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The *Altona Rhineland • Morris* Voice

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Margie Hildebrand to receive Citizen of Distinction Award

By Lorne Stelmach

A dedicated volunteer in the local arts scene is receiving the Citizen of Distinction Award from the Morden Area Foundation this spring.

Margie Hildebrand is being recognized for her service not only with the Pembina Hills Arts Council but with other initiatives such as the Pembina Valley Studio Tour and the Morden & District Horticultural Society.

"I just want to do whatever I can to help," said Hildebrand. "I've just kind of got my finger in a lot of pots, and I have a lot of interests."

"A lot of the things that I do, I like to collaborate ... do background things to keep things moving and collaborate with people, nurture other people with whatever it is they are doing."

With the horticulture society, especially during the pandemic when there was very little going on at the time, she wanted to help keep it going, Hildebrand shared.

She has also spent countless hours helping out at the Pembina Hills Art Gallery, especially during a number of staff transitions in recent years, because she is passionate about the role of arts programming in the commu-

nity.

"I'm just always trying to see how we can network," Hildebrand said. "A citizen is like a tree in the forest, and we're all in the forest together."

"We're all part of the community here ... we're all part of it. It's all helping others to make it better for everyone, and I get to enjoy it too at the same time."

"Her long-standing commitment, knowledge, generosity and creativity have significantly enriched the lives of many residents in our community," Hildebrand's nomination for the honour cited. "During many years of volunteering and supporting the gallery, she dedicated enormous number of hours to volunteering, and she does it at its very best."

Her time at the gallery has included playing an active role in ongoing renovations and improvements, teaching numerous art classes, and volunteering her time organizing fundraising events.

"She has played a crucial role in organizing and supporting key fundraising events that sustain free community programming, including the annual Christmas Craft Market, which is one of the gallery's most im-

portant benchmark events," the nomination said. "Funds raised through this event directly support free children's programming in the community. Her hands-on involvement has helped ensure the event's continued success year after year."

"On numerous occasions, Margie has taken on a significant workload in organizing the annual chili bowl fundraising event. This event raises funds that cover free arts and crafts programming for the community. Her ability to coordinate, mobilize volunteers and manage event details has been essential to the success of the event for many years."

"There have been several critical moments when the gallery required urgent help or additional support. In those situations, Margie stepped forward without hesitation and without expecting any compensation for the huge work she has done."

Hildebrand has also volunteered at numerous other community events, including the Corn & Apple Festival, Winterfest, and Arbor Day, to name a few.

"Many times, she volunteered her time, expertise, and labour simply be-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The Morden Area Foundation will present Margie Hildebrand with the Citizen of Distinction Award this spring.

cause she believes deeply in the value of arts and community," nominators said. "Her willingness to act in difficult circumstances reflects exceptional leadership and commitment."

An official award presentation and reception is in the works, with the date still to be determined.

Winkler, Morden receiving \$100K each in public safety funding

By Lorne Stelmach

The Manitoba government is investing \$1.1 million to strengthen community safety in several major centres across Manitoba, including Winkler and Morden.

The funding that included \$100,000 each for Morden and Winkler was announced last week as part of the province's "Safer Neighbourhoods, Safer Downtowns" public safety strategy. The funds are meant to support community partnerships that improve safety and upgrades to municipal buildings such as security cameras, alarm systems, and improved lighting, repairs to damaged windows, doors or locks, and measures to address vandalism and graffiti.

It was an unexpected bonus for the cities here, so Winkler Mayor Henry Siemens said they are uncertain at this time exactly how the community will be making use of the funds.

"This was surprise dollars that showed up for us, so we weren't anticipating it," he said. "It's nice for the province to recognize that there are concerns in some of our larger communities in this area ... and there's

maybe some responsibility on their part to be involved in some of these public safety areas. It was certainly encouraging for us.

"Our communities are changing, and it's important for us to recognize it, and it's nice to see the province recognizes it as well."

Morden Mayor Nancy Penner said their council was also uncertain how the funding might be put to use, but wonders if they could perhaps do something for and with the downtown businesses.

"We are going to look at this funding and see how we could leverage those dollars ... maybe it could be cost-shared," she said.

"We haven't had the opportunity yet to consult with the chamber, but I know that is one discussion that will be happening. How can we collaborate with the business community, probably down Stephen Street, to start?" Penner said. "Public safety is huge for our community, and even with downtown businesses, retail safety is important."

Continued on page 4

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Kalansky retiring, Penner to step into deputy chief role

Jason Penner (left) is stepping into the deputy chief role with the Winkler Police Service as Chris Kalansky retires (right) after nearly 24 years with the department.
PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

By Ashleigh Viveiros

There are big changes afoot at the Winkler Police Service as Deputy Chief Chris Kalansky prepares to work his final shift.

Kalansky, who became deputy chief in 2018, is retiring this week after nearly 24 years with the department.

"You hit a certain age and you realize that you've done your time and you want to leave on a good note, and leave when you're ready to do so," Kalansky says. "I think it's time."

Kalansky moved to Winkler from Winnipeg in 1996. His full-time job at the time was at a local bank, though he also kept busy volunteering with the Winkler Fire Department (a role he continues with today) and the ambulance service.

"I really got to like emergency services, and so in around 2001, 2002, I was looking at a career change," Kalansky recalls. "I'd gotten to know some of the police officers. The department was going through a transition phase at the time as well, so an opportunity came up. I figured I like serving the community, and policing really interested me, so let's go for it."

His career with WPS saw Kalansky start out as a patrol constable before taking on specialized roles in criminal intelligence and financial crimes.

Getting the chance to tackle new challenges made for a deeply fulfilling career, Kalansky says, but the opportunity to serve the community stands out as a real highlight.

"The community we live in is a great place to live, and I wanted to keep it safe," he said. "I like serving people, I like interacting with people."

Kalansky is leaving behind a department that has grown in leaps and bounds since he started, and he feels the time is right for someone new to

step into leadership alongside Chief Ryan Hunt.

"We're in a really good position in that we have a lot of experienced officers," Kalansky says. "We have some in the middle [of their careers] and we have a number of newer officers too, so it's a good blend. So it's time for me to go to another opportunity and turn over the reins."

Picking up those reins is fellow Winkler Police veteran Jason Penner, who steps into the deputy chief job May 1. He brings experience in major case investigations, crisis negotiation, and multi-agency operations, including serving as unit coordinator of the Regional Crisis

Negotiation Unit.

Penner, who joined the department in 2005, is eager to take this next step in his career.

"THE COMMUNITY WE LIVE IN IS A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE, AND I WANTED TO KEEP IT SAFE."

Continued on page 5

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One last ride-along

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Way back in early 2003, Winkler's newest police constable, Chris Kalansky, just a few months on the job, was saddled with a cub reporter from the *Winkler Times* for a police ride-along.

The overnight shift highlighted how Winkler's then mere handful of officers kept the community safe at all hours, patrolling the streets and apprehending criminals.

In the intervening years, Kalansky rose through the ranks to become Winkler's deputy chief, leading the department alongside Chief Ryan

Hunt for the past eight years.

As he prepared for his final days on the job ahead of retirement, Kalansky was kind enough to take that same reporter on one more ride-along to bookend his career.

Here's a few of the thoughts he shared on that last patrol:

Voice: When you look back, did a career in policing live up to what you were hoping for?

Kalansky: I think it's honest to say that I had no idea what I was truly getting myself into. It's hard to describe until you actually do the job.

The career is certainly not ordinary.

You go to a lot of calls for service that are traumatic, very emotional calls. Sometimes you can be helpful and maybe do some good work, other times it's just heart-wrenching. So you have those highs and lows.

V: Does policing change a person? Do you look at the world differently now?

K: I do think that policing does change your personality a little bit. It is tough on you because what somebody might see once in a lifetime police will see on a monthly basis.

You're always on some level of alertness. On duty, off duty. But I look at our community and we live in a great place. We live in one of the safest communities in the country, and Canada is one of the safest countries in the world, and I appreciate that.

Police deal with those issues that affect the public, those safety issues, but overall I'd say we live in a great place ... people don't need to walk in fear here.

One of the things I like about this community is that, having lived here for 30 years now, is you have you so many connections. I can walk into a business and talk to a business owner and say, hey, we've seen this or can you help me out with this and they're readily willing to help out.

And these business owners know that we're here to help them as well. So there's that partnership, that relationship that develops over the years which I think is very valuable.

V: How has the community and the job changed?

K: The community itself has doubled in size, but the change in policing has been even larger. The use of computers, the use of digital technology, the legal requirements, the expertise of our officers, the training expectations, the community expectations have all grown so much since we started.

When I started we had a handful of forms and we had a couple portable radios and one cell phone. The change has been amazing. It's improved us, but it has been a tremendous amount of change that we've experienced.

V: Over the years, there has been a shift, certainly in larger urban centres but perhaps smaller ones as well, in how people view the police, often taking a more negative stance against them. Have you felt that here at all?

K: We do surveys every couple of

years and we have a very high rating within the general public. There's always instances that people don't understand or like, or sometimes police have to take actions they don't agree with, but overall I think there is a great deal of trust and respect for policing within the community in general. And police can't take that for granted. Every day we have to go out and build that again.

The idea of community policing isn't just a concept. I really believe in it.

V: How has the work-life balance been for you the past 20 years?

K: Shift work certainly takes a toll. But I think if you have an understanding family, it's doable. The hours are very tough, however somebody has to be out there protecting the community when everyone else is sleeping and on weekends and all that.

You're going to miss a lot of things, family gatherings and special events, that's just the nature of it. And you're

going to get call outs, you're going to get questions when you're off-duty, people approaching you, especially being in a small town. That's the good part of it and the bad part of it.

It's nice that people are willing to approach us and ask questions. I think it's a sign of a healthy relationship."

V: Have you enjoyed being deputy chief?

K: The patrol officers go out and they patrol the streets, they do investigations, they're the forward-facing aspect of the police service. Being on the administrative side, your job is to make sure the police service keeps running ... so that the members are free to go out and actual police.

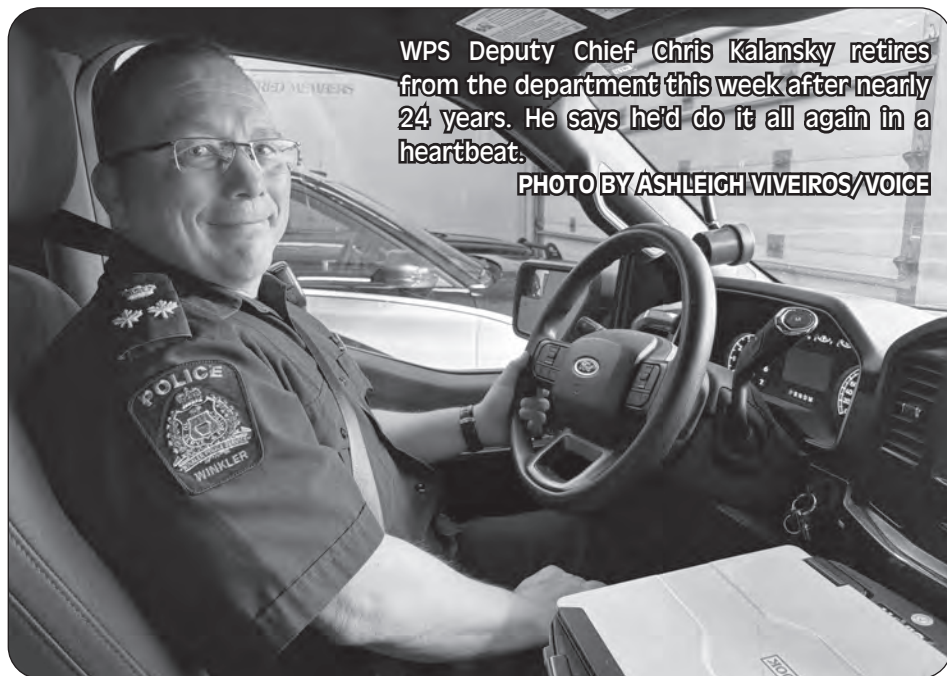
I took the role because I thought I could help out there, and I think I have. I'm a strong believer in trying to leave the place better than you found it, and hopefully I've accomplished some of that."

V: Looking back, what advice would you have for the 30-something Chris as he embarked on this career?

K: Just enjoy every day. Do the best you can.

It's been a great adventure. I'd do it all over again if I was given a chance.

This interview has been edited for length and clarity.



"IT'S BEEN A GREAT ADVENTURE. I'D DO IT ALL OVER AGAIN IF I WAS GIVEN A CHANCE."

> PUBLIC SAFETY, FROM PG. 2

"Public safety is a top priority for this government," said Justice Minister Matt Wiebe in announcing the funds. "We're working with municipalities to keep people and communities safe, cracking down on drug dealers and getting weapons off our streets while also tackling the root causes of crime."

"We know that each municipality in Manitoba has unique needs, and we want to make sure they have the resources they need to keep their communities safe," said Municipal and Northern Relations Minister Glen Simard. "Our municipal partners deserve to have a provincial government that supports and empowers them in making their communities safer."

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getinformed

CFDC wins Tourism Award for dig tour marketing

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre (CFDC) has added another feather to its cap.

Last Thursday, the Morden museum took home the award for Marketing Campaign of the Year at the fourth annual Tourism Awards organized by Travel Manitoba.

The honour came in recognition of CFDC's work in promoting its Fossil Dig Adventure Tour, which gives visitors the opportunity to help paleontologists unearth 83-million-year-old fossils at its dig site in the Pembina Escarpment.

The museum really ramped up its marketing efforts for this unique experience during the 2025 dig season, shared executive director Adolfo Cuetara.

"So this award is huge for us," he said. "It's recognition of all the effort that we did last year.

"We are really honoured because there's so many incredible tourism businesses in Manitoba, so to be selected as the best between all of them, that's incredible."

Behind-the-scenes videos showcasing the dig tours racked up tens of thousands of views last summer, and the museum made national news



SUPPLIED PHOTO

CFDC's team—from left, paleontologist and board member Dr. Kirstin Brink, board member Monica Rodriguez, executive director Adolfo Cuetara, paleontologist and board member Dr. Melina Jobbins, paleontologist Bruno Costa, and board chair Henry Penner—at Travel Manitoba's Tourism Awards last week, where the Morden museum was honoured for best marketing campaign for its dig tours.

for discoveries dug out by visitors. CFDC also signed a new agreement with travel company GetyourGuide to help it attract even more people to the tours.

"Last year we had more than double the amount of visitors than the year before," Cuetara shared. "And especially from outside the country—we

have visitors coming from Australia, New Zealand England."

Bookings are already starting to fill up for the 2026 season, which Cuetara predicts will see even more growth.

"We have a lot of room to improve in the future," he said, noting they're limited to just 12 seats per tour due to the size of the current transport vehicle, but increased interest could see them find ways to boost those numbers with

more vehicles or dig days.

The tours give people the chance to get truly hands-on with prehistory.

"They are actually digging up a skeleton. It's not like they're just looking for fossils in a field," Cuetara said. "They are helping us in a professionally established dig site to really dig out most of the skeleton. So every visitor is uncovering a new vertebra, a new tooth, a new limb element.

"We are very lucky to own those acres in the escarpment that are so rich in fossils."

> WINKLER POLICE, FROM PG. 3

"I'm very excited. But it is big shoes to fill," he says. "There is an adjustment from patrol to police administration ... I was working my last set of night shifts and it was bittersweet. I've done that for 20 years ... out at 2 o'clock down a quiet street ... knowing that you're part of the team that's protecting the community."

But he comes to his new role well prepared, including through his time as patrol sergeant.

"The service has provided me with education and training throughout my career that has led me down this path, so it was a natural progression for me," he says.

Penner notes that Chief Hunt and Kalansky have built a solid foundation for the department.

"So I don't have to reinvent the wheel. There will be things that I make my own, but very much so the foundation that Ryan and Chris have built here, we're going to build on that," he says. "My job is to look at ways for us to get better and be more efficient, and if I can do that during the time I'm doing this, then that's

a win."

It's always hard to lose an officer of Kalansky's experience, notes Chief Hunt.

"Bittersweet's a good way to put it," he says. "I've worked with Chris a lot of years, especially the last eight years working very closely together in our roles here. You get to know each other pretty well. He was always great to work with. We're going to miss having him around."

He has full confidence, though, that Penner is more than up to the challenge.

"He brings a lot of good qualities to the table, leadership qualities," Hunt says, noting Penner had demonstrated a keen ability to build up other officers, strengthening the department as a whole. "I think it's going to be a really good thing having him in this role."

The department recently welcomed one experienced officer coming over from the Morden police service to the team, and have two more constables going through training in Winnipeg. That will bring the roster up to 24 officers in total.

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OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



The greatest nation on Earth?

As we in Canada watch in horror while increasing numbers of nations around the world continue to restrict the rights and freedoms of their residents, a thought often expressed amongst one another is: "I'm so glad I live in Canada right now."



By Peter Cantelon

I echo that thought. I couldn't be happier in these insane days of violence and war that I am a Canadian. Canada has always been a bastion of democracy and an example to the world ... right? Or has it?

Has Canada always been a democracy since it was founded in 1867?

You might be surprised by the answer.

Did you know that Indigenous Canadians did not have the right to vote nationwide until 1960?

To paraphrase a thought from American author Brynne Tannehill, can a nation truly be considered a democracy while denying its residents the opportunity to vote? I echo Tannehill by saying I do not think so.

Prior to 1960, it was up to individual provinces to determine whether Indigenous people could vote in their jurisdiction. Ontario led the pack by

allowing it in 1934 while Manitoba didn't allow it until the late 1940s and Quebec came to it last in 1960 just prior to a federal law which was implemented granting the right across the nation.

How insane is that? How ridiculous that the people who occupied Canada long before any settlement were denied the right to vote until 1960? That's only 66 years ago.

In the United States, the last state to grant Indigenous Americans the right to vote was Utah in 1962. Insane.

You cannot claim to be a democracy while denying people in your country the opportunity to participate in said democracy through the most fundamental right: voting.

One convenient argument against the idea that our democracy is younger than we think is that voting rights are not extended to non-citizens, and Indigenous peoples in Canada were not extended citizenship until 1960.

According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, a democracy is "a system of government by the whole population through elected representative."

Pretty straight forward. If the WHOLE population is not afforded equal opportunity to participate in government, then a country cannot really be called a true democracy.

Perhaps we are on the way ... perhaps democracy is an ideal that we strive toward. If so, I would like to think that we are constantly seeking to get closer to that ideal.

Participation requires more than simply the right to vote. Participation means transparency. It means clear and easy access to the mechanisms of government for all. Things like transparency and communication increase accountability and safeguard democracy.

The less transparent your government, the harder it is to access information, the harder it is to hold elected representatives accountable.

Do not trust elected representatives and bureaucrats who fear to implement initiatives of transparency and clear communication. They are eroding democracy.

This is how democracy fails. This is how whole peoples, like Indigenous Canadians for example, can be excluded from their own nation's democracy. It happens through red tape and policies designed to obfuscate and limit.

I still think Canada is the best nation on earth, but we have a lot of work to do on the journey toward democracy.

Letter policy

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

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

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

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

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• FAITH FOCUS

Inviting words

Psalm 23 in the Old Testament portion of the Bible is a very effective expression, describing an awareness and confidence in the existence, presence, and concern of God for everyday people like you and me.

It was a song of King David, who was a musician and a shepherd before he became a king. His life experiences led him to express this brief and poetic song. In the NIV translation it is 114 words long.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I lack

nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."



By Randy Smart

It is a personal Psalm. It describes how God can care for us like a shepherd looks after the sheep. We can say "the Lord is my shepherd." Not "a shepherd" but "my shepherd."

It is an inviting Psalm calling us to recognize and to remember how God can care for us through all of our life experiences and needs.

It is a comforting Psalm. I have observed that these few words can bring comfort to individuals in challenging times. In later years of their lives, some who learned these verses early look to them again with a fresh awareness of their life-giving truth of the Lord as their shepherd.

The imagery of shepherd and sheep is used often in the Bible. In the New Testament, Jesus identified himself as the shepherd of the sheep. (See John 10).

Another aspect of the Lord as our shepherd, is that people like you and me are the sheep. Sheep are not easily guided. One veterinary writer not-

ed the following five qualities: sheep fight things that are good for them, sheep have trust issues, sheep need community, sheep are easily distracted, and sheep will blindly follow other sheep—even off a cliff.

The prophet Isaiah wrote "All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own. Yet the LORD laid on him the sins of us all." (Isaiah 53:6). In John 10 Jesus said that the sheep will follow the shepherd because they know his voice. In animal life, sheep do respond to the voice of their shepherd and do not recognize or follow an unknown voice.

When you say that "the Lord is my shepherd" say it thoughtfully. We can listen for His voice in the wise words of the Bible. The words of Jesus can be very personal, inviting, and comforting.

Randy Smart has been a pastor in Southern Manitoba since 1979.

Youth for Christ Morden hosting annual fish fry Friday

By Lorne Stelmach

Youth for Christ in Morden continues to appeal to the community for support of their mission to reach teens in the community.

The ministry is holding a fish fry fundraiser this Friday, May 1. The annual event has become an important initiative for the organization, bringing in upwards of \$20,000.

"Every one of those dollars helps us to serve our teens better and provide them programming for free," said Reilly Smith, who is stepping into the role of executive director.

"We know that there are youth involved in sports and other activities, but there's lots of youth who aren't, and they also need a safe outlet. They need a space where they can grow and develop and experience some degree of independence while also having a degree of safety."

The by-donation fish fry takes place from 4-7 p.m. at the Christian Life Centre (605 1st Street) with both dine-in and take-out available as well as

gluten free options.

Smith said the funds raised will go a long way to supporting the organization with everything from their drop-in nights to Samson's Gym.

"Essentially, all of our programs at YFC Morden are offered for free. There's the sole exception of if a teen wants to go to our gym outside of the hours that we have volunteers there, then that part they pay a \$10 a month fee," Smith explained. "It makes it easy for any teens of any backgrounds to access it, but it does also mean that we have to cover the costs."

Which is why community support is so important to YFC.

"There's no government funding or anything like that which goes into our youth regular programming," Smith said, noting they may get funding for a couple summer students and specific projects, but "when it comes to our programs and staff, it's all fund-raised."

Drop-in programs are their main initiative, aimed at providing a supportive space for junior high and high

school students.

"Each of these provide a safe place for teens to go to on those nights to make connections with adults who care for them, who are safe and can help teach them," said Smith.

"By developing these relationships, not only do we provide a safe space but we're also providing an opportunity for them when they do run into trouble, when they do have issues, that there's someone they can come talk to and have those conversations, and of course we do this from a Christian perspective. We want these teens to know that they are loved and they are cared for and that they are valued."

Between their two locations in Morden and Pilot Mound, Smith estimated they have about 160 weekly program connections, and he sees there really being a need for it.

"There's a tremendous need for these things," he said. "Every teen just needs somebody who is just willing to listen to them, who cares about them, who wants a relationship with

them but doesn't want it to get anything out of them ... all we're asking is that we can sit down with them and have a conversation and build relationships."

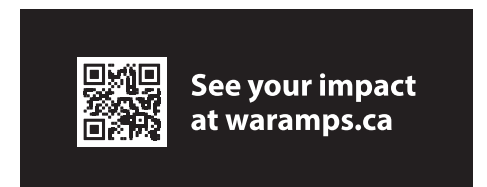
Looking ahead, YFC Morden has been raising funds for an asphalt pad outside for a basketball court, new fencing, and a gazebo to spruce up its outdoor space.

"We've gotten over half way there, but there's still a lot of money to go," said Smith.



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Festival of the arts highlight concert Sunday

By Voice staff

The 51st season of the Morden Festival of the Arts is wrapping up with a few final sessions followed by the grand finale.

The vocal sessions took place Monday at Morden Mennonite Church with adjudicator Dorothy Dyck, who

has directed numerous choirs and worked as a choral and vocal jazz adjudicator/clinician across Western Canada and served as co-chair of Manitoba Choral Association's ChoralFest committee.

Next up, the band session takes place Thursday, April 30 at the Mor-

den Collegiate band room.

Concluding the festival season then is the highlights concert May 3 at 2 p.m. at Westside Community Church. It will showcase performances that have been recommended by the adjudicators of each discipline. All are welcome to attend.

Pembina Valley film group preparing to release its first full-length film

By Lorne Stelmach

A fledgling local group of filmmakers have taken a big step forward with the coming release of their first full-length feature film.

Headed up by lead filmmaker Santi Larrauri, Pembina Valley Films is in the post production phase for the *The Distance Between Bars and Benches*, so it is an exciting time for them to be about to release the results of their efforts that drew on local talent and locations.

"It was exciting to see how everybody was able to rise to the challenge, the whole group," said Larrauri. "It was nice that they developed so quickly."

The film centres around Jolene, who after suffering partial amnesia from an accident embarks on a quest for clues of what happened that night. She soon discovers, though, that the truth comes at a price.

Starring Kelsie Dorge as Jolene, the film also features such local talent as Xander Klassen, Julie Myers, Larrauri himself, Alexander Peters, Darien Dawley, Nick Pharoah, Tim Aliev, Keith MacLean, and many more.

The Pembina Valley Films group had started out with a number of short films but with the idea that they would work towards doing a full-length feature film, Larrauri noted.

"I had to develop a theme right from scratch," he said. "When the team started to get more positioned in their craft, we decided it was time, so I wrote a story."

"It was originally a story I was supposed to write for a client. I sent it to him, and I said to my partners okay, this is actually something we can afford to make," he said.

Larrauri touched on the story idea.

"After months of therapy with little success, the doctor tries a different approach. He releases [Jolene] back home with strict instructions that nobody is to speak to her about any of it ... she's supposed to remember



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

The Distance Between Bars and Benches was shot at locations across the Pembina Valley with local talent. It's set to be released later this spring.



the events organically on her own," he explained. "She pursues the truth ... but it's not necessarily a good idea that she pursues it because when she discovers it, things spiral down from there."

Larrauri recalled reading about a real-life case like this years ago.

"It never got out of my mind. I remembered the story ... so I decided to develop something similar to it ... and I added a few twists and turns."

Larrauri said it was a somewhat daunting task to contemplate at first with limited resources and basically a crew of just three people.

"The community really pitched in. We made our budget stretch. We got free locations," he noted. "The town really helped us out. We couldn't have done it without Morden."

Filming was limited to weekends over the course of several months, as all involved have full-time jobs and other responsibilities.

"It was challenging, but we had great help. The actors we chose from local theatre groups here. Most of them had experience with acting," Larrauri said. "Most of them didn't have any experience with film though except for the ones I used in my short films. It was a nice experience ... working with them and seeing the, transferring their skills from theatre to cinema."

Larrauri has a real appreciation for the level of talent here in this region.

"We have quite a good theatre community here," he said. "When we advertised for auditions for this, we were surprised by the number of people. We had over 60 people show up ... and we ended up extending it ... we eventually used most of them even as extras. It was nice."

"When I wrote the script, I already had some people in mind for the characters. I already had people in mind who were all local," he added.

It seemed like a natural fit for Xander Klassen to be involved, as he very much grew up around theatre and acting, with his father, Richard Klassen, being the lead producer and director with Candlewick Productions.

"I've been around acting most of my life. I believe I was four or five years old when I started acting with Manitoba's Passion Play," he noted.

"This is the first time on film, so it's quite new for me," Klassen said, observing that theatre acting is quite different from film. "It's a unique experience."

"It's definitely something I came to enjoy. I started with some nerves with auditioning and all that, but it really is amazing to be on set and to work with people who had maybe done this before but maybe it was their first times too. It is very much surprising how much talent there is in this area," said Klassen, who added he also likes the storyline. "It is really a story of what was lost and all of the characters wanting to repair that ... all of the characters have lost something from this accident."

Playing the lead character of Jolene is Kelsie Dorge. She said the film shoot was quite intense and challenging, but also exciting.

"It really is a great story, and the people who have put so much time and work into it is really something. It has been amazing."

She was immediately interested when approached about it.

"I've always been into theatre, always been in choirs and in bands," she said. "And I had worked with Santi on a couple short films ... I've already been working with him and his team."

"I instantly was, you know what, I've got to try," she said. "It is kind of a childhood dream come true. I've always been into theatre, always had a childhood dream of being in a movie ... so I had to be a part of it."

"It was very much daunting but extremely exciting," said Dorge. "It was absolutely exciting to see that kind of interest and that level of talent in the area."

The Distance Between Bars and Benches is aiming for a release date of late May. Larrauri plans to have a local premiere for it and to submit it to film festivals and perhaps to streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime.

"IT WAS EXCITING TO SEE HOW EVERYBODY WAS ABLE TO RISE TO THE CHALLENGE, THE WHOLE GROUP."

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What's *Your* story?

Pembina Hills Arts Council celebrates year of stability

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Outgoing Pembina Hills Arts Council chair Lorne Stelmach feels good about how far the arts organization has come in the last several years.

Stelmach and his wife, Michelle, both wrapped up their terms on the PHAC board at its annual general meeting last week.

He recalls the two of them sat in on a board meeting six years ago and left not only as board members but in executive roles, the board being in dire need of new faces.

"The six years that have followed have been filled with ups and downs and a number of challenges," Stelmach reflected. "Over that time, we have dealt with a number of staffing changes, and it also involved along the way making changes to our staffing structure."

The Morden gallery also weathered pandemic shutdowns and significant financial struggles as a result.

It put PHAC "in the position of needing to stabilize its financial position through both controlling costs and finding more diversified revenue sources, including grants and fundraising," Stelmach said.

The past year has been one of continued stabilization, he observed, giving much of the credit to Anna Ishkhanyan, who has stepped into the role of gallery director.

"THE ONGOING CHALLENGE FOR THE ARTS COUNCIL IS TO CONTINUE TO DIVERSIFY OUR REVENUE."

"Under Anna's passionate and fully dedicated direction, there is much that has improved and grown, in all aspect," Stelmach said. "From further and more diversified grants and other revenue sources to expanded, diversified, and successful programming and events."

In 2025, the gallery hosted eight art exhibitions, offered classes in everything from pottery to watercolours to knitting, ran successful kids art classes and day camps, and launched a free drop-in studio program to give both kids and adults the opportunity to explore different art forms.

To support these programs, PHAC hosted numerous fundraising events and raised \$7,616 at them—up over \$2,000 from the year before.

PHAC has "continued to make good strides financially after a number of years with operating deficits," Stelmach noted. "We [ended] 2024 and again in 2025 in virtually break-even



SUPPLIED PHOTO

From left: Outgoing PHAC board chair Lorne Stelmach with gallery director Anna Ishkhanyan and incoming board chair Karen-Denise Cyr at the AGM last week.

positions.

"Of course, costs and expenses will continue to rise, so the ongoing challenge for the arts council is to continue to diversify our revenue," he added, thanking both the City of Morden and the provincial government for the integral financial support they provide annually.

The future of PHAC is one that sees it continuing to do whatever it can to engage the community in arts and culture.

"And particularly to make new connections as well as explore opportunities for more partnerships," Stelmach said. "As well, we must strive to continue to embrace and highlight our diversity, as it is an absolutely vital

part of the fabric of our community and region."

Stelmach urges people to consider how they can get involved with the arts council, as they're always looking for people to lend a hand.

"I always say you don't have to be an artist to be involved with the art gallery," he stressed. "You just have to have some appreciation for the importance of arts and culture in the community."

Joining the board to replace the Stelmachs are Kathy Froese and Suzanne Powell. Continuing their terms are Karen-Denise Cyr (who succeeds Stelmach as chair), Cyndy Kutzner, Jahangir Alam Talukdar, Inna Rasitsan, and Terri Clark.

Morden marking Mental Health Week with rec. activities



VOICE FILE PHOTO

Participants at last year's Mental Health Week activities in Morden.

By Lorne Stelmach

The City of Morden is offering a number of activities to mark Mental Health Week May 4-10.

The annual campaign urges people to "get loud" and "unmask mental health" by engaging in open conversations and using provided tools for support.

"Mental health is super important for anybody," said Brookelynn Wolfe, recreation programmer for the City of Morden.

"It's just as important as physical health, and it's about your quality of life," she said. "And it's important to connect with others as well."

The activities began this past Tuesday with a flower crown workshop led by Earth Buds at the Access Event Centre.

Next on the agenda is free pub-

lic skating this Sunday, May 3, from 12:15-1:45 p.m. in the Huron Arena.

That's followed by a free nature, wildlife, and wellness presentation by Prairie Wildlife Rehab Centre Tuesday, May 5, from 6-7:15 p.m. in the Morden Chiropractic Centre meeting room.

The events conclude then with a Paint Night for Mental Health led by artist Jen Martens Thursday, May 7 from 6-8 p.m., also in the Morden Chiropractic Centre meeting room. There is a small fee of \$2 per person for this event, which includes light refreshments.

For more information or to register, head to morden.ca/rec.

"There's a lot of different things you can do for mental health," said Wolfe. "We would just like to give people a few ideas."

Are you ready if a disaster strikes?

Emergency Preparedness Week is May 3-9

By Ashleigh Viveiros

If a disaster were to hit right now, would you and your family know what to do?

It's a question Altona and Rhineland municipal emergency coordinator Perry Batchelor wants everyone to consider as we head into Emergency Preparedness Week May 3-9.

The theme for the nationwide awareness campaign this year is "Be Prepared. Know Your Risks."

"People usually don't think about these things until they're in a crisis," Batchelor said. But that's not the time to wondering what you're supposed to do if the power goes out or floodwaters are threatening your family's safety. A little advance consideration and planning can go a long way towards keeping everyone calm and safe.

One key part of every household's emergency plan should be a kit filled with everything you might need to make it through at least three days.

"The first 72 hours, you can expect to get no help," Batchelor said. "If, for example, we had a tornado strike one

of our communities, all our municipal resources and emergency personnel are going to be dealing with that strike."

The attention will be on people who need emergency care, and you can do your part to free up first responders by ensuring you're able to stay off the streets and shelter in place through that time.

It's not a bad idea, either, to consider longer-term emergency needs, Batchelor noted. If a blizzard or ice storm were to knock out power for several days, do you have what you need to survive until it's restored?

"You've got to think about food, water, power, how you're going to cook your food, how you're going to stay warm, how you're going to charge your various devices so you can continue to get information," Batchelor said. "And if you're looking at an evacuation, do you have prescription pills? Are you covered for the evacuation period? You should have a go bag of some sort you can grab with a change of clothes and all your identification, your medications."

It's something most people never really think about until they've lived through a natural or man-made disaster and have had to either shelter in place or flee their homes unexpectedly.

"Disasters strike at the most inconvenient times, but if you have a bag or you have a checklist, at least it's there ready to go," said Batche-



GETPREPARED.CA

Every household should have an emergency kit ready to go full of everything your family needs to get through at least 72 hours, says municipal emergency coordinator Perry Batchelor.

lor.

Another thing everyone should do to stay on top of what's going on is to sign up for your community's emergency alert systems. Simply head to your municipal website to register.

"That's instant messaging," Batchelor noted. "And it can be used not only in a disaster but for service interruptions or boil water advisories, things like that."

It's free to register, and doing so in advance ensures you'll get a text, phone call, or email immediately when something bad goes down directing you on what to do next.

"We really encourage people that now is the time to sign up, not during a disaster when you'll crash the system," Batchelor said. "Every cell phone should be signed up ... and I really encourage parents to allow their kids to sign up for it too."

"It's a tremendous resource that allows us to communicate instantly with whoever's on it."

If you'd like to learn more about how to keep your family safe, there's an Emergency Preparedness Expo planned for Tuesday, May 5 from 6-8 p.m. at the Altona Fire Hall (84 1st St. NW).

"We'll have a number of different resources showing up—Altona Fire, Plum Coulee Fire, public works, RCMP, EMO [Manitoba Emergency Management Organization], the Hutterian Emergency Aquatic Response

Team, which is really quite something to see," Batchelor said. HEART is an underwater search and recovery team based out of the Oak Bluff Hutterite Colony.

The expo is a chance to see emergency equipment up close, chat with first responders about what emergency planning they advise, and enjoy a free hot dog supper.

Batchelor also reminds Altona residents that the emergency warning siren will conduct a four-minute test at 1 p.m. on Monday, May 4. The siren is tested daily for a few seconds at noon, but this longer tests ensures the full warning cycle is working correctly. Other area communities will likely also be sounding their sirens to test them next week—check your municipal website for alerts.

People sometimes complain they can't hear the siren when they're inside their homes during these tests, but that is not the purpose of these sirens, Batchelor pointed out.

"It's an outdoor warning siren telling you to shelter immediately, so if you're inside already you probably won't hear it," he said, noting the last thing you should do when you hear the siren is try to go see what's going on—it is a warning of potential imminent danger for anyone caught out of doors.

You can learn more about emergency preparedness online at getprepared.ca.


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Clothesline Project represents stories of survival, healing

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A row of T-shirts decorated with painted-on images and sayings were on display at locations in both Morden and Altona the past two weeks.

Behind each colourful shirt was a sobering story—one of survival in the face of sexual assault.

In recognition of April being Sexual Assault Awareness Month, Genesis House, the regional shelter for the survivors of domestic violence, brought the Clothesline Project to several stops across the region.

“It’s an art installation where people are invited to stop by and see T-shirts that have been created by survivors of sexual assaults,” explains Sophie Gerbrandt, the shelter’s resource development manager. “And people are also invited to make their own T-shirt, whether they’ve been personally impacted or if they know someone who has.”

The first shirts were made by members of Genesis House’s support groups, but the collection has steadily grown.

“We’ve heard from people who have stopped by and participated in the project that it’s felt healing for them. It’s felt liberating,” Gerbrandt shares. “Some people have said they

felt some release after they were done with their artwork. So we’re happy to be able to provide that opportunity for people.”

The hope of a display like this is to get the larger community thinking about this issue and recognizing it is happening to people right here and now.

“Things like abuse and assault, they thrive in the darkness,” Gerbrandt stresses. “So if we can have displays like this out on the street on a beautiful sunny day, hopefully it just opens up opportunities for people to disclose abuse, to disclose assault, and not feel alone.”

If you missed the display, you’ll have another opportunity to view a similar installation next month when the shelter’s *What Were You Wearing?* exhibition makes the rounds.

When survivors of sexual violence share their stories, they’re often asked what they were wearing when it happened, as if their clothing choice makes a difference when it comes to consent.

The display features re-creations of clothing survivors were wearing when they were assaulted. It’s full of everyday clothes—sweatpants and a T-shirt, medical scrubs, a wedding



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The Clothesline Project set up shop at locations in Morden and Altona this month to raise awareness about sexual assault. Each shirt was painted by a survivor.

dress, even children’s PJs—that dispel the myth that clothing makes any difference and emphasizes the importance of holding predators accountable for their actions.

“We had some good conversations with folks last year who stopped by and saw the exhibit, which actually sparked us to want to do it again,” Gerbrandt says, noting they have

some new looks for the mannequins this year to spark new conversations. A support person will be on hand at each display stop, she notes, as seeing the exhibit can bring up powerful emotions in people, especially fellow survivors.

Check out Genesis House’s social media pages in the weeks ahead to see where the installation will be next.

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Local businesses, non-profit honoured at Altona Chamber Awards Gala

By Holly Thorne-Wiebe

Community leadership, entrepreneurship, and business excellence were in the spotlight as the Altona and District Chamber of Commerce recognized four organizations at its 2026 Awards Gala, celebrating the people and enterprises helping shape the region's future.

Held at the Rhineland Pioneer Centre before a large crowd, the annual gala blended celebration with reflection, as speakers highlighted the strength of the local business community amid broader economic uncertainty, while also honouring community builders whose work often extends beyond commerce.

"This isn't just about awards, it's about people," said economic development officer Stephanie Peters in her welcome remarks. "Behind every business and every organization represented here tonight is a story of early mornings, late nights, tough decisions and the determination to keep going, even when it's not easy."

Mayor Harv Schroeder and Rhineland Reeve Don Wiebe both spoke to the importance of collaboration between business, municipalities, and community organizations, while also recognizing the recent passing of longtime businessman and community supporter Ray Loewen.

Four awards were presented during the evening.

The Non-Profit of the Year Award went to the Altona and Area Family Resource Centre, recognized for more than 25 years of supporting local families through accessible early childhood programming. Founded in 1998 as a grassroots initiative, the centre was honoured for fostering connec-

tion and removing barriers for young families.

Accepting the award, coordinator Nina Edbom-Kehler said the recognition belonged to the community.

"When AAFRC was founded, it began with a simple but powerful idea that families raising young children shouldn't have to do it alone," she said. "If we can help even one parent feel more confident, one child feel more supported, and one family feel more connected, then we are doing something meaningful."

The Entrepreneur of the Year Award was presented to Jenna-Lee Luptak of Beautiful Bend Therapy.

"THIS ISN'T JUST ABOUT AWARDS, IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE."

A pediatric occupational therapist with 18 years of experience, Luptak launched the practice two years ago to help fill a gap in support

services for children and families in southern Manitoba. The business was recognized for both innovation and impact.

In her emotional remarks, Luptak reflected on how personal loss shaped the business and her vision for its future.

"Our world broke and we had to bend," she said. "There's some beauty in this bend. If I can help families find that too, then I'm honoured."

She said she hopes to grow Beautiful Bend into a multidisciplinary, collaborative clinic that supports families in more holistic ways.

The Business Excellence Award for 10 or fewer employees went to Altona Dental Centre.

Serving the community for more than 50 years, the clinic was recognized for growth, modernization and expanding



PHOTO BY EDWARD VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE

The Altona Chamber's gala last week featured performances from Folklorama entertainers as well as the W.C. Miller Collegiate Jazz Band.

access to advanced dental services locally.

Owner Dr. Kyee Bo noted the practice has grown from three employees to nine since 2018, with nearly all hires drawn from the local community.

"Supporting local people and creating opportunities within the community means a great deal to us," said Bo, who credited the community's support for the clinic's continued success.

Red River Mutual received the Business Excellence Award for 11 or more employees. With headquarters in Altona and roughly 190 employees, the insurer was recognized for sustained growth, innovation and community investment, including more than \$600,000 contributed to local initiatives over the past three years.

President and CEO Brenda Gibson said the award carried special meaning in the company's home community.

"We know without a doubt our success is grounded in values, commit-

ment to community, looking after one another, being resilient and adapting to change," she said. "Our legacy isn't just something we look back on—it's something we continue to build every day."

Chamber president Cal Smith, presenting the awards, said the recipients reflected the range of contributions that strengthen the region, from business innovation to social support and community investment.

The evening also featured performances by Folklorama entertainers and music by the W.C. Miller Collegiate Jazz Band, underscoring the gala's broader theme of celebrating both economic vitality and community spirit.

For organizers, that spirit was at the heart of the night.

"Your presence speaks to the strength of this community," Peters told the crowd. "And the importance of supporting one another."



PHOTOS BY EDWARD VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE

The Gardens on Tenth hosted its Healthy Living Forum April 22, featuring a host of booths and guest speakers focused on wellness for life after age 50. Right: Getting people moving during a break between speakers. Above: One of the many educational displays from local groups and services.

Talking health living



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IN MORRIS MB

Sunflower Queen returns from Down Under with a fresh perspective

By Holly Thorne-Wiebe

For Lacey Toews, a recent trip to Emerald offered more than a chance to visit Altona's sister city—it became an experience of cultural exchange, adventure and personal growth.

The reigning Sunflower Queen recently returned from spending a week in the Australian community, where she was hosted by local families as part of the longstanding relationship between the two communities.

"We were welcomed with open arms," Toews said. "It was just an amazing experience."

The visit included a packed itinerary designed to showcase the region and its industries. Among the highlights were tours of a coal mine and cotton farm, sapphire fossicking at a heritage mine, and swimming beneath waterfalls in the Queensland landscape.

The waterfall excursion stood out as a favourite.

"That was definitely one of my highlights," Toews said. "It was so beautiful."

The exchange also deepened a friendship with her Australian counterpart, the Emerald festival queen, whom Toews first met when the Australian delegation visited Altona during the Sunflower Festival last summer.

"It was like two worlds colliding, but at the same time we just clicked," she said. "We became best friends."

Beyond the sightseeing, Toews said the experience gave her a deeper appreciation for embracing opportunities.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Manitoba's Sunflower Queen Lacey Toews (far left in photo at left) has returned from her trip to Altona's Australian sister city, Emerald. It was an amazing experience, she shares, one filled with adventure and personal growth.

"If you have an experience you can take, take it," she said. "Do it."

She said being immersed in a different culture—from meeting local residents to seeing daily life in rural Australia—was eye-opening.

"Everything's different—the people, the culture, the way they do things," Toews said. "It was really cool to experience all of that."

The trip also pushed her outside her comfort zone. During the visit, Toews delivered multiple speeches and read a formal letter at events, something she admitted she initially felt nervous about.

"But once I was doing it, it came naturally," she said.

The role of Sunflower Queen has helped build confidence in areas such as public speaking and connecting with people, Toews added.

"There's been a lot of growth."

Now nearing the end of her reign, Toews is reflecting on a year marked by travel, community events and mentorship.

She points to the opening of last summer's Sunflower Festival, including the traditional fashion show and dance performances, as a personal highlight, along with taking part in community events such as the winter carnival.

"It's been so good just connecting with people," said Toews.

Another rewarding part of the role has been mentoring younger girls through the Sunflower program, in-

cluding recent activities with Grade 6 students.

"I really enjoy connecting with younger girls," Toews said.

Toews shared that encouragement from past queens and organizers helped shape her journey, particularly in pushing past self-doubt.

"You don't think you can do it going into it," she said. "But you just have to expand your mindset and believe you can."

She credits former queens and mentors with helping her see the personal growth the program can foster.

Her own journey to the crown began as a childhood dream.

"Ever since I was a little girl, I always looked up to the princesses and queens," she said, noting that though she drifted from the idea for a time, encouragement from a coordinator led her to enter the program. "I'm so glad I did."

As her reign winds down, Toews still has several commitments ahead, including last week's fundraising quiz night, dance practices, mentorship activities, and preparations tied to this summer's festival.

Looking beyond her term, she hopes to continue travelling—something her Australian adventure has only strengthened.

For now, she's focused on enjoying the final months of her reign and making the most of what remains.

"I've enjoyed every minute of it," Toews said. "It's been such a positive experience."



PHOTOS BY EDWARD VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE

The Manitoba Sunflower Festival brought the Quiz Masters to Altona Friday to lead a trivia night in support of the 2026 festival. Above: Teams rush to get their answers in first to the volunteering Sunflower Festival royalty. Right: The event filled the Rhineland Pioneer Centre.

Quiz night fun



Big Bros. bringing Reese Ketler to Winkler May 21

Wheelchair rugby athlete to speak on resilience

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley is bringing a speaker to town with an inspiring story of resilience to share.

Six years ago, Winnipegger Reese Ketler was playing junior hockey when he collided with an opposing player and hit the boards headfirst. The resulting spinal cord injury left Ketler a quadriplegic.

In the years since, he's shared his journey of healing and independence on social media, becoming a popular content creator with hundreds of thousands of followers around the world.

Ketler will be at the Winkler Arts and Culture Centre on Thursday, May 21 to share his thoughts on how a positive mindset, a strong support system, and role models can all change the direction of your life, no matter what obstacles life might throw in your way.

"He has experienced a lot of hardships, and he's a very, very inspiring individual," says Jenelle Neufeld, executive director of the local Big Bros. chapter. "He'll be speaking to the experiences he went through and the perspective that he had to have in order to come out the other side of it the way that he has."

Neufeld feels Ketler's story will certainly resonate with a lot of people.

"We're a very big hockey community, and he talks a lot about how he put a lot of his identity into being a hockey player, or just sports in general," she says, noting Ketler had to come to terms with losing the abilities he once had and discover a new path in life. Today, he is training to compete in wheelchair rugby at the 2028 Paralympic Games.

The evening, dubbed Big Resilience, will begin at 6:30 p.m. and include beverages, charcuterie, and a silent auction. Tickets are \$60 each at peminavalley.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca/event/big-resilience, or find the link on the agency's social media pages. Seating is limited, so book your tickets soon to avoid disappointment.

Funds raised that night will go to support Big Brothers Big Sisters' ongoing mentoring programs for local youth.

"He's going to be speaking a lot about resilience, and I think a lot of our youth that we mentor are very resilient as well," observes Neufeld, noting Ketler also touches on the importance mentorship has had in his life.

If you can't make the evening but still want to support the cause, you can stop by the art gallery at 547 Park St. when it opens at 1 p.m. that day to take part in the silent auction. Auction prizes will be revealed in the days leading up to the event.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Reese Ketler was paralyzed during a hockey game six years ago. In the years since, he's shared his journey on social media with hundreds of thousands of followers.

Walks unite communities in dementia support

By Haley Cvar

Communities across the province are preparing to step up in support of families affected by dementia as the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba hosts its annual IG Wealth Management Walk for Alzheimer's throughout

May and June.

The walk, the Society's largest annual fundraiser, brings together participants of all ages to raise funds and awareness while supporting people living with dementia, as well as their families, friends and care partners.

"It's one of my favourite days be-

cause of the strong sense of community—you really feel like you're a part of something," said CEO Erin Crawford. "It's also just a lot of fun. There's music, activities for the kids and so much laughter and love. You'll leave feeling uplifted."

Walks are scheduled in several Man-

itoba communities, including Altona on June 17 and Darlingford on June 20.

Funds raised through the events help the Alzheimer Society continue offering critical services, including one-on-one support, education sessions, support groups and dementia-friendly programming aimed at helping individuals and families live well with the disease.

For participants like Gary Garbutt, the walk holds deep personal meaning. Garbutt, who walks with his team "Gary's Groupies," said the event has become one of the most important days of the year for him and his wife, Barb.

"It's inspiring," he said. "You see all those people, and you think, 'wow, there's a lot of support out there.'"

Organizers encourage participants to register as individuals or teams, begin fundraising and share their reasons for walking with their networks. The event also serves as an opportunity to connect with others who understand the challenges of dementia and to show support for those navigating the journey.

Visit alzheimer.mb.ca to learn more about the Walk and to register.

JOIN US FOR THE MAY CONSIGNMENT SALES 2026

May ONSITE Week 1 Consignment Sale

Viewing: May 4th - 8th from 9 AM to 5PM.
Bidding starts: May 7th, 2026 at 9:00AM
Lots start closing on May 14th, 2026 at 10:00AM. Pick up days: Friday, May 8th from 9 AM to 5 PM

May Ashern Auction Mart - 1st Annual Online Equipment Sale

Viewing: May 18th -21st from 9 AM to 5PM.
Bidding starts: May 21st, 2026 at 9:00AM
Lots start closing on May 27th, 2026 at 10:00AM. Pick up days: Thursday, May 28th & Friday, May 29th & Saturday May 30th from 9 AM to 5 PM

May OFFSITE Consignment Sale including Ashern Sale

Viewing: May 18th -22nd from 9 AM to 5PM.
Bidding starts: May 21st, 2026 at 9:00AM
Lots start closing on May 27th, 2026 at 10:00AM. Pick up days: Friday, May 22nd & Saturday, May 23rd from 9 AM to 5 PM



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Winkler, MB

May 14, 2026



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getinformed

Morden's Bruce statue lighting up to raise awareness about FMD

By Lorne Stelmach

The highway sign that welcomes people to Morden will be lit up in blue to draw attention to a little known disease for the next two weeks.

It is a simple initiative but nevertheless important to people who live with and deal with fibromuscular dysplasia (FMD) and who want to raise awareness of the condition.

"It's still classified as a rare disease," said Gloria Thom, who grew up in Morden and was diagnosed with FMD last fall.

"There's a list of specialists who you will need to see, and what is interesting about that is the specialists actually don't take this disease very seriously at all, unless if you've already had a major event as a result of this disease," she shared. "The feedback that I've received is we'll take care of you when something really bad happens, but until then, good luck, and don't worry about it at all."

"They used to say it was a rare disease, but now researchers are thinking that it isn't ... it's just not often diagnosed," said Julie Vogelsang, a volunteer with the Fibromuscular Dysplasia Society in Winnipeg. "I think there's a lot more people out there who have it."

FMD is a blood vessel disorder in which some of the strong, flexible cells of arteries are replaced with cells that are more fibrous. This change in composition leads arteries to become stiffer and more prone to damage. The condition can lead to high blood pressure, stenosis, aneurysm, and sometimes dissection of arteries.

"It's considered an incurable vascular disease, and most often FMD is discovered when they're initially looking for something else," said Thom, noting it is a diagnosis that doctors don't arrive at easily.

"I went into the emergency room because I was experiencing migraines, dizziness, pain in my neck and a couple other things. I felt like I was starting to struggle a bit with memory, and my symptoms were just getting worse," she said, observing that her family doctor couldn't really put it together. Her diagnosis finally came



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Gloria Thom, who grew up in Morden, was recently diagnosed with fibromuscular dysplasia (FMD). The FMD Society is lighting up Morden's welcome statue in blue the next two weeks to raise awareness about the condition.

when a neuro resident took a look at her CT scan

Thom reflected on the day-to-day impact of the condition.

"It's really disconcerting when you start having symptoms like dizziness when you're driving and you don't know what's going on," she said.

"You also want to be very careful that you don't see your blood pressure rise ... if you have FMD and your blood pressure goes up above 135 on 85 ... you have to go into the hospital to be checked to ensure that you're not at immediate risk for a stroke. If

your heart rate is high, you have to go into the hospital.

"Every little thing that happens to you in regards to anything that could be construed as a symptom of a stroke or heart attack. You don't really have the choice to stay home and find out and see what happens. You have to go and be checked."

Thom has learned that she needs to really monitor herself carefully, but

she also doesn't want it to overtake her and feed the anxiety.

"I experience migraines quite often because there is just not enough blood flow getting to all the parts of my brain all of the time because that artery is squeezed at certain intervals ... the neck pain goes along with those migraines, and it's debilitating," she said, describing it as being like a migraine on steroids.

Vogelsang recalled being sent home and having her symptoms written off initially as anxiety.

"Some people, it takes years to get the diagnosis," she said. "The risk with FMD is it can lead to strokes ... and if you are having symptoms that might be FMD, you do want to advocate for yourself and have it further looked at to rule out any of those possible risks."

She was diagnosed in 2022 and then found a group on Facebook to connect with others living with FMD. Those connections have been incredibly helpful as she navigates life with the condition.

"I think there's a lot more who don't even know where to turn to or who are living with the symptoms or not getting diagnosed and not getting the help that they need."

You can learn more about FMD at fmdsa.org.

"SOME PEOPLE, IT TAKES YEARS TO GET THE DIAGNOSIS."

The Funnies

PANET GARRY By: Harrison Doll ©



sports & recreation



By Ashleigh Viveiros

About 30 competitors braved wintry conditions Saturday to take part in StrongManitoba and The Forge Gym's Novice Showdown.

The Winkler fitness centre welcomed first-time strong men and women of all ages to try their hand at the sport. The day also featured several experienced 50+ competitors.

Any opportunity to grow the sport in Manitoba is a welcome one, shared Tyler Sigurdson, who heads up StrongManitoba, the province's largest

strongman promotion company.

"This competition is everything for us," he said. "It's us getting the next level of guys and girls involved and getting them started in the sport, showing them how welcoming and inclusive this community is."

"It's for people of all different ages, weight classes, men, women, and we have a team division—anybody can jump in and try this."

Saturday's competition included a truck pull, farmer's carry, wagon wheel axle deadlifts, log clean and press for reps, and a sandbag and keg

Growing the sport



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

About 30 competitors came out to The Forge Gym in Winkler Saturday to take part in a Novice Showdown strongman competition.

carry and load medley.

All these events take a great deal of physical and mental discipline to pull off, but the truck pull remains a favourite for spectators, Sigurdson noted.

"If I say that I put 300 pounds on a

bar, if you've never lifted it, you don't know what that feels like. But when I say that we're pulling a truck with nothing but our hands and feet, people can understand exactly how challenging that is."

SEMHL champions reflect 75 years of league excellence

By Annaliese Meier

With the South Eastern Manitoba Hockey League having just wrapped up its 75th season, its championship history tells the story of a league built on tradition, rivalry and sustained excellence across generations.

Since its inception in 1951, the SEMHL has crowned champions from communities across southern Manitoba, with several franchises establishing long-standing dynasties while others have etched their names into league history with breakthrough ti-

ties.

Leading the way is Morden, which stands as the league's most successful franchise with 16 championships. The team's dominance has spanned multiple eras, beginning with its first title in 1975/76 and continuing through a sustained run of success in the 1990s and early 2000s. Morden added its most recent championship in 2018/19, reinforcing its status as the benchmark for excellence in the SEMHL.

Close behind are Carman and Altona, each with 10 championships.

Carman's titles stretch from the 1960s through to its most recent win in 2017/18, highlighting decades of competitiveness and strong local talent development. Altona, one of the league's longest-running franchises before it left after the 2023-2024 season, captured its first title in 1951/52 and won back-to-back championships in 2011/12 and 2012/13.

Portage has also been a consistent contender, winning five championships during a dominant stretch in



Continued on page 18

The **Voice**

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The Crusty Bun Morden Open

PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Morden's Access Event Centre was filled Saturday with singles table tennis players vying for supremacy in the annual The Crusty Bun Morden Open tournament. Clockwise from top left: Vitalli Dolzhanskyi poised to return the ball; Polina Sirotnina tries to get her paddle ahead of the shot; Rachel Lemus makes contact. The tournament was held by the City of Morden rec. department in partnership with the Manitoba Table Tennis Association and The Crusty Bun Bakery & Café.

> SEMHL, FROM PG. 17

the 1980s before adding another in 1994/95. Winkler, another historic franchise, has captured four titles, including their first in 1956/57, a second in 1970/71, followed by a championship in 1988/89 and its most recent title in 2025/26.

Notre Dame has claimed three titles, with championships coming in 1995/96, 2004/05 and 2016/17, while Warren has emerged more recently with titles in 2009/10 and 2021/22.

The league's competitive balance is further reflected in several teams that have captured single championships, including Stonewall (2006/07), Swan Lake (1997/98) and Warroad (1989/90), each marking memorable seasons in their respective communities.

In recent years, Ste. Anne has emerged as a modern powerhouse, capturing three consecutive championships from 2022/23 through 2024/25 —

one of the most dominant runs in league history and a sign of the evolving competitive landscape in the SEMHL.

While current franchises continue to battle for supremacy, the league's history is also shaped by now-defunct teams that played key roles in its early decades. Miami captured five championships between 1957/58 and 1964/65, while Oakville won four titles during a strong run from the late 1960s into the early 1970s. Pilot Mound and Ste. Anne (in its earlier iteration) each secured three championships, further contributing to the league's rich competitive tapestry.

The SEMHL's longevity is equally reflected in the stability of its core franchises. Teams such as Morden and Carman have been part of the league for more than six decades, providing continuity and helping maintain strong community connections. Both have surpassed 60 years of participation.

Winkler has also been a mainstay, returning to the league in recent years after an extended absence (winning the 2025-2026 championship), while newer franchises such as the Ile des Chenes Northstars, Red River Wild, and Springfield Winterhawks represent the next generation of SEMHL competition.

The league's championship record also reflects broader moments in history, including the cancellation of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 seasons due to the COVID-19 pandemic, marking the only years in which no champion was crowned.

Through decades of competition, the SEMHL has remained a cornerstone of senior hockey in Manitoba, combining high-level play with deep-rooted community pride.

Each championship banner represents not only a season of success but also the dedication of players, volunteers and fans who have helped sustain the league for 75 years.

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Long before the Olympics, Patrick Fischer found a home in Carman

By E. Antonio

Long before he stood behind the bench at the Winter Olympics, Patrick Fischer was a teenager lacing up his skates in Carman.

The head coach of Switzerland's men's hockey team returned to the Olympic stage in February, capping a journey that decades earlier included a formative year in the small Manitoba town.

At 16, Fischer left Switzerland to attend high school at Carman Collegiate and immerse himself in Canadian hockey culture. He stayed with the Leslie family — Bob and Barbara and their sons Boe and Nate — who had previously lived overseas and built ties with the Fischers.

Bob and Barbara, who now live in Vancouver, have remained in touch with Fischer over the years. They first met when Barbara was on a teaching sabbatical and Bob was coaching hockey in Zug, Switzerland — the city where Fischer was born.

"Patty was your normal 12-year-old kid," Bob recalled. "He loved sports, he loved his family and he loved hanging out with his friends."

Four years later, Fischer's parents were transferred for work to the southern United States, where opportunities to play hockey were limited. Wanting to keep their son's passion for the sport alive, they reached out to the Leslies, who were now living back in Manitoba.

"He wanted to keep playing hockey and we had a place for him here in Carman," Bob said. "It was an easy decision and he quickly became like one of our sons."

Barbara said Fischer quickly adapted to the Canadian way of life, making friends, navigating the school system and continuing to develop his English.

"He had a lot of self-confidence and a great personality, so he fit in well," she said. "He already knew the family, so it was just a matter of him getting to enjoy life and school."

Both Bob and Barbara said Fischer's outgoing personality helped him integrate easily into the Carman community, which offered plenty of academic, athletic and social opportunities.

Fischer joined Carman Collegiate's hockey team, which Bob coached at the time. The school also hosted several other exchange students that

year, creating opportunities for students to learn about different cultures and form international friendships.

For Boe Leslie, the connection with Fischer had already been years in the making.

"I always like to say this — by the time he got to Carman when we were 16, we had already been like brothers for four years," Boe said. "Once he arrived in Carman, he fit in like he had grown up there his whole life. He has never been shy. He talked to everyone. He also knew that his year in Carman was going to be a once-in-a-lifetime experience and he made the most of it."

Decades later, Fischer's career would take him from professional rinks in Switzerland to the National Hockey League and, ultimately, to the Olympic bench.

After leaving Carman, Fischer went on to play 14 seasons in Switzerland's top professional league before transitioning into coaching. He eventually rose through the ranks to lead Switzerland's national men's team, guiding the country into international competition against the world's best.

For Boe, many of the memories from that year have nothing to do with the spotlight Fischer stands in today.

He recalls playing badminton, hockey and soccer together, and said Fischer quickly became part of the community.

"The town welcomed him with open arms and he loved it," Boe said.

The friendship has endured over the decades. The two still meet up when their travels allow.

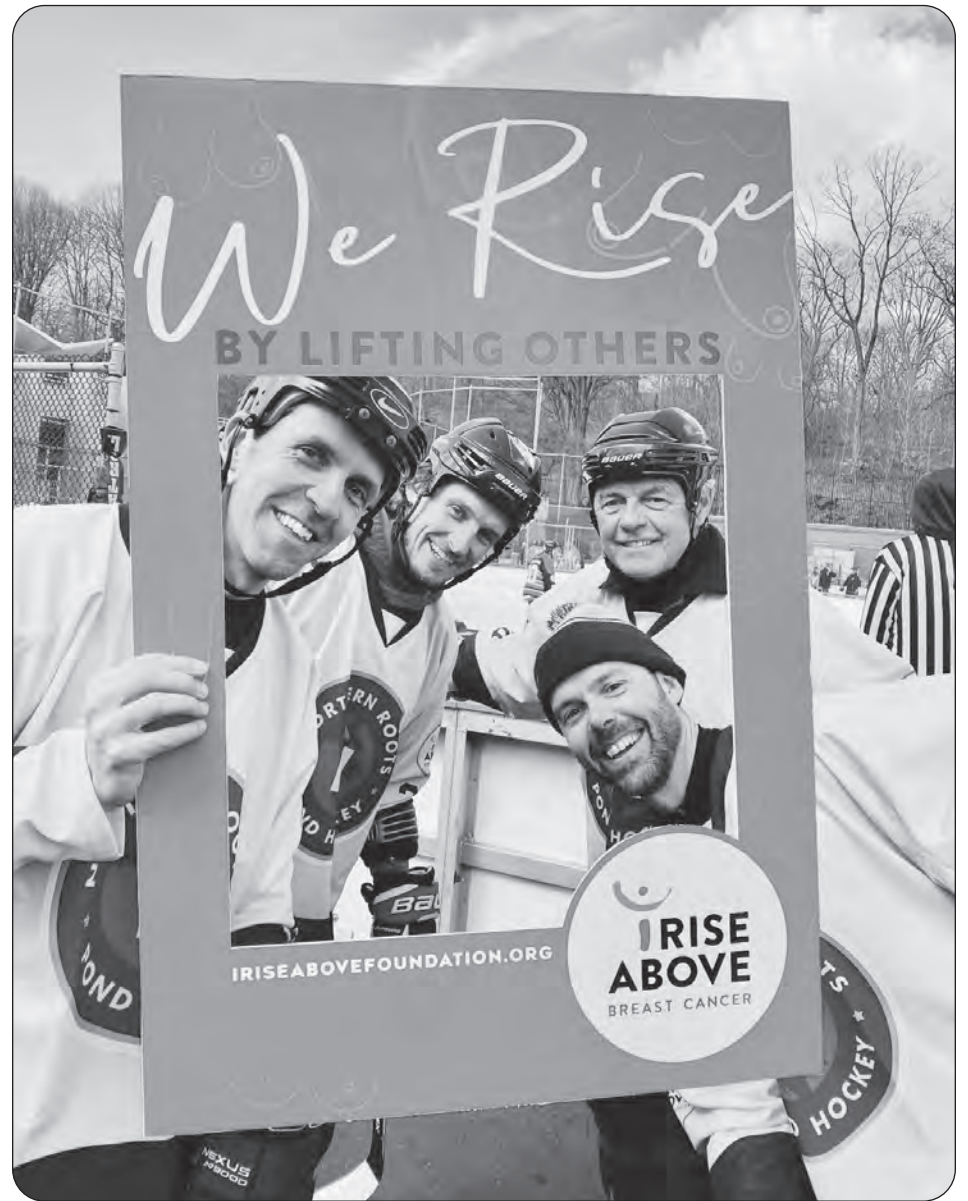
"When we see each other, it's always like we never missed a beat," he added.

Nate, who was 14 at the time, said adjusting to life with what felt like a second brother came naturally.

"Patty didn't hold back," he said. "He could drive my mom crazy but make her laugh at the same time. He taught our family how to be both a 'high performer' and the class clown at the same time."

For him, simply sharing the ice remains one of the biggest highlights of that year.

"When he's on the world stage with the Swiss national team and I see him on TV, it often prompts me to send him a text congratulating him or giving him a jab," Nate said. "Watching Patty's success over his career always



STANDARD PHOTO SUBMITTED

Boe Leslie, Patrick Fischer, Bob Leslie and Nate Leslie reconnect at the Northern Roots Charity Pond Hockey Tournament in support of the iRise Above Breast Cancer Foundation a few years ago. Fischer lived with the Leslie family while attending Carman Collegiate as a teenager, forming friendships that have lasted decades.

reminds me that we can be hyper-focused on our personal success while also choosing not to take life too seriously. The Patty Manitobans see on TV at the Olympics is the exact same guy who laughed his way through Grade 11 at Carman Collegiate."

Fischer's year in Manitoba is widely seen as a period of personal growth — one that required independence, adaptability and resilience. Leaving home at a young age helped broaden his perspective and, Bob said, gave him tools that would later help him connect with teammates and players from Canada once he returned to Switzerland.

The Leslies never imagined the teenager who once lived in their home

would one day coach at the Olympics, but his determination made his success less surprising.

"He worked very hard to establish his career," Bob said. "He took full advantage of his opportunities and I'm happy he has done so well."

Looking back, both Bob and Barbara say it's difficult to sum up the impact Fischer's year in Carman had on their family.

"As any family who has had a connection to an exchange student would say, our lives have been enriched," Barbara said. "And those who knew Patty would feel the same. For us, it was more than a short year — it's been decades."

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF JOHN EDWARD WALL, late of MORDEN, in the Province of MANITOBA, deceased.

All claims against the above Estate, duly verified by Statutory Declaration, must be filed with the undersigned at their office, 14 Main Street South, Box 1670, Carman, Manitoba R0G 0J0, within thirty (30) days of the date of this publication.

DATED at the Town of Carman, in Manitoba this 20th day of April, 2026.

MCCULLOCH MOONEY
JOHNSTON SELBY LLP

Attention: MICHELLE L. HARMS
Solicitors for the Administrator

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION OF PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FOR GENERAL SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION BORDER LAND SCHOOL DIVISION

Please be advised that a general School Board election will be held on **October 28, 2026**.

Prospective School Board 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 School Trustee: Between **June 30, 2026, and September 15, 2026**, at the Border Land School Division Administration Office, 120-9th Street NW, Altona, MB during the regular hours of business.

To obtain a registration form contact the SEO at the email or telephone numbers listed below.

Dated at Altona, MB on April 15th, 2026.

Jake Bergen
Senior Election Official
Border Land School Division
Ph. 204-324-7693 or 204-324-6491
Fax 204-324-1664
Email bergenj42@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE



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

Please be advised that a general municipal election will be held on October 28th, 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 candidate registrations will be received:

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 Morden administration office, 100-195 Stephen Street during the regular hours of business.

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

Brian Nedohin
Senior Election Official (SEO)
204-822-2579
SEO@morden.ca

Dated at the City of Morden, Manitoba on April 16th, 2026

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PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF VOTERS LIST / PERSONAL SECURITY PROTECTION BORDER LAND SCHOOL DIVISION

Notice is hereby given that a copy of the VOTERS LIST may be revised at: Border Land School Division Office, 120-9th St, NW Altona, MB during regular business days until Tuesday, September 15th, 2026 between the hours of 9:00 am and 4:30 pm.

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

- (a) adding the names of voters who are entitled to have their names on the list;
- (b) deleting the names of persons who are not entitled to have their names on the list; and
- (c) 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.

APPLICATION FOR PERSONAL SECURITY PROTECTION:

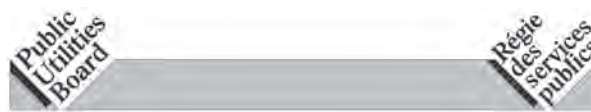
A voter may apply in writing to the SEO (at the address / email below) no later than September 15th, 2026, to have his/her name and other personal information omitted or obscured from the voters list in order to protect the voter's personal security. The application may be submitted in person, by mail or email and must include your name, address and include proof of identity

All changes to the voters list must be completed on or before September 15th, 2026.

Dated at Altona, in the Province of Manitoba, April 15th, 2026.

Jake Bergen
Senior Election Official
Border Land School Division
120-9th St. NW Altona, MB R0G 0B1
Ph. 204-324-7693 or 204-324-6491
Email - bergenj42@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE



NOTICE OF APPLICATION TOWN OF ALTONA REVISED WATER AND WASTEWATER RATES ALTONA WATER AND WASTEWATER UTILITY April 22, 2026

The Town of Altona (Town) has applied to the Public Utilities Board (Board) for revised water and wastewater rates for the Altona Water and Wastewater Utility (Utility) as set out in By-Law No. 1839/2026, read the first time on March 24, 2026. Current rates were last approved in Board Order No. 5/18. The application includes an application for recovery of a 2024 operating deficit using the Utility's working capital surplus. The current and proposed rates are as follows:

	Current Rates*	Proposed Rates			
		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Quarterly Service Charge	\$33.84	\$31.79	\$29.74	\$27.69	\$25.62
Water (\$/1,000 gallons)	\$15.52	\$17.43	\$18.87	\$20.31	\$21.73
Wastewater (\$/1,000 gallons)	\$10.71	\$12.77	\$14.83	\$16.89	\$18.93
Minimum Quarterly Charge**	\$112.53	\$122.39	\$130.84	\$139.29	\$147.60
Minimum Quarterly Charge - Water Only	\$80.40	\$84.08	\$86.35	\$88.62	\$90.81
Unmetered Wastewater Only***	\$65.97	\$191.42	\$215.12	\$238.82	\$262.25
Bulk Water (\$/1,000 gallons)****	\$17.38	\$18.70	\$20.18	\$21.66	\$23.12
Hydrant Rental	\$150.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Manual Quarterly Meter Reading	\$0.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00	\$30.00
Disconnection and Reconnection*****	\$40.00	\$60.00	\$60.00	\$60.00	\$60.00
Meter Tampering*****	\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Meter Testing*****	\$200.00	\$30.00+	\$30.00+	\$30.00+	\$30.00+

*Current rates include pass through increases from the Pembina Valley Water Coop from Board Order No. 172/18 and Board Order No. 138/22.

**Based on 1,000 gallons

***Based on 12,500 gallons

****Current rates are \$17.38 per 1,000 or \$0.25 per 14.4 gallons.

*****Current rates are \$40.00 for first 1/2 hour thereafter as per Fees & Charges By-Law.

Proposed rates are \$60.00 for the first 1/2 hour and \$40.00 per hour thereafter.

*****Proposed rate is in addition to amount calculated to adjust based on historical usage.

*****Current rates based on a deposit of \$200.00. Proposed rates based on a \$30.00 fee plus a deposit of the actual costs of testing.

Details of the Town's application are available for review at the Town's office or the Board's office. Any questions concerning the application for revised rates, or the operation of the Utility, should be sent directly to the Town.

If you have concerns/comments regarding the Town's application for water and wastewater rates, please go to www.pubmanitoba.ca and provide your comment. Please note all comments will be forwarded to the Town.

Questions or comments should be sent on or before June 8, 2026

The Board is the provincial regulatory agency that reviews and approves rates for water and wastewater utilities in Manitoba, with the exception of the City of Winnipeg. The Board's review process involves:

- the Utility filing a rate application to the Board,
- a public notification of proposed rate changes,
- the Board's review of the application through a public hearing or paper review process, and
- the issuance of an Order which outlines the Board's decision on the rate application and the rates to be charged.

The Manitoba Ombudsman has privacy guidelines for administrative tribunals. The Board is mindful of its obligations under those guidelines. Its decisions in respect of the application being considered will be sensitive to the guidelines. Personal information will not be disclosed unless it is appropriate and necessary to do so. However, the Board advises participants that these proceedings are public and that as a result, personal information protections are reduced.

The Board will then decide whether any further notice is required and whether to proceed with a public hearing or paper review process. All concerns received by the Board will be considered in the Board's decision on rates to be charged.

PLEASE BE ADVISED THAT IN CONSIDERING THIS APPLICATION, THE PUBLIC UTILITIES BOARD MAY OR MAY NOT FIND IT NECESSARY TO DETERMINE RATES DIFFERENT FROM THOSE APPLIED FOR BY THE APPLICANT.

Note: All proceedings will be conducted in accordance with the Board's Rules of Practice and Procedure, which the Board may vary in order to constrain regulatory costs. The Rules are available at www.pubmanitoba.ca.

Frederick Mykytyshyn
Frederick Mykytyshyn
Assistant Associate Secretary
Manitoba Public Utilities Board

FIND THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE POSITION with an EMPLOYMENT/CAREERS AD in



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Classifieds Announcements

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF REGISTRATION OF PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATE FOR GENERAL SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION GARDEN VALLEY SCHOOL DIVISION

Please be advised that a general School Board election will be held on **October 28, 2026**.

Prospective School Board 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 School Trustee: **Between June 30, 2026 and September 15, 2026** at the Garden Valley School Division, 750 Triple E Blvd, Winkler, MB during the regular hours of business.

To obtain a registration form contact the SEO at the email address or telephone numbers listed below.

Dated at Winkler, MB on April 20, 2026

Patricia Wiebe
Senior Election Official
Garden Valley School Division
Ph. 204-324-3899 or 204-325-8335
Fax 204-325-4132
Email: SEO@gvdsd.ca



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PUBLIC NOTICE



2026 Annual Public Notice Additions to Voters List and/or Personal Security Protection Requests

In accordance with Section 36 of the Municipal Councils and School Boards Election Act (MCSBEA), the R.M. of Montcalm Voters List is open for changes or revisions.

- Any person who is eligible to vote in municipal elections in the Local Authority of R.M. of Montcalm can have his or her name added to the Voters List, or have any information about the voter on the Voters List corrected.
- Any person can request to have his or her name and address obscured from the voters list.
- A person whose name has been obscured will receive a personal security certificate and Identification number. In civic election, that person may only vote by Sealed Envelope Ballot and cannot vote in person at the regular or advance voting places.

To implement the above, a written request must be submitted to the Senior Election Official, in person, by e-mail, fax, or mail to: Rural Municipality of Montcalm, 46 First Street E, Letellier, MB, R0G 1C0

The next General Election takes places in October, 2026

Jolene Bird, Senior Election Official Tel: (204) 737-2271



Avis public annuel 2026 Inscriptions à la liste électorale et/ou Demandes de protection de la sécurité personnelle

Conformément à l'article 36 de la Loi sur les élections municipales et scolaires (LÉMS), la liste électorale de la Municipalité rurale de De Salaberry peut être modifiée ou révisée.

- Tout électeur admissible aux élections municipales dans l'autorité locale de la M. R. de Montcalm peut faire inscrire son nom sur la liste électorale ou faire corriger toute information la concernant figurant sur cette liste.
- Toute personne peut demander que son nom et son adresse soient masqués sur la liste électorale.
- Une personne dont le nom a été masqué recevra un certificat de sécurité et un identificateur numérique. Lors d'une élection municipale, cette personne ne peut voter que sous enveloppe scellée et ne peut pas voter en personne dans les centres de scrutin ordinaires ou par anticipation.

Pour mettre en œuvre ce qui précède, une demande écrite doit être soumise au fonctionnaire électoral principal, en personne, par courriel ou par courrier à: Municipalité rurale de Montcalm, 46, rue First Est, Letellier (MB) R0G 1C0.

Les prochaines élections générales auront lieu en octobre 2026.

Jolene Bird, fonctionnaire électoral principal Tel: (204) 737-2271

TENDER



JANITORIAL TENDER

Access Credit Union Vita

Access Credit Union's Vita branch located at 100 First Street W., requires the services of a contractor to provide general cleaning duties.

Duties include:

- Cleaning of interior and exterior areas of branch

Tenders or resumes, accompanied by a minimum of two references, must be received on or before May 15, 2026, before 4:30 p.m.

Walk throughs available by request.

Tender information can be obtained by emailing: Vickie.Addison@accesscu.ca

Tenders may be delivered, mailed or emailed to:

Access Credit Union
PTH #14 Unit 2 - 23111 Stanley Business Centre Winkler, MB R6W 4B4
Email: vickie.addison@accesscu.ca

Classifieds Announcements The Winkler Morden Voice

OBITUARY



Helen Janzen Pauls

Helen Pauls (nee Janzen), was born March 12, 1927 in Adelsheim, Ukraine, the former USSR, the fourth child of Jacob and Katharina (Peters) Janzen. At the age of 22, she immigrated to Canada, settling in Manitou, and later Crystal City and Morden.

Helen experienced much in her life, from her early years where she recalled enjoying school, playing with her older sister and brothers and swimming in the Dnieper River. She also remembered the fruit trees and vegetable gardens as well as the farm animals. As a young adult, she experienced war-torn Russia and all that it entailed and her immigration to the beautiful land of Canada. Showing great valour and resilience in all that she experienced, she embraced this new home, even the difficult English language, and learned a new way of life. She had lost her father to the Great Terror of 1937-1938. She had also made the Great Trek, escaping

Stalin rule with thousands of Mennonite refugees, and miraculously came out of Russia to Poland. With the help of MCC, sponsored by close relatives, she, her brothers and her mother came to Canada in June of 1949. Her first jobs in Canada was as a housekeeper and doing laundry at the Manitou Hospital.

Her marriage to the love of her life, Henry Pauls on March 12, 1955, on her 28th birthday and the two sons and three daughters that followed, made for a very busy life but one filled with meaning and purpose. She was hard-working and dedicated in all she did for the family and for the family farm at Purves, things like sewing for her girls, knitting and crocheting blankets, baking delicious things and bringing meals to the field. Helen's hobbies included travelling, music and books. Singing was one of Helen's loves and she and we all did a lot of this, especially in her later years as she remembered all the words of the beloved hymns even while other words were fading from her memory.

Faith in God, which became Helen's own during the difficult time of World War II, was an important aspect of her life. Her faith journey began in her homeland, despite the fact that Church, Bible Reading and Prayer were forbidden and had to be done in secret. Later when there were more freedoms, Helen professed faith and was baptized in the Dnieper River.

After retiring from the farm, Helen with Henry moved to Morden where they enjoyed 12 years at Oakwest Estates. After this, because of health issues, both Helen and Henry were able to go into Care, first at St. Claude and then at Tabor Home where first Henry and then Helen passed away.

Helen was predeceased by her husband, Henry Pauls in 2022, her parents, Jacob in 1938 in USSR and Katharina Janzen in 1957 in Manitou, two brothers, Jacob and John and a sister Tina. She was also predeceased by many other friends and in-laws and her special cousins, Sarah, Elizabeth, and Mary Kasper as well as their parents, Uncle Heinrich and Aunt Sarah Kasper.

She leaves to mourn her children, Ernie (Alvina), Kathy (Rocky) Wiebe, Mary Anne (Aron) Friesen, Susan, James (Shawna) and 11 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren and one brother, Peter.

Helen passed from this life to the next, on April 18, 2026 at the age of 99 years, one month and six days. We rejoice that she is, "Absent from the body, but present with her Lord." "Precious in the Lord, is the death of His saint."

Funeral Services were held at Westside Community Church in Morden with burial at Manitou Cemetery.

The family would like to thank the staff at Tabor Home for their excellent care and compassion.

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



OBITUARY



Lena Hunt (née Thiessen)

Passed away peacefully on April 17, 2026, surrounded by her loving family at Boundary Trails Hospital.

Born in Mexico, Lena immigrated to Winkler, Manitoba, in 1952, where she was raised helping care for her siblings and supporting her family. A chance moment in her youth led her to Garry, her devoted husband of 62 years.

Together, they built a life on their farm northeast of Darlingford, raising their two sons, Bill and Mel. Lena was the heart of the farm—working tirelessly while creating a home filled with warmth, generosity, and good food. Her door was always open, whether on the farm or later in Morden, where she and Garry retired in 2001.

Lena also worked in the community over the years, including at the Motor Inn, Morden Recreation Complex, SAAN Store, and Walmart in Winkler. She will be fondly remembered for her kindness, strong work ethic, and welcoming spirit.

Her greatest joy was her family. She treasured her six grandsons, great-grandchild, and stepchildren, and was known for her loving hugs, sense of humor, and famous chocolate cake. Lena will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by all who knew her. She is reunited in heaven with her beloved son Bill, her parents, and her two sisters.

A celebration of Lena's life will be held on Saturday, May 2, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. at the Darlingford Community Centre.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Darlingford Community Centre.

Wiebe Funeral Chapel, Morden
In care of arrangements
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RIDE DAY Saturday May 30, 2026

10am Earls Polo Park (Winnipeg)

Visit ridefordad.ca/manitoba

to register or make a pledge

REAL ESTATE

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OPEN HOUSE May 8, 2026, 1 pm - 8 pm

One level home at 112 4th ave SW Altona, includes fridge, stove, dishwasher, microwave, washer, dryer. Heated floor in garage, new HE furnace, approved for insulation upgrade, C/A, C/V. Will also consider offers until May 15, 2026!
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PHOTO CREDIT: JAKE REMPEL ESTATE COLLECTION

Some time during WWII (1939-45) these 7 POWs are taking a lunch break from hoeing a sugar beet field in the Halbstadt area. Name on the truck is J.A. Sawatzky, lic plate #17-165.

PART TWO IN AN ONGOING SERIES

By Shaun Friesen

From 1942 to 1946 Canada was home to approximately 37,000 German Prisoners of War (POW). On October 26, 1943, 440 German POWs arrived in Manitoba. They were sent to camps at Pine Falls, Mafeking, and Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP). Here their task was to cut fuel wood. They worked six days a week, cutting pulp and fuel wood.

They were sorted into three distinct groups, the first being the hard-core Nazis who were fully committed to the beliefs and actions of the Third Reich. They were sent to the most remote camps, where they could not influence the others. The second group were young men who had been indoctrinated and radicalized by their time in the Hitler youth. They had been programmed to see Germany and the outside world through a narrow lens. The third group was comprised of ordinary men forced into the war by conscription, many of them not supporting the war or the Nazi agenda.

All prisoners were treated according to the Geneva convention, many of them better. The Whitewater camp in RMNP did not have a fence or guard towers. By all accounts the food was very good, better than they had in Germany before the war. They were fed three meals per day, with the menu including meat, soup, stew, milk, bread, coffee, potatoes, vegetables, and dessert. In contrast, Canadian POWs in Germany subsisted on 750 calories of hardtack and water. In their non-work time they hiked, made handicrafts, built canoes, and went canoeing. Some registered for correspondence courses. They even had a band, and a pet bear cub named Moshe. Prisoners were paid 50 cents a day, which could be spent at the camp store, or to order items from the Eaton's catalogue. There are accounts of prisoners sneaking away to attend dances in the communities just south of the park. When one man was killed by a falling tree, he was granted a full military funeral in the Catholic church in Dauphin. Photographs show prisoners in German uniforms, and a coffin draped with the Swastika Flag of the Third Reich. Their treatment was part of a plan to reprogram them before they were repatriated to Germany, to undo the indoctrination and radicalization. Upon their return, they would

return to tell a different story of life in Canada and the character of the Canadian people.

On March 31, 1945 the cutting of wood ceased. Prisoners were given the choice of being relocated to Lethbridge Alberta, or work as agricultural labour in southern Manitoba. In 1945, 46 tent camps served as hubs from where farmers could access the labour they needed. Sometimes it would be just for a few days, sometimes for the season. One of these camps was located near the junction of Hwy 23 and Hwy 59, another near St. Jean. Farmers paid the government \$2.50 per day, of which the prisoner received 50 cents. There are accounts of some Mennonite farmers paying them more, the same as any other worker. POWs worked for farmers in the Emerson and Halbstadt areas. Cliff Neuman recalled going with his father to St. Jean to pick up POWs to work on their farm east of Emerson. He recounted how his mother fed them a wholesome lunch, because she felt the sandwiches they came with were not enough. He also shared that his sister corresponded with one of them for several years after the war. In the Halbstadt area POWs worked for Peter F. Friesen and Jacob A. Sawatzky. An archive photograph confirms that at one point Mr. Friesen employed 19 POWs. Even though they came with sandwiches for lunch, Mrs. Friesen served them borscht. Another photograph confirms that Mr. Sawatzky employed a minimum of seven POWs to work on his beet field. Additional photos of Helen Hildebrand, Nettie Friesen, and Sara Dyck posing with POWs, indicates that there were positive interactions between prisoners and local residents.

By the close of 1946, all of the POWs were returned to Europe. There are differing accounts that claim some were allowed to stay. Years later some former POWs emigrated to Canada. It is ironic that at the same time POWs were working on the southern side of RMNP, Mennonite conscientious objectors were working on the eastern side. And that later, when POWs were working on Mennonite farms, the sons of the fathers who employed them, and mothers who fed them, were in the Canadian armed forces fighting Germans, or working in conscientious objector camps.



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