown," he added.

Organizers are also capitalizing on the fact that the Suncatch Sounds concerts that happen through the summer provide an established draw.

"We kind of took over one of those, so that already helped that the City would be prepared to put on one of those," Falk said. "We could keep



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

The line-up of Back 40 performers this year includes The Irvin Miller Band (above) on the Friday night and Cassidy Mann (left) on the Saturday, among other acts.

things set up and do a second day on the Saturday."

The festival kicks off Friday, June 26 at 6 p.m. with a lineup that starts with local band Lakes and Pines followed by Stellar and The Irvin Miller Band along with a few to-be-announced "tweener" acts.

The second night, Saturday, June 27, also gets underway at 6 p.m. with a lineup that includes The Sharpe Brothers Band, Cassidy Mann, and Field Guide.

Falk feels there is a good lineup of local performers as well as some bigger names from Winnipeg.

"I think we've got a great mix," he said.

"It's a really nice blend of some popular Manitoba performers both from Winnipeg and from our local area," agreed Bell.

In addition to the music, there will be a vendor market and food trucks. Organizers are also planning to offer a 50/50, with the proceeds being split between Many Hands Resource Centre and Big Brothers Big Sisters Pem-

bina Valley.

"It's kind of a Back 40 gives back initiative," explained Falk, who also shared that music fans who are not ready to go home after the show can head down the block for more music. "We're also doing something this year to keep the music going with some local bands. We partnered with Travellers [Inn Bar & Grill] ... after 10:30, there will be bands playing there as well."

Head to backfortymusicfestival.com for more information.

> CCI FISH FRY, FROM PG. 5

children in India, Brazil and Cambodia can meet Jesus and they can change their lives even in such difficult conditions.

"It's so that the children can receive Jesus in their lives and they can start a new journey with Jesus in their

lives. It can really start to change their lives."

The impact of CCI's work is reflected in its recent milestones, including, in 2025, a total of 456,800 children attending Bible camps and CCI's year-long follow-up discipleship program. And, this past Feb-

ruary, 750 pastors in southeast Asia were newly trained to lead Bible camp there, equipping them to reach tens of thousands of children with the Christian gospel.

You can learn more about CCI's work online at childrenscampsintl.com or stop by the fish fry April 24.

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PHOTOS BY EDWARD VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE

The Altona Community Action Network's third annual Fruit Jam took over The Community Exchange Saturday night for an evening of music, art, and

fellowship. Providing the soundtrack for the night were The Pylons. The evening also featured a prize raffle and art auction featuring work from local artisans as well as a host of tasty baked treats. Funds raised will go to support ongoing improvements at the Altona Community Garden and Orchard.

Fruit Jam raises funds for community garden



Healthy Living Forum aims to support aging well

By Holly Thorne-Wiebe

A new community event focused on helping older adults stay healthy, informed, and connected is coming to Altona later this month.

The Healthy Living Forum takes place Wednesday, April 22 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at The Gardens on Tenth.

The day is geared towards older adults, along with their families, and will feature a range of speakers, informational booths, and hands-on wellness opportunities.

Carissa Kiansky, life enrichment coordinator at The Gardens on Tenth, said the idea for the forum grew out of a need she's seen in the community.

"The Healthy Living Forum was inspired by a growing need in our community for accessible, reliable health information in one place," she said. "We saw that many people—especially older adults—are looking for guidance on how to stay healthy, active, and independent, but don't always know where to start."

By bringing a variety of professionals and organizations together under one roof, the forum is designed to make that information easier to access in a welcoming, supportive environment.

The forum will focus specifically on adults aged 50+, recognizing that health needs often evolve with age.

"At this stage in life, health and wellness can look a little different, and the information people need becomes more specific," Kiansky said. "Whether that's managing medications, maintaining mobility, supporting brain health, or simply staying socially connected, it's about empowering people with the tools to age well and live fully."

Attendees can expect a mix of short presentations and interactive booths covering topics

such as physical health, nutrition, brain health and safety. Organizers are also offering practical services, including free hearing tests and biometric screenings, allowing participants to walk away with both knowledge and tangible health insights.

Beyond the physical aspects of wellness, Kiansky emphasized that the forum also aims to support mental, emotional, and social well-being.

"Health is about so much more than just the physical side," she said. "This forum encourages connection by bringing people together in a shared space where they can learn, ask questions, and build relationships. It helps reduce isolation and reminds people they're not alone in their health journey."

A number of organizations and health professionals will be on hand, including representatives from the Alzheimer Society, HearingLife, Rust Medical, CancerCare Manitoba, Southern Health-Santé Sud, and Active Aging Manitoba. Each group will offer expertise and resources tailored to older adults and their families.

Kiansky said the collaboration between partners and sponsors has been the key to making the event possible, helping ensure a wide range of supports are available in one place.

Continued on page 11

Pickup *Your* Community
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IN MORRIS MB

MTYP brings Tad & Birdy tour to Morden, Altona

By Lorne Stelmach

The annual production of the Manitoba Theatre for Young People (MTYP) that goes on tour to schools province-wide this year has been offering a heartwarming play about an unlikely cross-species friendship.

The tale of *Tad & Birdy* hopes to inspire young audiences to face the fears that may be holding them back, and one of the lead actors loves the message of the story.

"I think it is bravery, not bravery through isolation as in just doing it on your own, but bravery through your friendships," said Hera Nalam, who plays Tad. "I think it's really and truly about bravery and friendship."

The production was brought last week to École Morden Middle School and École Discovery Trails School in Morden Tuesday and Wednesday and then École Elmwood School in Altona Thursday.

Tad, a bird-voiced tree frog tadpole, and Birdy, a lovebird who knows everything except how to be happy, form an unlikely friendship.

As Tad emerges into the world, they find themselves in a messy bedroom, where Birdy has been living for much longer. Birdy has no hope or interest in the world beyond their window, but the optimistic Tad eventually breaks through Birdy's resistance.

Through the ups and downs of their friendship, they grow to appreciate each other and inspire one another to venture beyond the limitations placed on them, both real and perceived.

"One of the things I really love about this show is how it is about friendship," said Halam.

"They sort out their differences, and they learn a thing or two from each other. Their friendship grows," she said, noting how Tad turning into a frog can provide some inspiration for kids. "And that growth also encourages Birdy to also embrace change and overcome their fears."

"They become really good friends, and I think that is a really good lesson to share in today's world," suggested Nalam. "With the times today, I think it's really important to lean into each other and get through difficult times and rely on our friendships and connections and overcome our fears."

Tad & Birdy was developed through MTYP's Sandbox creator's unit.

"*Tad & Birdy* actually originated from a writing exercise that Pablo Felices-Luna gave me and the other creators in MTYP's Sandbox a few years ago," noted playwright Anika Dowsett. "He had each of us randomly draw a children's song from a hat and then pitch a show inspired by the music. My song was about tadpoles and I immediately saw this little tadpole in a jar asking a bird about life."

This is the second time Halam has worked with the MTYP, having previously been part of another touring production several years ago, and she has also been involved in other capacities. She sees it as a rewarding opportunity.

"One of my favourite things about being able to work at MTYP is because I get to visit schools and meet all of these lovely students who are just eager and excited to see theatre," she said. "And especially in the smaller towns, it's really lovely to share stories with them."

"It's very special to be part of it," Halam added, calling it a good opportunity to expose them to theatre, which is not something a lot of kids would necessarily have a chance to experience otherwise.

As for the tour, it is nearing the end after having started in early February following the show's run on MTYP's main stage. By the time it wraps up May 1, it is expected to have reached audiences of over 20,000 people.

As of last week, they had reached 74 shows, noted Halam.

"It's been a slow but steady process. I think we locked in the show really



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The province-wide tour of Manitoba Theatre for Young People's *Tad & Birdy* made stops at schools in Morden and Altona last week.

well. Me and the crew have become real tight friends ... it's even been a real gift to be getting to know Manitoba. It's been really lovely."

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> FORUM, FROM PG. 10

The forum is free to attend, though those who register in advance will be entered into a prize draw. Organizers encourage attendees to book specific services, such as hearing tests and biometric screenings, ahead of time to secure a spot.

For those still considering whether to attend, Kiansky offered a simple

message.

"Come check it out," she said. "There's truly something for everyone, and you might walk away with just one helpful tip or connection that makes a difference in your daily life."

To register, call 204-324-8945 or email info@gardensontenth.ca.

Your FARM



St. Claude bison ranch earns prestigious industry honour

By E. Antonio

Central Plains Bison Inc., a bison farm located in St. Claude, has been named the recipient of the prestigious Bill Lenton Memorial Award by the Manitoba Bison Association, recognizing the operation's dedication, commitment and service within the bison farming industry.

Bobbie Earle and Jamie McInnes own the farm after McInnes realized he wanted to work in agriculture but wanted to pursue something different. He began researching bison ranching and established Central Plains Bison in 2000.

Now a side venture — with Earle working as a teacher and McInnes as a welder — the pair have grown their meat business over the years, selling products at markets across Manitoba. In 2020, they introduced an online store and began offering curbside deliveries. Since 2024, their focus has shifted entirely to online orders, with curbside and ranch pickup available for customers. They currently have approximately 250 bison on their farm.

"The bison industry is currently strong and the demand for meat products has never been better," Earle said. "We have fallen in love with the animals and consider it a blessing to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Central Plains Bison of St. Claude, received the Bill Lenton Memorial Award from the Manitoba Bison Association at the No Borders Bison Show, Sale and Convention in Yorkton, Saskatchewan this winter. From left: MBA vice-president Bridie Ritchie, director Nolan Miller, and Central Plains Bison owners Bobbie Earle and Jamie McInnes.

be able to look out our kitchen window and see them in our backyard."

She added that bison are easy to care

for, calve easily and rarely require medical intervention. They are also able to withstand Manitoba winters.

Their ease of care is what drew Earle and McInnes to bison farming.

"Farming is becoming increasingly difficult, especially for first-generation farmers, with elevated land prices and constantly increasing costs for inputs, equipment and fuel," Earle noted. "Bison farming is more of a hobby for us, as we enjoy giving the animals the best life possible while they are here with us."

Describing bison farming as more "mainstream" now than it was 25 years ago, the pair say they are proud to have helped raise awareness of the industry by putting meat on thousands of people's plates. They ensure their operations run as smoothly as possible by improving infrastructure when needed, maintaining the animals as nature intended, and providing top-quality food and clean drinking water.

"For 26 years, we have dealt with the highs and the lows of the agriculture industry," Earle said. "We both work off the farm to make ends meet and somehow we have made it happen every year. We put in the work with early mornings, late nights and weekends — whatever it takes. We work great as a team and are proud of how far we have come."

Their most recent milestone, they say, is receiving the Bill Lenton Memorial Award — something that came as a total surprise.

"To be acknowledged by a group of producers who have been leaders in the industry is such an honour. The trophy holds the names of significant bison producers in Manitoba, and to be given that same honour feels amazing."

Bill Lenton was one of the earliest commercial bison ranchers in Manitoba and is described as a "driving force" for provincial and national bison associations, helping open the gate to international bison shipping. Earle and McInnes even purchased their squeeze chute and two original breeding bulls from Lenton's ranch.

The award was presented to Central Plains Bison in Yorkton, Sask., at the Manitoba Bison Association (MBA) and Saskatchewan Bison Association

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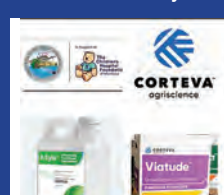
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Your FARM



> BISON RANCH, FROM PG. 12

No Borders Bison Show, Sale and Convention after being nominated by MBA board members. While Earle is the current MBA president and has served on the board since 2019, director Nolan Miller and vice-president Bridie Ritchie presented the award and said that because of Central Plains Bison's dedication to the industry, the operation was more than deserving of the honour.

"They volunteer endless hours for the association and the bison industry, from promoting bison meat through their online off-farm marketing to volunteering on the Manitoba Bison Association board of directors and managing the association's website," Miller said. "Not to mention all the organizing of the MBA's events."

Ritchie added that Earle stepping up as president came during a time of need.

"We are a close-knit association and she brings a plate full of great ideas,

organization and care," she said. "Winning this award means you are recognized not only by the association, but by your friends — it comes from the heart."

Earle hopes that if Lenton were here today, he would notice the grit, determination and love they have for bison.

They are grateful for the support they have received from the bison ranching community throughout the years, noting they are "like family."

"The list of people who have walked beside us would be very long, but they know who they are," Earle added.

Looking ahead, they hope their daughters will one day take over the operation. Their eldest daughter, nine, has already expressed interest, according to Earle.

"To see it passed down to the next generation would be something we would be very proud of."



Earle's and McInnes' three daughters look out into their bison ranch.

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MEC display honours Olympian Karen Doell

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The display case at the Meridian Exhibition Centre in Winkler is shining a spotlight on a local softball legend.

The Winkler rec. department has filled two sections of the main hallway display with items highlighting the achievements and community impact of Olympian Karen Doell.

The items—which include Doell’s glove and bat, a ball signed by the entire 1996 national team, her Olympic jacket, news clippings, and more—were all donated by Doell as she downsized in preparation for a move to a smaller living space.

Still, it took a little bit of convincing to get this display put together, noted Winkler recreation programmer Meg Dias.

“One of the traits that people would say Karen carries across every part of her life is humility,” she said, noting with a laugh that “even as she was bringing these things in she was going, ‘I don’t know if you even want this stuff.’”

“As celebrated as she is. I don’t know how comfortable she’s always been being celebrated,” Dias observed, “but we’re really appreciative of her doing this. For us to be able to see these things and display them, I think many people don’t know just how extensive and how successful her career was.”

Doell’s athletic journey began at the age of eight with Little League baseball. By 13, she was already playing senior women’s softball with the Win-

kler Skylarks, earning the MVP award at the provincial championship.

In 1983, she joined the Smitty’s and helped the Winnipeg-based team win six medals—including three gold—at the national fast pitch championships over the next 15 years.

A member of Canada’s national team from 1990-1996, Doell played in the 1991 and 1996 Pan Am Games (winning silver in ‘91) and went on to compete as a member of Canada’s first Olympic softball team at the 1996 Summer Games in Atlanta.

She retired from senior A competition in 1999, turning down an invitation to join Team Canada at the Olympics in Australia in 2000. She was inducted into the Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame in 2008.

Off the ball diamond, Doell went on to become a business leader with Pembina Valley Physiotherapy, a member of the popular Bare Yogis band, and an advocate for people living with Parkinson’s Disease, which she was diagnosed with nearly 25 years ago.

The City of Winkler is thrilled to be able to celebrate Doell’s many accomplishments, Dias said.

“Softball is big in our area—we’ve hosted some really big events here—and I think we need to celebrate folks that are playing and succeeding in female sport,” she said, noting they have had hockey jerseys up on the walls of the rink celebrating numerous homegrown male NHLers—Dustin Penner, Eric Fehr, Byron Froese, and Ray Neufeld—for years.



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Memorabilia from Olympic softball player Karen Doell’s storied career is on display at the Meridian Exhibition Centre in Winkler.



Doell’s Olympic jersey is slated to go up alongside them soon, as is a jersey from Major League Baseball player Tristan Peters, who joined the Chicago White Sox this spring.

“Someday we might have a PWWL [Professional Women’s Hockey League] jersey hanging up here too,” Dias said, noting all this memorabilia serves as both an homage to these athletes’ successes and an inspiration to the next generation of Winkler sports stars. “It’s a beautiful thing for these kids to see: you can go to the Olympics, you can do great things too.”

The MEC display case also proudly showcases plaques, trophies, and team photos outlining the success of Winkler teams and clubs in sports including soccer, baseball/softball, figure skating, and hockey.

Dias urges Winkler sports teams and athletes to reach out to the rec. department with their recent accomplishments.

“It doesn’t have to be a trophy, it can be a team photo, it can be whatever. Let’s celebrate sport, celebrate participation in local sports,” she said.

The display case will have space allocated for both ice and turf sports and the items will be rotated throughout the year as needed.

It’s a big part of making the exhibition centre, which is still relatively new to Winkler, feel more like home.

“One of the things that we’ve noticed is when you build a new building nothing feels homey until you start adding things to it,” Dias said. “A big part of that is you don’t ever want to forget your roots, you don’t ever want it to stop feeling like a community space.”

If you’ve got a local sports accomplishment or memorabilia to share with the community, you can reach the rec. department at recreation@citywinkler.ca.



The rec. department is asking local teams to reach out to them if they have accomplishments they’d like to spotlight in the MEC display case.

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

sports & recreation

Morden figure skater making her mark

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A Morden teen is winning medals and breaking ground in the sport of figure skating.

Galina Annamuradova came home from the Skate Manitoba provincials this spring with another gold medal to add to her growing collection.

The 15-year-old has been skating with the Morden Figure Skating Club for the better part of a decade, but has only begun competing in the Special Olympics category at Skate Manitoba events within the last few years.

Annamuradova, who is autistic, has been the only Manitoba skater taking part in that category in that time, but she was thrilled to get to meet a second young female Special O skater at the provincials in Stonewall at the end of March.

"For years we were fighting for that, because for so many years nobody else was in that category," says proud mom Sasha Pashchenko, noting Manitoba used to have several Special O skaters years ago, but the numbers eventually dwindled to none. As a result, the province hasn't been represented at Special Olympics figure skating competitions in some time.

"No one wants to be first, but we were, and now we're so excited to see it grow," Pashchenko said. "And hopefully more kids will be added to this category."

Pashchenko recalls they were trying to find a sport Annamuradova might thrive at.

"Because she's a special girl with special needs," she said, noting that skating seemed the perfect fit, offering both individual accomplishment and a team atmosphere. Pashchenko shared that the skating club has proven to be an incredible welcoming group. "They are all so amazingly supportive, the team is. We have an amazing figure skating community here."

Three years ago, skating club head coach Pam Parker suggested Annamuradova could work towards representing Manitoba on the national stage with Special Olympics.

"Galina started with us in CanSkate [the club's learn-to-skate program], and she grew and kept progressing through the levels," Parker said. "So when it became a time where she could start to compete, she could have either gone into the regular system or the Special Olympics system. Knowing that there was some more opportunities for her to experience



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Galina Annamuradova, 15, with some of the medals she's won in figure skating the last few years, competing in Skate Manitoba's Special Olympics category.

some trips and different levels of competition, we leaned towards the Special O pathway."

"I said, okay, if you think she's ready let's try it. And three years later, look at this amazing stuff," Pashchenko said, gesturing to the medals Annamuradova has earned since.

"During these three years we started to think what is the next step? We contacted Special Olympics Manitoba ... and they were so excited" to learn about Annamuradova and her success, Pashchenko said of the agency which oversees sports for individuals with intellectual disabilities across the province.

Annamuradova is on track to represent Manitoba in the Special O category of figure skating at the Canada Games in Quebec next winter. She also has an opportunity to compete in provincial and national Special Olympics-specific competitions in the years ahead.

"It's nice to be able to see her have that opportunity to make more connections with people with the same background as her," said Parker. "I'm very proud of her for everything she's accomplished."

"We have so many families here with children with special needs, and they are watching us, excited to see the results we have now," Pashchenko said, noting they hope it inspires other families to get their kids involved in sports. "Families who are waiting to bring their kids on the ice, they see that they can do it too ... I just want



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Annamuradova with her Pembina Pizazz synchronized skating team (left) and Morden Figure Skating Club head coach Pam Parker (right).

Winkler Royals win provincial Senior A title

SEMHL champs sweep Shamrocks in two straight

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Royals are tops in the province after downing the Killarney Shamrocks in two games straight.

The best-of-three Men's Senior A Provincial Championship saw the SEMHL champs take game one 7-1 April 2 and game two 3-2 April 9.

The Thursday night game was by no means a sure thing, with the Shamrocks up 2-1 after 20 minutes. Aaron Lewadniuk got Winkler on the board with just a second left on the clock.

The score was deadlocked through the middle frame, with the Royals' Matthew Thiessen denying all of Killarney's attempts to widen the gap—they had fired 32 his way by the second intermission.

Justin Augert got the tying goal as the third period wound down, scoring with just over eight minutes left, and then Cody Fowlie fired home the winning goal with 2:19 to go to bring home the trophy.

It caps off a season that saw the Royals finish in first place in the South Eastern Manitoba Hockey League



PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Above: The Winkler Royals are the Men's Senior A provincial champs. Right: Winkler goalie Matt Thiessen covers the loose puck before Killarney's Bryce Enns can get his stick on it. Below: Cody Fowlie scores the game-winning goal late in the third period.



regular season with a 14-3-0-1 record and then make short work of the Notre Dame Hawks and the Red River

Wild in the early playoff rounds (taking those series 3-1 and 3-0, respectively) before downing Ile des Chenes

four games to two to win their fourth league championship.

> FIGURE SKATING, FROM PG. 15

to send them the message to join us. This [skating] community is inclusive for all kids, and I'm so grateful for that."

Annamuradova is a bit tight-lipped about all the fuss but shared she does enjoy getting the chance to compete as a solo skater as well as skating with her club's synchronized skating team, the Pembina Pizazz.

"I like both," she said, noting that performances can be a stressful experience, what with the noise of the crowd, but she's worked hard on developing her ability to focus on the routine in front of her, pushing out all the background noise when she's

on the ice.

Her advice to other youth thinking of taking up skating? Be prepared to practice. Annamuradova hits the ice three times a week throughout the season to fine-tune her moves.

"The waltz walk or one-foot jump or back spins" are among her favourites, she shared.

Parker notes Annamuradova's one-on-one coach, Asten McGill, is currently obtaining her Special O coaching certification, and other local coaches may follow suit.

"There might be a few more that will also take it so we have the skills and learn different ways that work

best for Galina to help her achieve all that she can," she said, noting they'd also love to see more special needs kids get involved with the sport.

"We're always open to helping anybody in any capacity, no matter what their needs are. It helps create a more inclusive club. The kids all encourage each other and they know everybody can be different, and we just accept that. I think it's been really cool for our club as a whole and all the young athletes coming up to see how we communicate with [Galina] and help her.

"She brings a lot of unique talents as well," Parker added. "She has a

very keen sense of music—she can tell the beat in the music, she always knows exactly where it is. So for instance, on our synchronized skating team ... she can quickly pick up the musical cues in the music and know exactly where everything should be instantly.

"She's really stepped up this year. She was more confident to be a little bit of a leader on the team because she was the one that was able to always know exactly when the next element should happen, so it's really helped the younger kids, which is very cool to see happening."

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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION OF PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FOR GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION CITY OF WINKLER

Please be advised that a general municipal election will be held **October 28, 2026.**

Prospective municipal election candidates must register with the Senior Election Official (SEO) during the registration period before they may begin to accept contributions, incur expenses, fundraise or borrow money for their campaign.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I will be receiving candidate registrations:


For the office of head of council: Between May 1, 2026 and September 22, 2026

For the office of councillor: Between June 30, 2026 and September 22, 2026

at the City of Winkler Administration Office, 185 Main Street, during the regular hours of business.


To obtain a registration form contact the SEO at the email or telephone number listed below:

Wendy Klassen
 Senior Election Official (SEO)
 City of Winkler
 204-325-9524
 seo@cityofwinkler.ca



Dated at the City of Winkler on April 7, 2026.

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PUBLIC NOTICE



NOTICE OF REGISTRATION OF PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FOR GENERAL MUNICIPAL ELECTION MUNICIPALITY OF EMERSON-FRANKLIN

Please be advised that the general municipal election will be held on October 28, 2026.

Prospective municipal election candidates must register with the Senior Election Official (SEO) during the registration period before they may begin to accept contributions, incur expenses, fundraise or borrow money for their campaign.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I will be receiving candidate registrations:

For the office of head of council: Between May 1, 2026 and September 22, 2026

For the office of councillor: Between June 30, 2026 and September 22, 2026

at the Municipality of Emerson-Franklin Municipal Office, 115 Waddell Avenue E Dominion City, Mb Monday to Friday excluding Holidays and between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

To obtain a registration form contact the SEO:

Tracey French
Senior Election Officer for Municipality of Emerson-Franklin
Dominion City, MB ROA OHO
Fax: 204-427-2224
Phone: 204-427-2557
Email: cao@emersonfranklin.com

PUBLIC NOTICE



NOTICE OF VOTERS LIST MUNICIPALITY OF EMERSON-FRANKLIN

Notice is hereby given that a copy of the VOTERS LIST may be revised at:

The Municipal Office, 115 Waddell Ave E Dominion City, MB, Monday to Friday excluding Holidays between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

At this time the Senior Election Official (S.E.O.) and or Assistant Senior Election Official will be available to update the voters list by:

- adding the names of voters who are entitled to have their names on the list;
- deleting the names of persons who are not entitled to have their names on the list; and
- making such other correction of errors to the list as required.

VOTER ELIGIBILITY

A person is eligible to have his or her name added to the Voters List if he or she is:

- 1) a Canadian citizen and at least 18 years of age on election day; and
- 2) a resident of the local authority for at least six months prior to election day, OR a Registered owner of land in the municipality for at least six months prior to election day.

NON-RESIDENT VOTERS QUALIFIED IN MORE THAN ONE WARD

In accordance with Section 25(2) of the Municipal Councils and School Boards Elections Act, any non-resident voter who owns property in more than one ward is responsible to notify the S.E.O. in writing, not later than September 22nd of the ward in which he/she desires to vote. Failing the foregoing, the voter's name will be placed on the list as the S.E.O. may select.

NON-RESIDENT PROPERTY OWNERS, PER PROPERTY

A maximum of two non-resident property owners, per property, are permitted to vote in a municipal election. In order to vote, each of these voters must obtain written consent from a majority of the registered land-owners, and file this with the S.E.O. Consent forms can be obtained from the S.E.O. and must be presented at the time of voting.

APPLICATION FOR PERSONAL SECURITY PROTECTION

A voter may apply in writing to the S.E.O. no later than September 22nd to have his/her name and other personal information omitted or obscured from the voters list in order to protect the voter's personal security. The application may be submitted in person, by mail or fax and must include your name, address and include proof of identity.

All changes to the voters list must be completed on or before September 22nd 2026.

Dated at Dominion City in the Province of Manitoba this 4th day of April, 2026.

Tracey French
Senior Election Officer for Municipality of Emerson-Franklin
Box 66
Dominion City, MB ROA OHO
Fax: 204-427-2224
Phone: 204-427-2557
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OBITUARY



Helen Hildebrand (née Martens)

It is with great sadness that we share the passing of Helen Hildebrand (née Martens) on Tuesday, April 7, 2026, at Boundary Trails Health Centre.

Helen was predeceased by her parents Henry H. and Katherine (née Hildebrand) Martens, her husband Peter, her son Darrel, her brother Henry, and her sisters, Mary, Elizabeth, and Kay.

She leaves to mourn her passing her daughter Joyce, her grandson Josh and Amanda and their children Gabrielle, Gavin, and Quinn, her grandson Jered and Alesha and their daughters Taylor and Hailey, as well as her brothers Abe and George, her sister Ruth, and their families.

Helen was born on November 21, 1936 in Friedensruh, MB. She was baptized in 1954, and in 1956 she married Peter P. Hildebrand.

Helen was a longtime member of the Morden Alliance Church.

She showed her faith through the way she lived, through her care, her kindness, and the way she treated others. She had a way of making anyone fortunate enough to meet her feel deeply valued.

If friends so desire, donations may be made in Helen's memory to CancerCare Manitoba.

A Memorial Service took place on Saturday, April 11, 2026 at the Wiebe Funeral Chapel in Morden with the burial at the Chapel Cemetery prior to the service.

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take a break > GAMES

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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!

PUBLIC NOTICE



MUNICIPALITY OF EMERSON-FRANKLIN PUBLIC NOTICE 2026 FINANCIAL PLAN

Public notice is hereby given pursuant to sub-section 162(2) of the Municipal Act that the Council of the Municipality of Emerson-Franklin has scheduled a public hearing at the Municipal Council Chambers at 115 Waddell Avenue East, in Dominion City, MB on the 28th day of April, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. to present the 2026 Financial Plan. The purpose of the public hearing is to give the public the opportunity to make a representation, ask questions or register an objection with respect to the plan. Copies of the Financial Plan and presentation are available for review during regular office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday to Friday at the Municipal Office and on the municipal website www.emersonfranklin.com

Tracey French
Chief Administrative Officer
Box 66 Dominion City, MB ROA OHO
Phone: 427-2557
Email: info@emersonfranklin.com

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CAREERS



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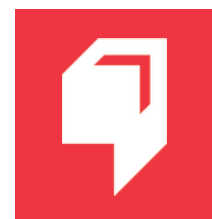
School of Nursing
Full/Part-Time, Term (April 13, 2026, to December 23, 2026)
Red Sucker Lake, MB
Competition: #65-25/26
Salary: \$65,184 to \$102,262 annually (\$34.58 to \$54.25 hourly)
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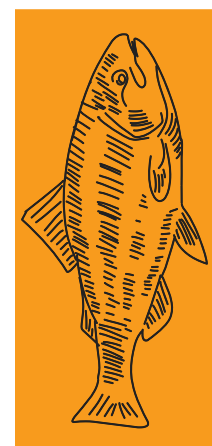
How to Apply:

If you are interested in this career opportunity, please email your resume and cover letter with reference to this competition to careers@assiniboine.net. We thank all applicants for their interest; only those selected for further consideration will be contacted.

COMING EVENTS



YFC MORDEN FISH FRY BY DONATION



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Sudoku Answer

3	1	9	2	8	7	4	5	6
4	5	9	1	3	6	8	7	2
2	8	7	5	4	9	6	3	1
6	9	5	4	1	2	3	8	7
8	4	3	9	7	5	2	1	6
2	7	1	2	3	6	8	9	4
5	3	8	7	2	1	6	9	4
1	4	7	1	6	9	3	5	8
6	6	2	8	5	4	7	3	1

get inspired

> MEAL IDEAS



Basil Pesto Mashed Potatoes

1/2 cup milk
2 tablespoons butter
Add potatoes to a large pot and cover with water. Add 1 teaspoon salt and bring to a boil for 15 minutes, or until potatoes are tender.

In a food processor, place basil, garlic, pine nuts and Parmesan. Add oil and pulse until mixed then season with salt and pepper, to taste.

In a small saucepot over low heat, heat milk and butter until butter is melted and milk is steaming.

Once potatoes are cooked, strain and transfer to a medium mixing bowl.

Using a potato masher, smash potatoes with milk and butter mixture then season with salt and pepper, to taste. Stir in pesto mixture.

Prep time: 5 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Servings: 4
1 1/2 pounds Little Potatoes water
1 teaspoon salt, plus additional for seasoning, to taste, divided
2 1/2 cups fresh basil
4 cloves garlic
1/3 cup pine nuts
1/2 cup Parmesan, grated
2/3 cup olive oil
pepper, to taste



Vietnamese Caramelized Beef Bowls

moons
1 bunch fresh mint
1 bunch cilantro
chopped roasted and unsalted peanuts
1 lime, cut into wedges
Cook vermicelli noodles according to package directions. Set aside.

To prepare beef: In medium bowl, whisk garlic, ginger, fish sauce, brown sugar, lemongrass paste and lime juice until blended. Add beef and mix until well blended. Marinate 15 minutes.

In large skillet over medium-high heat, heat vegetable oil. Add beef and cook, breaking up using wooden spoon and stirring occasionally, until beef is dark and caramelized, 10-12 minutes.

To make dressing: In small bowl, combine soy sauce, lime juice, lemongrass paste, brown sugar and sriracha, if desired. Whisk until sugar dissolves. Slowly stream in vegetable oil, whisking, until dressing is thickened.

To prepare salads: Divide noodles between four shallow bowls. Arrange caramelized beef, lettuce, carrots, cucumber, mint and cilantro in bowls then drizzle with dressing and sprinkle with peanuts. Serve with lime wedges for squeezing on top.

Prep time: 20 minutes
Cook time: 30 minutes
1 package (8 ounces) rice vermicelli noodles
Beef:
2 cloves garlic, grated
1 thumb ginger, peeled and grated
2 tablespoons fish sauce
4 teaspoons light brown sugar
1 tablespoon lemongrass paste
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
1 pound Niman Ranch ground beef
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
Dressing:
4 tablespoons soy sauce
4 tablespoons fresh lime juice
2 tablespoons lemongrass paste
2 tablespoons light brown sugar
2 teaspoons sriracha or hot sauce (optional)
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
Salad:
8 ounces butter lettuce leaves
8 ounces carrots, peeled and sliced into matchsticks
1 English cucumber, halved lengthwise and thinly crosswise into half-

Building a strong Canada means not leaving people behind

By Krista Carr, CEO of Inclusion Canada

As many people in Canada gathered around their tables this past Easter weekend, sharing warm meals with family and friends, a quieter, far less comfortable reality was unfolding behind closed doors across the country. For many people with disabilities, the holiday was not defined by abundance, but by impossible choices — between paying rent or buying groceries, between keeping the lights on or filling a prescription.

The rising cost of living in Canada has become a dominant national concern, but its impact is not felt equally. Inflation has driven up the price of basic necessities — food, housing, electricity and medication — at a pace that far outstrips income supports for the most vulnerable. Among those hit hardest are people with disabilities, many of whom rely on fixed or limited incomes that have not kept up with this rapid escalation in costs.

About 27 per cent of people in Canada live with a disability, and they are more than twice as likely to live in poverty as those without disabilities.

In this context, the Canada Disability Benefit (CDB) was introduced with the promise of reducing poverty and improving financial security for individuals. Yet in its current form, the benefit amounts to roughly \$6.66 per day — a figure that is not only inadequate but, frankly, disconnected from the lived reality of those it is meant to support.

While any additional income is welcome, six dollars and sixty-six cents a day does not buy dignity. It does not cover a meal, let alone contribute meaningfully to rent, utilities or essential medical expenses. In cities and rural communities alike, housing costs alone can consume the majority of a person's income. Add to that the rising price of groceries — where even basic staples have become noticeably more expensive — and the financial strain becomes overwhelming.

For individuals with disabilities, these pressures are often compounded by additional costs others may not face: specialized diets, mobility aids, transportation and other disability-related supports. Medication, in particular, can be a sig-

nificant and unavoidable expense. Yet for many, it becomes one of the first things sacrificed when budgets no longer stretch far enough.

This is the cruel arithmetic of poverty: when resources are scarce, survival takes precedence over health. Skipping medication, delaying treatment or rationing doses becomes a coping mechanism — one that carries serious, long-term consequences. People with disabilities are already navigating food, housing and economic insecurity while also facing systemic barriers to employment and social isolation.

Many people with disabilities are unable to access even the \$6.66 per day because of administrative barriers. Applicants must first qualify for the Disability Tax Credit, which typically requires access to a family doctor willing to complete the forms — often at a cost. To qualify for the CDB, individuals are also assessed not only on their own income, but on the income of those they live with. Put simply, the benefit remains too small, too restrictive and too difficult to access for many who need it most.

As a minimum starting point, the Canada Disability Benefit should be \$1,393 per month, in line with the Guaranteed Income Supplement for seniors, and adjusted to reflect the true cost of living with a disability. It should then be increased over time as the gap between income and the cost of living continues to widen.

If Canada is serious about reducing poverty and promoting inclusion, the approach must be bolder and more responsive to actual needs. This means aligning disability income supports with the true cost of living, ensuring individuals can afford not just to survive, but to live with dignity. It also means recognizing that poverty is not just about income — it is about access, opportunity and the ability to participate fully in society.

No one should have to choose between rent and medication. No one should face hunger in a country of such abundance. And no one should be left behind by policies that fail to reflect the realities of everyday life.

If the federal government is serious about building a strong Canada, it must include people with disabilities in that vision.

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