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The **Voice** *Altona • Rhineland • Morris*

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2026
altonavoice.ca

LOCALLY OWNED HISTORY BOOK FOR THE COMMUNITY

WELCOME TO SUMMER

COMMUNITY BBQ

Thursday
JUNE 4TH

5:30 pm to 7:30pm

654 Main Street S Morris
(Bigway parking lot)

HOSTED BY:
**MLA FOR MIDLAND
LAUREN STONE**

info@laurenstone.ca

Fire blanket in action

The community of Gretna came together Monday night for an annual barbecue to raise funds for the local fire department and the Gretna Prairie Centre. The evening included plenty of good eats, fellowship, and a chance to see how effective fire blankets are in smothering flames. Attendees also took a moment to remember the late Chief Jack Driedger and to honour retiring firefighters Terry Toews and Rick Friesen.

PHOTO BY EDWARD VINCENT
ARCENAL/VOICE

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

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> BIG RESILIENCE, FROM PG. 2

me in having a comeback story. Without positivity and being positive, I definitely couldn't have gone through it."

Ketler continues to push the limits, both in life and on the wheelchair rugby court, where he has set his sights high.

"My goal is to make the 2028 Paralympic team," he said. "And if I don't make 2028, then it will be 2032 in Brisbane."

Big Bros. executive director Jenelle Neufeld noted how Ketler's story of perseverance in the face of adversity ties in with the work they're doing with kids in our own community.

"Tonight is about resilience, connection, and the incredible strength that can come from having even one person believe in you," she said. "At Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley, we see every day how powerful supportive relationships can be in the lives of young people."

"Many of the children and youth we work with are navigating challenges that no child should have to face

alone: adversity, instability, trauma, isolation, struggles with confidence, mental health challenges, grief, bullying, family difficulties, or simply feeling like they don't truly belong," Neufeld shared. "Often these struggles have invited many young people

to become experts at hiding what they are carrying.

"What mentoring does is create space for a child to finally feel safe enough to be seen," she stressed. "Mentors show up consistently. They listen without judgment, they encourage, they build trust over time. And through that relationship, a young

person begins to realize something incredibly important: I matter, I am worthy of care, and I am not alone.

"Through mentorship, guidance, and connection, we can help young people build confidence, resilience, and hope, creating lasting impact not only in their lives but for the future of our communities as a whole."

You can learn more about Big Brothers Big Sisters' work at pembina-valley.bigbrothersbigisters.ca.

"WHAT MENTORING DOES IS CREATE A SPACE FOR A CHILD TO FINALLY FEEL SAFE ENOUGH TO BE SEEN."

Why Annual Well Water Testing is Essential in Manitoba

For many rural Manitobans, a private well is the primary source of drinking water. While groundwater is often clean and reliable, it is not automatically safe. Unlike municipal water systems, private wells are not routinely monitored by government agencies—meaning the responsibility for ensuring safe drinking water falls entirely on the landowner.

You Can't See What's in Your Water

One of the biggest risks with well water is that contamination is often invisible. Harmful bacteria, nitrates, and other contaminants typically have no taste, smell, or colour.

Water may appear perfectly clean but still pose serious health risks to you and your family.

Bacteria Can Enter Your Well at Any Time

Well water can become contaminated by bacteria such as coliforms and E. coli, which often come from human or animal waste.

In Manitoba, contamination is especially likely:

- After spring snowmelt
- Following heavy rainfall or flooding
- If a well is older or improperly sealed

For this reason, Manitoba health guidelines recommend testing private wells at least once every year, ideally in the spring.

Nitrates and Other Contaminants Pose Serious Health Risks

Nitrates—commonly from fertilizers, manure, or septic systems—can seep into groundwater. High levels are particularly dangerous for infants, potentially causing "blue baby syndrome," which reduces the blood's ability to carry oxygen.

Other contaminants that may be present in well water include:

- Bacteria and viruses
- Parasites
- Chemicals from agriculture or industry

Regular testing helps identify these risks before they impact your health.

Water Quality Can Change Over Time

Even if your well has tested safe in the past, conditions can change. Factors like weather, nearby land use, and aging well infrastructure can all affect water quality.

Manitoba experts emphasize that wells located close to each other can have completely different water quality, so you cannot rely on a neighbour's test results.

Early Detection Saves Time, Money, and Health

Routine testing allows you to:

- Catch contamination early
- Take corrective action (such as disinfecting the well)
- Avoid costly repairs or health issues down the road

If contamination is found, steps like chlorination, filtration, or well repairs can restore safe drinking water.

It's Your Responsibility

In Manitoba, private well owners are responsible for testing and maintaining their own water supply.

Regular testing isn't just a recommendation—it's a critical part of protecting your household.

Bottom Line

Testing your well water annually is a simple, affordable way to ensure your drinking water is safe. Because contamination can happen without warning and cannot be detected by sight, smell, or taste, regular testing is the only reliable way to protect your health and your family.

The Redboine Watershed District, Pembina Valley Watershed District and the Central Assiniboine Watershed District is offering a well testing program on Wednesday, June 10th and Wednesday, June 24th. Landowners can pick-up testing supplies and drop-off samples at various locations within the districts (see the advertisements for more details). The Watershed Districts then takes care of getting the samples into the lab in Winnipeg at no additional cost to the landowner.

ADVERTORIAL



Well Water Testing Program

Wed. June 10th and Wed. June 24th, 2026

Sample Bottle Pick-up & Drop-off Locations (Municipal offices):

Drop off by 9am:
Killarney—Turtle Mountain (Killarney, MB)

Drop off by 9:30 am:
Cartwright—Roblin (Cartwright, MB)
Glenboro South Cypress (Glenboro, MB)
Prairie Lakes (Belmont, MB)
Oakland Wawanesa (Wawanesa, MB)
Grassland (Hartney, MB)
Argyle (CAWD office - Baldur, MB)
Souris Glenwood (Souris, MB)
Whitehead (Alexander, MB)
Elton (Forrest, MB)
North Cypress Langford (Carberry, MB)
Oakview (Oak River, MB or Rapid City, MB)
Riverdale (Rivers, MB)
Sifton (Oak Lake, MB)
Minto—Odanah (Minnedosa, MB office)

Drop off by 10:00 am:
Louise (Crystal City, MB)
Lorne (Somerset, MB)
Rhineland (PVWD office - Altona Mall)
Pembina (PVWD office - Manitou, MB)
Victoria (RBWD office - Holland, MB)
Norfolk Treherne office (Treherne)
Thompson (Miami, MB)
Woodlands (Woodlands, MB)
Grey (Elm Creek, MB)
Roland (Roland, MB)
Rockwood (Stonewall, MB)

Drop off by 11:00 am:
Stanley (Stanley, MB)

Water Analysis Options:

Code	Cost	Description
B1 Bacteria	\$20.00	Total Coliform & E. coli *B1 analysis cost is reduced to \$10.00 if you are also getting Mi2HL or Mi2HL+ analysis
N	\$45.00	Nitrogen—Nitrates & Nitrogen—Nitrites
Mi2	\$195.00	Basic drinking water - Calcium, Magnesium, Sodium, Potassium, Manganese, Zinc, Iron, Nitrogen—Nitrites, Chloride, Sulfate, pH, Hardness and Conductivity
Mi2HL	\$200.00	Advanced drinking water quality - includes all parameters in the Mi2 tests plus Arsenic, Boron, Barium, Fluoride, Uranium and Copper
Mi2HL+	\$230.00	All parameters in the Mi2HL plus Lead

Samples must be taken the morning of testing
Watershed Districts will look after shipping samples to the lab
Cheques made payable to: Horizon Lab Ltd.

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GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

Plum Coulee Fdn. hands out \$50K in grants

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Plum Coulee Community Foundation presented several local non-profits with grants and committed additional funds to an ongoing community improvement project last week.

Following its annual meeting, the foundation announced the recipients of its 2026 grant cycle, which totals \$50,340—up over \$9,000 from the year before.

“It’s an increase from last year, a pretty significant number,” noted board chair Levi Taylor. “And we’re proud to support seven different local non-for-profit organizations within the community.”

The Centre on Main received \$1,000 towards new tables, a music stand, linens, and a mural; the Plum Coulee Elevator Museum received \$1,000 to aid in display upgrades and purchase new signage; the Winkler Family Resource Centre (WFRC) received \$2,600 for its early childhood education programming in Plum Coulee; the Plum Coulee Fire Department received \$2,815.46 for new wildland equipment; the Winkler and District Imagination Library received \$3,000 to support sending out free books to pre-school children; Genesis House received \$3,800 towards Clearwater Place, its transitional housing complex under construction in Winkler; and the Plum Coulee Plum Fest received \$5,000 help the community celebrate its 125th anniversary Aug. 14-16.

“This contribution helps us continue to bring this festival to our communi-

ty year after year,” said festival chair Erica Dyck in accepting the funds. “Thank you as well to the amazing volunteers for the time and effort that they put into making this event happen.”

“These funds will help us to continue to bring free books into the homes of Plum Coulee,” noted the Imagination Library’s Dorothy Derksen, sharing that there are 800 kids in the Winkler area currently receiving books in the mail every month. The impact of the program has been profound, helping to foster a love of reading in countless children since the program launched over a decade ago.

Likewise, the programs WFRC run in Plum Coulee each week are reaching numerous families, noted executive director Monica Dueck.

“Funding like this has a direct impact on all the young families in the community and allows us to continue to offer programming throughout the year that they can come, the parents can make connections, the kids can make connections and learn with play.”

The Centre on Main has become a social hub for Plum Coulee, and the funds they received will help ensure it continues to meet the community’s needs, shared Derksen, who also serves on that facility’s board.

“Last year we had 75 rentals, which is why we asked for a grant to replace some tables—they get worn out, setting up and putting them away,” she explained, noting as well that they are in the midst of planning to fill a blank interior wall with a mural depicting various places in the Plum Coulee of

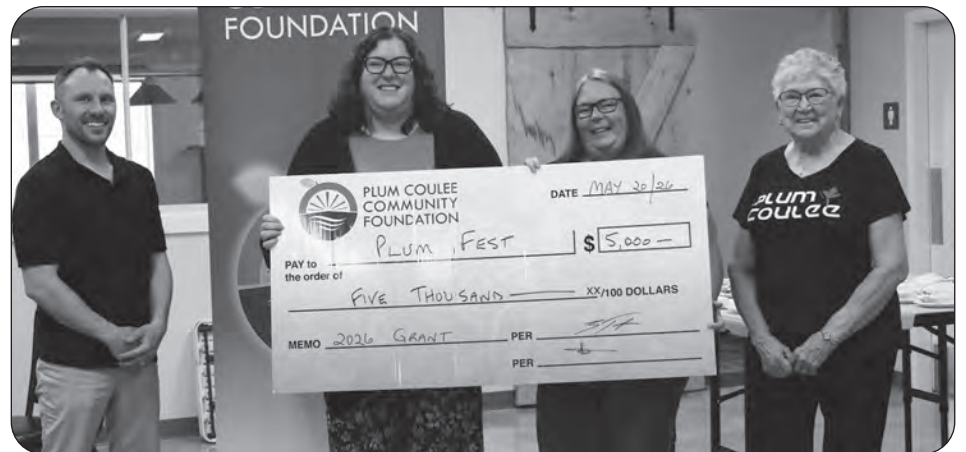


PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Plum Coulee Foundation chair Levi Taylor (far left) and board member June Letkeman (far right) presents Breanne Jack and Erica Dyck from the Plum Fest with a grant of \$5,000. The festival was one of seven community groups receiving funding this year.

yesteryear.

Also speaking on behalf of the elevator museum, Derksen noted they made numerous improvements to the facility last year, and are eager to do more this summer to further cement the heritage museum as a tourism destination. They’ll be hosting an open house the afternoon of June 28 to kick off the season.

When Plum Coulee firefighters headed north to help fight last summer’s wildfires, they very quickly saw the shortfalls of their aging equipment, shared Riley Fehr.

“Those calls made us realize how much our equipment lacks,” he noted. “The wildland equipment that this grant is going towards is going to replace as well as extend our equipment we have into some newer stuff, some nicer stuff that helps us to do the job we do best longer, without tiring as much.”

Accepting the grant on behalf of Genesis House was Sophie Gerbrandt, director of development, who noted they provide their services—including their emergency shelter, 24/7 crisis line, and supportive programming—to women right across southern Manitoba, including Plum Coulee.

“The support from the Plum Coulee Community Foundation means the world. Not just in dollars, but in knowing that we have a community

in our area that believes in the work that we are doing and stands with us and with the women and children that we serve.”

The funds will help equip Clearwater Place with a commercial dishwasher. When it opens next year, the 25-unit affordable housing apartment complex will give women attempting to start a new life free from domestic violence a safe space to get back on their feet.

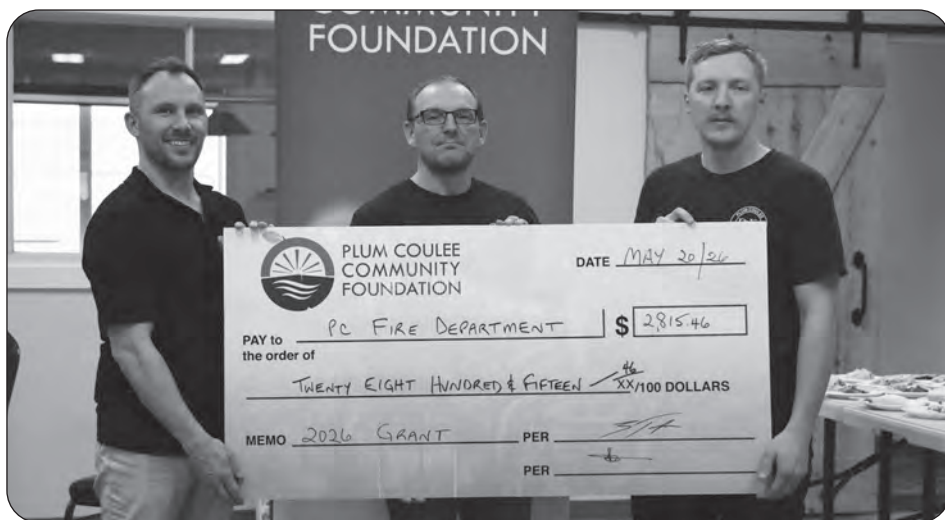
The foundation also committed \$30,000 in self-directed granting funds to continue installing solar lights along Plum Coulee’s pathway system (a project they began last summer with funding for the first 10 lights) and to install a series of plaques downtown showcasing some of the historical buildings that once stood in commemoration of the community’s 125th anniversary.

A GROWING FOUNDATION

The foundation’s annual report shows an organization that continues to grow.

Having served the community now for 25 years, the foundation ended 2025 with total fund assets of \$952,080. These funds generate interest that allow them to distribute grants each year. Last year those funds generated

Continued on page 5



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Above: Taylor presents Plum Coulee Fire Department reps Tony Fehr and Riley Fehr with funds to purchase new wildland equipment. Right, from left: Taylor and board member Moira Porte presented The Centre on Main reps Brian Derksen, Dorothy Derksen, and Allen Funk with funds for facility improvements.



Stanley Community Pathway nears fundraising finish line

Ribbon cutting planned for June 2

By Lorne Stelmach

The Stanley Community Pathway got some further financial support recently in advance of its grand opening.

The ribbon cutting on the bike path that connects Morden to Winkler is set for Tuesday, June 2 at 2 p.m. near the pathway on the north highway entrance to Morden Nurseries.

Ahead of that celebration, organizers this week recognized donations of \$35,000 from Wolfe Enterprises and \$25,000 from Elite Crushing along with several other private contributors to the project.

"Community support is something that I have always taken seriously," said Rod Wolfe of Wolfe Enterprises. "And in particular, when we are working on a project that is community involved, I especially like to give back even more at that time."

He noted how the pathway is something that connects and brings the three communities together.

"Hopefully, this is one next step to being even better."

"I like to give back to the communities," said Levi Wiens of Elite Crushing. He noted how they do business in the wider region and in particular do a lot of work with Triple E. "The pathway project was a big passion for them.

"It made sense for us," said Wiens of the donation. His company also supplied material for the base under the

pathway. "It was really nice to be part of this big project, and it's kind of nice to be able to put your name on it."

A number of other donors were also acknowledged, providing statements as to why they opted to support the project.

"We support safe active transportation and gladly contributed toward this project in 2025," said Brenda and Ken Klassen. "We have enjoyed this type of pathway in many other communities and are so pleased that our communities have collaborated to provide this in our region. We have already enjoyed the trail several times and look forward to continuing to use it. We hope many others also utilize it."

Mike, Mel, Marlow, and Juniper Urichuk commented on how they love having an active and connected community in Winkler and try their best to make the community healthy, support its growth, and shape its future.

"We all work in our own ways each day to build a connected community. Most of the time, these connections are abstract. Stanley Trail Association, along with Winkler Community Foundation and Morden Community Foundation, gave us the opportunity to build a physical connection between our cities.

"While this pathway helps our active commuters stay protected from highway traffic while giving families a place to ride, walk, and bike, I see it as a path to a more connected Pembina Valley—a bridge to tomorrow. We donated because we believed that this project was part of a better tomorrow. We wanted to part of that," they



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE
Rod Wolfe of Wolfe Enterprises (far left) presented Stanley Community Pathway project reps with a \$35,000 donation Monday. Right: The project has also received support from numerous community members, including Brenda and Ken Klassen.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

wrote.

"The Stanley community pathway was a project I knew early on that I wanted to be part of," noted fellow donor Irene Krahn. "I loved the vision of having a safe way for the people of Winkler, Morden and the RM of Stanley to get outside, be healthy, promote better mental health all while making it safer by having a path that walkers, runners and bikers could enjoy that connects the three communities.

"Having an easier way for people at the Boundary Trails Health Centre and the families staying a Katie's Cottage to enjoy the outdoors is something that really made this project complete for me," she continued. "By donating to the project, I knew that this would outlive me and would be enjoyed by my grandkids and community members for generations to

come."

Pathway committee lead James Friesen commented on how well the route has already been embraced since it opened to the public several months ago.

"We had a beautiful fall, so people were out there," he said. "We basically opened the pathway for people to start using, and that was a good thing."

He noted they were very close to finishing up the project, only needing to address some drainage issues along with plans for a shelter and rest station near Boundary Trails Health Centre.

Friesen estimated they need to raise perhaps another \$65,000 to complete what overall has come to be a \$4.2 million project.

"We finished 99 per cent of it. We've got some signage to put in place," he said. "So this is a celebration of all of the funders, the grants, and the individuals who have sponsored, allowing us to finish this project."

> PLUM COULEE FOUNDATION, FROM PG. 4

\$112,000 in investment income.

Financially, the foundation finished the year with an operating surplus of \$6,600 and a total surplus, once you factor in investment income, of nearly \$99,000, to be held by the endowment funds or issued as grants. Factoring in all its assets, the foundation has actually surpassed the \$1 million mark.

Looking back at 2025, Taylor noted it was an exciting year for the organization.

"Thanks to generous donations from this community, the foundation at \$19,883.66 to the general endowment fund, \$7,070 to the administration fund, and \$1,294.88 to the heritage fund," he shared, noting the 2025 grants totaled \$41,653 for a variety of community projects.

Thanks to funding the Thomas Sill Foundation gave to community foundation across the province as it closed up shop, "for the last two years, we've essentially doubled

what we've granted out," Taylor noted. "It's really exciting."

Exciting as well is how the community steps up to support the foundation's work.

"Year after year I am amazed by your generous support of the foundation," Taylor said to the community at large. "Your support for our semi-annual soup-and-pie events continues to surpass our expectations, and your generosity during the Giving Challenge helps us exceed our goals. Thank you!"

The **Voice**

getheard
EDITORIAL > VIEWPOINTS > LETTERS



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Our commitment to you: we want to help build stronger communities through articles that both inform and entertain you about what's going on throughout the Pembina Valley. This is your community newspaper—let us know what you want to see in it.

OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



• **FAITH FOCUS**

A familiar voice

Have you noticed how the familiar voice of someone you love and respect can bring warm moments to your day?

The conversation can be a safe place for talking about the matters important to our deeper person. Thanks to the technology now available we can speak to family members and friends who may live many kilometers away from our home and we can have warm moments built on shared identity, experiences and trust.

Our voices do not just deliver words for others to hear. The words are delivered with a package of emotionally shaped messages that can be shared with care and genuine interest in the wellbeing of others. When unwanted messages are received, we look for ways to shut them out.

In my recent studies about Jesus as the Good Shepherd and people as sheep I have been pondering the application that the sheep hear the voice of their shepherd and feel safe. In John 10:4 we read that the shepherd “goes on ahead of the sheep, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.”

Listening to the voice of the Shepherd can be challenging because God's words are rooted in truth. In the judgment room of Pilate, a Roman governor, allegations about who Jesus

was and why he had been brought to Pilate were reviewed. When asked about his situation Jesus said “The reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.” (John 18:37).

Pilate, in response, asked “What is truth?” Without further discussion, he proceeded to complete his duties as a judge and allowed the penalty of death even though he had stated that “I find no basis for a charge against him...” Pilate

and the others were not listening for truth. Rather they were seeking what they thought was convenience.

What messages are we listening to today? What sources are we seeking them from? Are they messages that can constructively shape our thinking about our relationship to God, our relationships in our home, family, and in our communities?

The Bible contains teaching and truths that may not always seem convenient to us but they have been tested and found to be wise. The man

we now call the apostle Paul was convinced that Jesus was a fraud and he was empowered to detain those who were Christ followers. In Acts 9:3,4 we read of how Saul (later to become known as Paul) was dramatically stopped by Jesus on a roadway. A bright light and a voice called him to go into the city and to “listen”. He was to wait for instructions from Jesus about what he should do.

Saul went to the city. While he was waiting and listening, a man named Ananias came to confirm what Saul had experienced and prepare him for his new life. Saul's life was radically transformed.

We like to hear familiar voices. Loved ones, friends, neighbours. Most importantly, when we listen to Jesus through his instructions for godly living we will become better listeners to others as well.

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

“WHEN WE LISTEN TO JESUS ... WE BECOME BETTER LISTENERS TO OTHERS AS WELL.”



By Randy Smart

Letter policy

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

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

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

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

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

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

Manitoba Blue Cross opens service centre in Winkler

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Manitoba Blue Cross cut the ribbon on its newest regional service centre in Winkler last week.

"This new location represents an important step in making our services more accessible to the people across southern Manitoba, specifically in the Pembina Valley area," said David Tompkins, vice-president of sales for the not-for-profit agency. "Above all, today is about further strengthening our connection with these communities and making support more accessible and ensuring people can get assistance from Manitoba Blue Cross closer to home."

Located at 88L 15th St., Unit 3, the service centre gives both existing Blue Cross members and the public

at large a place to go for face-to-face assistance with claims or questions about health and travel insurance coverage.

"Sometimes people want more than information; they want a chance to ask questions, talk things through, feel confident, and understand their options for coverage," noted Benjamin Graham, president and CEO of Manitoba Blue Cross. "Having local support can make that experience more personal, convenient, and approachable, especially when navigating something important or unfamiliar."

The facility will also serve as a base

for eligible members with individual or employee assistance program coverage to access professional support for their mental well-being through in-person counselling sessions.

"This is especially important because, for some people, being able to speak to someone in a safe, supported environment locally can make it much easier to reach out and get the support that they want and the support that they need," Graham noted.

This is the second regional service centre the agency has opened in the past year (the first was in Thompson last fall) as it endeavours to reach out to its many members beyond Winnipeg.

"There's always been a presence here, but in the last few years the board of directors and the executive have really talked about

how do we put more of Manitoba in Manitoba Blue Cross?" noted board member Curwin Friesen, who is president of local agricultural dealership Greenvalley Equipment.

Given the growth of the area, Winkler was the perfect fit for the next rural community in which to establish a service centre.

"The next logical choice because of the boom in this area was to serve locals down here in the Pembina Valley," noted Graham.

The centre will employ three full-time staffers and also welcome Blue Cross counsellors from other offices.

The non-profit's commitment to

"THE NEXT LOGICAL CHOICE BECAUSE OF THE BOOM IN THIS AREA WAS TO SERVE LOCALS DOWN HERE IN THE PEMBINA VALLEY."



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Winkler Mayor Henry Siemens (left) helped Manitoba Blue Cross president and CEO Benjamin Graham cut the ribbon on the new service centre on 15th St. last week. Below: Graham presented United Way Pembina Valley reps Anna Wieler, Nichole Hiebert, and Cathy Sandercock with a \$10,000 donation to mark the occasion.



in-person customer service is to be lauded, said Winkler Mayor Henry Siemens, on hand to officially help Graham cut the ribbon on the facility.

"In a day and age when everyone seems to be running from customer service, when it's harder and harder to get through, even on a phone call,

to somebody when you're looking for something, to see this investment into our community, to see this investment here with personal service ... we're extremely thankful for that. We're very proud that you've chosen Winkler."

Manitoba Blue Cross further marked the occasion by making a \$10,000 donation to the United Way of the Pembina Valley.

"Supporting organizations like United Way is one more way we can help strengthen the region beyond the walls of our service centre," Graham said. "This space is about being present—building relationships, supporting people in a meaningful way and investing in the well-being of the communities we serve."

"It's a wonderful boost to our campaign, which we'll be launching this fall," noted United Way board treasurer Anna Wieler. "This will really help the organizations that we support. We pass it on and they, in turn, support the people that make use of their programs and services. And now Blue Cross just adds to that support system within the community."

**Roland Loepky,
Morden**

Letters

> Got something you want to get off your chest?

Send your letters to the editor or acts of kindness to news@winklermordenvoice.ca. Please include your name, address, and phone number for confirmation purposes.

SAFETY TRUMPS CONVENIENCE

I would like to comment on the proposed bill regarding daylight saving time.

The proposal is to remain on daylight saving time all year. That means it could take effect in November 2026. I think that most people object to switching back and forth twice a year. Most would want longer daylight in the evenings in summer. The

significant drawback to that is that the mornings will be way too dark in winter and be unsafe for school children.

It seems that the train of DST is now unstoppable. I believe that B.C. made a mistake by opting for permanent DST.

Time changes should be implemented in such a way that solar noon occurs at or near 12 o'clock. Here in Manitoba, solar noon occurs at about 1:30 p.m. during the

summer. In winter it's 12:30 p.m. It would be sensible to adopt permanent standard time (ST).

When decisions are made the government should remember that the majority is not always right. After all, what's more important? The safety of children and commuters or your ability to golf till 10:30 p.m.?

Morden mayor to seek another term in office

By Lorne Stelmach

Morden Mayor Nancy Penner has announced she will be seeking re-election in this fall's municipal election.

She decided to seek to serve a full term as mayor after having initially



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Nancy Penner is running for a second term in office as Morden's mayor.

come into the role following the departure of previous mayor Brandon Burley mid-term.

"My hope is that I've got the leadership skills and the experience," said Penner. "And I believe deeply in this community, and that's why I feel that at this point ... this is not the time to lose momentum."

In a prepared statement, Penner said serving as mayor has been a tremendous honour, and she feels council has made bold decisions that will shape the community for decades to come.

"These decisions were not always easy, but they were necessary to prepare Morden for growth, opportunity and long-term success," she said. "During this term, council has advanced major infrastructure projects, strengthened regional partnerships, supported economic development and laid important groundwork for Morden's future.

"Through strategic planning initia-

tives, we are building a strong foundation that will support our city as it continues to grow," she continued.

"One of the most significant priorities before us remains the city's wastewater project. This is one of the most important infrastructure investments in Morden's history. Completing this project is essential to unlocking future housing, supporting business growth, attracting investment and ensuring our city is ready for the opportunities ahead.

"Morden is at a pivotal moment," said Penner. "We have important work underway, and this is not the time to lose momentum. Morden needs experienced leadership to see major projects through, communicate clearly with residents, foster a strong and respectful council team and continue making decisions that position our city for long-term success.

Penner acknowledged the city is facing some challenges, but she also feels

they are well poised to make good progress.

"I feel very strongly that we've had a really good council. I've been really pleased with how council has worked as a team with some of the challenges we have met," she said. "I'm looking forward to continuing to build on the momentum we've had as a team on council ... and I would like to continue and build on the momentum.

Penner noted she believes deeply in the community and in what can be accomplished when people work together.

"In the weeks and months ahead, I look forward to connecting with residents, hearing your ideas and having meaningful conversations about the future of our city," she said. "I have always valued hearing directly from residents, and I welcome your thoughts, concerns and ideas as we continue building Morden's future together."

First cohort of Big Picture Learning to start in GVSD this fall

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Big Picture Learning (BPL) is officially coming to Garden Valley School division this fall.

The alternative high school program will welcome its first cohort of 15 students in September, operating out of space at GVC TEC in Winkler.

"We had more applicants than we had space for, which allowed us to have enough conversation to ensure that we have a variety of different students," shared coordinator Carrie Friesen.

"We were looking for newcomers. We were looking for high achievers who are planning to go off to university. We were looking for people who weren't sure that high school was the right place for them, but they were excited about this model," she explained. "We really wanted the classroom to look like what the regular people of our community look like.

"I'm so excited to say that because we had a surplus of applicants, we could create this beautiful little microcosm of a true replication of what we have in our community."

This pioneering group of Gr. 9 students will receive a high school education with an emphasis on practical learning experiences tied to their interests rather than traditional classroom-focused learning.

Students still earn all the course

credits they need to graduate with a provincial diploma, but they'll reach curriculum-based goals in a much more flexible, community-integrated environment. Extracurricular activities and elective courses will also be available to them at the main GVC campus.

The BPL teachers work with each student and their families to develop personalized learning plans that, as they reach the upper grades of high school, will see them spending entire school days each week out on internships being mentored by people who are putting the concepts and skills they're learning about into real-life action.

Individual internships are less of a focus for the Gr. 9 year as students build their practical life skills and confidence levels, but they'll still be spending plenty of time learning together out in the community at large.

Friesen likens the program to the *Magic School Bus* television show, in which Ms. Frizzle would whisk her students away on fantastical adventures to help them learn about a host of topics.

"If we're learning something in an electricity unit, why wouldn't we just go to one of our local businesses and say, 'Can you teach us? Show us how you do this.' Or if it's a science unit, let's go to the Discovery Nature Sanctuary."

The plan is for these types of frequent field trips and hands-on learning experiences to come about organically as students explore and ask questions about the world.

"So when the kids have a great idea, we can go, 'Oh, that ties into this' and off we go into the community to see if we can find the greatest person to teach us more about it," Friesen said, noting they also hope local organizations will reach out to them with ideas or problems students can explore and address as they build up their skills. "So the kids will see themselves as more than students, but actually community members and citizens."

This will most certainly be a learning year for everyone involved in the program, Friesen acknowledged.

"It's a well-supported system that's been highly researched, that's evidence-based," she said, pointing to numerous programs operating in larger school division across the country. "But we are the first rural Big Picture school in Canada. So we're forging ahead in something that's relatively new here, even though there are many schools in Winnipeg that are already doing this. But they're urban, so it is different."

After spending the past few months reaching out to local community groups and businesses to gauge interest in being involved with BPL, Friesen isn't worried about finding

places with which to partner.

"I cannot be more proud of our community," she said. "People are stepping up and seeing the value of learning happening within the community, outside of the classroom, in the community, but also with community members. Our community members are saying, 'We want a stake in how education looks and feels' and they're seeing us as bringing something quite valuable to the community."

GVSD has hired two teachers to help them launch this program; one will remain with this first cohort through all four years of high school while the second will take on the program's second group in the 2027-2028 school year.

Friesen urges any parents interested in learning more about BPL or community leaders keen on having a hand in helping to educate the next generation to get in touch with her at 204-325-8335 or bpl@gvdsd.ca.

"We really want our community to feel that they can invest in this program, because it's embedded into everything we do."

The program will also be detailing its first year of operations on social media so that the next group of potential students and families can get a sense for how it all works. Watch for that this fall.

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

get informed

Pembina Threshermen's Museum open for the season

By Lorne Stelmach

Another season started up recently at the Pembina Threshermen's Museum in the highway corridor between Winkler and Morden.

The usual array of events are planned for the summer, and volunteer directors again hope to see more people come to check out this unique pioneer village.

"There's always some people who have not been here before ... this past weekend, there were some people from Winnipeg who had not been here before," said Marlene Loewen, chairperson of the museum board.

Following opening day, the first main event of the year is the Heritage Days coming up June 5-6.

"That's when we'll have perhaps 700 or 800 school kids coming through, and we're able to do all kind of activities with them and do a bunch of demonstrations," said Loewen.

Following that is Pioneer Day July 11 and Frontier Day Aug. 15, both offering an enhanced day of activities for the general public.

The main event of the summer, as always, is Reunion Days, which take place this year on Sept. 11-2 and features a packed lineup of activities, demonstrations, food, and entertainment.

As always, the museum has a few to-do projects lined up for the season, one of which has already been completed: a makeover of the main office.

"It needed some updating and stuff. In March, we tackled that, put in some new flooring, some new lights, to just give it a new look ... and it just makes it look a bit nicer," said Loewen.

"We want to do a makeover of the chain link fence in front. It badly needs to be redone ... and there's always building maintenance," she continued. "We have some extra funding for summer students this year, so we're going to be doing a lot of painting and redoing some things on the outside, just giving things a general facelift."

A more substantial project is a phase one of a makeover of the Brimberly Village building which houses a streetscape of pioneer shops and a wide range of historical memorabilia.

"We want to give it a good facelift on the outside," explained Loewen. "We've had a few people interested in partnering with us. We have a contractor in place who will do the bulk of the rebuild ... just to kind of enhance the look of the building."

They have applied for a couple grants and have received a number of other smaller donations to support this project.

"We have a bit of money to start



VOICE FILE PHOTO

The Pembina Threshermen's Museum kicked off its season earlier this month. The Hwy. 3 heritage museum has several special events coming up this summer.

with, so we will at least get phase one done this year. And if we don't get it all done this year, we'll finish it up next year or the year after as funding comes in," Loewen said.

Loewen noted they always have a five-year plan on the go and try to have perhaps one more major project or part of a major project to at least start on every season.

"Last year was more smaller ones, but it was still, I think, a really good

year."

As always, PTM could use some more volunteers to help keep things running smoothly.

"With the Valley Harvest Maids, we have an awesome bunch of ladies who have really stepped up and taken on a big role there," Loewen said. "And we're very grateful for everyone who comes out to help us do all of our events."

Winkler Senior Centre looking for volunteers to put together care packages

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Senior Centre has put a call out for volunteers in connection with a new initiative they're launching this week.

Thanks to funding from Southern Health-Santé Sud's Healthy Together Now program, Winkler's Services for Seniors has purchased a host of items they intend to use to create care packages for women staying at Genesis House, the regional shelter for the survivors of domestic violence.

"We wanted to do something different," explains resource coordinator Denise Enns of the program, which they've dubbed "Caring for All." "And so we thought of collabo-

rating with some other organizations, because the theme of the grant is creating connections."

They'll be putting the shelter's care bags together this Friday, May 29, following a presentation from Genesis House about its day-to-day operations, statistics about who makes use of its support programs and services, and an update on its new Clearwater Place transitional housing project going up in Winkler.

The presentation, which gets underway at 1:30 p.m. at the senior centre (650 South Railway Ave.) is open to all, no pre-registration required, but organizers hope some people will also sign up in advance to stick around

afterwards to help assemble the care packages.

"We are preparing 45 of them for Genesis House to give to each client that comes through their doors," shares Enns, explaining they'll be filled with basic toiletries, a notebook, and other small essentials.

"We need maybe five to 10 volunteers," she notes, urging anyone interested in joining the care package assembly line that afternoon to give her a call at 204-325-8964 or sign up in the resource office at the senior centre.

If you can't make it this week, you can still be involved in Caring for All when it assembles similar care packages for its second recipient: Katie

Cares. The charity, which operates the Katie's Cottage respite home and also sends gift bags to children receiving treatment in local health care centres, will make a presentation about its work at the senior centre sometime in July.

If volunteering doesn't work for you, Enns still hopes you'll come down to these presentations, as they will provide an interesting glimpse into the work of these two important non-profits in our area.

"It's a nice opportunity for everybody, and a chance for us to partner with a different organization," she says. "It should be eye-opening, too, to learn about what they're doing."

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



Dancing up a storm

The Liv Dance Company out of Carman filled the P.W. Enns Centennial Concert Hall in Winkler Friday and Saturday for their fifth annual recital, themed "Dancing Through the Decades." Left: The Junior Tap A group fired up the stage to the tune of "Meet Me at the Roxy." Right: Senior Jazz soloist Madeleine Chouinard performs to "Poison."

PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE



SPRING

Home and garden TLC time



Why Manitoba's Spring Clean-Up is a Rite of Passage

Every May, a collective shift occurs across Manitoba. The snow finally retreats, exposing the raw, brown reality of the winter aftermath. This is the moment Manitobans trade snow shovels for rakes, stepping into yards that resemble archaeological dig sites. Spring yardwork here is not a mere chore; it is a grueling, rewarding rite of passage bridging frozen winters and fleeting summers.

Our climate creates unique yard challenges. Months of deep-freeze compaction, street sand, and relentless winds trap debris in hedges. When the thaw arrives, it reveals matted straw lawns, rogue gravel, and tree branches snapped by ice storms.

The first warm weekend brings the neighborhood alive. The scraping of rakes and rustle of heavy-duty garbage bags fill the air. Neighbors who have not spoken since November exchange nods over property lines, commiserating over winter rodent damage or debating when to turn on outdoor water valves.

The physical labor is deceptively intense. Dethatching a lawn by hand is

a full-body workout. Then comes the gravel reclamation, sweeping city sand out of the boulevard grass. For gardeners, the season requires deep restraint. Manitoba's weather is notoriously fickle; a beautiful afternoon can easily be followed by a surprise May frost. Experienced locals wait for the soil to dry and leave perennial stems intact to protect overwintering pollinators.

Ultimately, this labor is about reclaiming our short,

precious summers. Every hour spent sweating over a rake is an investment in the months ahead. We clear winter's debris to make room for barbecues, patio nights, and backyard relaxation.

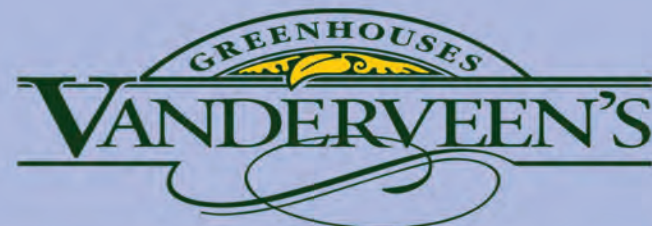
When the sun sets, a quiet satisfaction settles over the province. The lawns are still brown, but they are clean. We head inside, sore and exhausted, but content. We have tamed the thaw and earned our summer.

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Local landfill begins compost operations

By Ashleigh Viveiros

It took a bit longer than anyone expected, but the SWAMP (Solid Waste Area Management Plan) landfill north of Winkler is finally able to process organic compost material coming in from communities across the region.

In late 2024, the Morden-Winkler service providers previously handling household compost and yard waste closed up shop, leaving communities across the region on the hunt for another solution.

SWAMP, which is operated by Morden, Winkler, and Stanley, invested just shy of \$1 million to carve out a section of land for composting operations, purchase the necessary equipment, and hire additional staff. After receiving permits from provincial regulators and waiting for the weather to finally cooperate, they

were able to fire it up this spring.

“We created a driveway out here, got the equipment—a tractor and a compost turner—and we all got a bunch of training so that we can do it properly,” shared general manager Francis Fehr.

Compost collected from residents in all three communities as well as several other towns in the area—including Altona, Morris, and Carman—will now come to the designated space on-site, where staff will lay it out in giant lines and run the turner over it to mix everything up

so it can start to break down without overheating. They also have a repurposed sprayer they’re using to wet the piles as needed.

“We’re still figuring it all out,” Fehr said during a drive past the two massive piles they’ve just begun processing. “This is all from this year already,

“THIS IS ALL FROM THIS YEAR ALREADY, AND IT’S GOING TO GET BUSIER YET.”



Peter Froese (left) and Francis Fehr in front of the compost turner now in operation at SWAMP to process household organic waste.

PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

and it’s going to get busier yet. We’re just right in prime time [for drop-offs, as people do their spring yard cleanings]. We’ve gone from 50-60 drop-offs when it was cold to as high as almost 140 people already coming through.”

Staff need to keep a close eye on the heat of the piles to ensure the biological processes that turn organic waste into usable fertilizer are working just right.

“Air is one of the key things that you need with the moisture,” Fehr explained of the need to turn the ma-

terial regularly. “And then you have carbon and nitrogen and you need that mix to be where it should be to ultimately make it go the quickest.

“You’re trying to reach temperatures of about 55 degrees Celsius, and you need at least three days in a row so that all these processes are happening,” he added. “So we do temperature checks every day.”

Staff are also keeping an eye out for non-organic material in the piles, and they’re certainly finding plenty of it.

Continued on page 14

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Altona aims to plant 5,000 trees in next 20 years

By Lorne Stelmach

The Town of Altona is taking on an urban forest management strategy with some big goals for the years ahead.

Over the next 20 years, the town plans to plant about 5,000 trees all throughout Altona with the goal of increasing the community's tree canopy coverage to 15 per cent by 2045.

Town officials see these efforts as providing many benefits including more shade, cleaner air, improved storm-water management, wildlife habitat and more enjoyable public spaces. And trees also provide important economic benefits such as helping reduce home heating and cooling costs and increasing property values.

"The best time to plant a tree was 30 years ago, but the second best time is today," said public works assistant Mark Dupuis.

"Trees are a big part of what makes Altona a great place to live. This plan gives us a clear path to take care of what we have and keep growing our canopy for the future," noted Mayor Harv Schroeder.

Currently, Altona is home to more than 5,000 publicly-owned trees, which are in parks, boulevards, and other public green spaces. To increase the number of trees and strengthen the urban forest, the town's goals include:

- Planting about 250 trees annually to support long-term

canopy growth.

- Increasing tree species diversity to improve resilience against pests and diseases.

- Developing proactive maintenance and monitoring programs.

- Enhancing public education and community tree planting initiatives.

- Creating future tree protection and planting policies.

As part of the strategy, the town plans to strengthen proactive maintenance by increasing tree inspections, improving pruning schedules and preparing for emerging threats such as the emerald ash borer, dutch elm disease and other invasive pests.

Public feedback played an important role in shaping the strategy. Survey results showed 94 per cent consider trees important to their community with strong support for additional tree planting throughout Altona.

Residents will also have opportunities to participate in future planting events and community engagement initiatives as the strategy moves forward.

In 2026, the Town of Altona will be increasing from an annual 100 trees planted to 250 trees. This ambitious goal will be achieved through a few initiatives, including a tree planting workshop. On June 13 from 10 a.m. to noon, residents of Altona can participate in a mass tree-planting exercise in Ash Park.

The day will include tips on how to plant and care for a healthy tree as well as the opportunity to participate in planting 70+ trees in the park. In addition to participating in the public tree planting, attendees will also be given a voucher for a free tree to plant on their own Altona property.

Up to 50 tree vouchers will be available for trees to be planted on private properties in town. The vouchers can be redeemed at Two Sparrows Greenhouse for a tree from a pre-approved list with a value of up to \$80.

Registrants at the workshop will be the first to receive these vouchers, with the possibility for other residents to receive them on a first come, first served basis after the workshop.

Dupuis noted this all grew from the town getting support to do an inventory of the tree canopy in Altona, so they're trying to increase the canopy.

"One thing that we wanted to do was plant in more of our local parks because we are simply running out of boulevard space, and to meet this number, we need to look to other avenues, so that is why we are looking to do it in the park, in Ash Park, this year.

"We want to just make it look nice and bring more attraction to the park. It's a fairly popular park as it is, but we're hoping with the rejuvenation of its green space, it will just increase the attraction and draw people to come and check it out."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Public works assistant Mark Dupuis with some of the trees slated to be planted in Ash Park at a community plant-athon June 13.

Elks BBQ to support speech and hearing services

By Holly Thorne-Wiebe

The Altona Elks are inviting residents of Altona and the surrounding area to enjoy a hot dog, meet local volunteers, and learn more about the organization's work during a Community BBQ this Saturday, May 30, in Altona Park.

The drop-in event runs from 4-7 p.m. at Shelter #2 and is open to everyone. While the barbecue is free, donations are encouraged, with proceeds supporting the Winnipeg-based Central Speech and Hearing Clinic, an organization that helps children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing learn to listen, hear, and speak.

For Altona Elks member Rachel Friesen, the event is about more than fundraising.

"We felt like people don't know what we do," she said. "They hear about the Elks and they just don't know what we're about. We wanted to reach out to the community and give them a chance to come and meet us and find out what we're doing."

Friesen explained that supporting children, particularly those with medical needs, is at the heart of the Elks' mission. In Manitoba, the organization's primary charitable focus is supporting speech and hearing services through the Central Speech and Hearing Clinic.

"Anybody in southern Manitoba that has need for that, that's where they're going," she said. "For us, it's a big deal."

The local lodge also quietly supports families and community organizations throughout the region. While many of those efforts remain pri-

vate to protect the dignity of those receiving assistance, Friesen shared that the Elks regularly help children and families facing a variety of challenges.

"People have no idea," she said. "We want to help people, but we also want people to be helped with dignity."

The event will also provide an opportunity for residents to learn about volunteer opportunities and membership with the organization.

"We need volunteers," said Altona Elks president Lloyd Schroeder. "We need people to sign up for the Elks and come help us out. It's a good time. We have lots of fun."

Families attending the barbecue can also look forward to a visit from Charlie the Elk, the organization's mascot, who will be available for photos beginning around 5 p.m. Charlie sports both a hearing aid and a cochlear implant, helping promote awareness about hearing loss in a fun and approachable way.

The event has also received strong local support. Friesen noted that Sun Valley Co-op donated approximately half of the food required for the barbecue, helping reduce costs and ensuring more money raised can be directed toward speech and hearing services.

Organizers are encouraging residents to stop by, enjoy a meal, and learn more about an organization that has quietly supported communities across the region for decades.

"I hate to repeat myself constantly," said Schroeder, "but we help children in need. Is there a better cause? I don't think so."

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IN MORRIS MB

Gardens on Tenth hosting Walk for Alzheimer's June 17

By Holly Thorne-Wiebe

The Gardens on Tenth is inviting residents and community members to come together June 17 for the annual Walk for Alzheimer's, an event aimed at raising awareness, supporting families affected by dementia, and strengthening community connections.

Hosted in partnership with the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba, the walk will take place on June 17 from 10-11:30 a.m. and is open to people of all ages.

For Carissa Kiansky, life enrichment coordinator at The Gardens, the event represents much more than a fundraiser.

"The Alzheimer's walk is a very meaningful event for The Gardens on Tenth," she said. "It brings our residents, families, staff and community together to support an important cause that touches many lives."

Kiansky noted the walk offers residents an opportunity to connect with others, share memories, support one another and raise awareness about Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

"It also creates a strong sense of community and reminds everyone that no one has to face this journey alone," she said.

The need for awareness remains significant, particularly in smaller communities where families often rely heavily on local support networks.

"Raising awareness helps people better understand Alzheimer's disease and other dementias and the challenges families face every day," Kiansky explained.

"Awareness encourages compassion, reduces stigma and helps families know where they can find support and resources."

She added that community conversations can lead to earlier diagnoses, improved care and stronger support systems for those affected by dementia.

Funds raised through events such as the walk also help support research, education and programs offered through the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba.

"Continued fundraising helps provide resources, counselling, education and community programming while supporting ongoing research toward better treatments and, hopefully one day, a cure," said Kiansky.

Participants can expect a welcoming

and family-friendly event. The morning will include a brief program, the walk itself, and opportunities to connect with others before gathering for a hot dog lunch sponsored by Co-op.

Kiansky said partnerships play a key role in making the event successful.

"Partnering with the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba brings valuable knowledge, resources and support," she said. "Their involvement helps educate the community about Alzheimer's disease and dementia while also connecting families with impor-

tant programs and services."

The Gardens on Tenth also works to support families throughout the year by hosting a monthly Alzheimer's caregiver support group led by Rebecca Atkinson, South Central Regional Coordinator for the Alzheimer Society of Manitoba.

The group provides education, resources and a supportive environment for caregivers and family members navigating the challenges of

dementia.

Kiansky said staff at The Gardens regularly witness the impact Alzheimer's disease and dementia can have on both individuals and their loved ones.

"It can be a very difficult journey, not only for the person living with dementia but also for loved ones and caregivers," she said. "Many families experience changes in communication, memory and daily life routines."

For anyone considering attending the walk for the first time, Kiansky hopes they will simply come and experience the sense of support the event provides.

"Whether you have been personally affected by Alzheimer's disease or simply want to support an important cause, everyone is welcome," she said. "By attending, you are helping raise awareness, showing support to families and helping create a more compassionate community."

She added that even small acts of support can make a meaningful difference.

"It is a meaningful event, and even small acts of support can make a big difference."

"EVEN SMALL ACTS OF SUPPORT CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE."

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> SWAMP, FROM PG. 11

"The biggest issue that we're going to have is just ensuring that people understand what should go in there," Fehr said, gesturing in example to a plastic children's toy that someone tossed in the compost bin when it should have been trashed. They've also found things like soiled diapers

and feminine hygiene products, neither of which are accepted as compost at SWAMP. Ditto the standard plastic bags all too many people use to discard compost in.

"We get a lot of garbage bags, which shouldn't be in here," Fehr said. "They're not compostable and then we have to weed them out later on."

"This is going to one of the biggest

challenges we have," he reiterated of the ongoing public education a successful community composting program requires. "Because at the end of the day, it would be nice to give back some of the product, but we'd like to give back a good product. And so the more help we can get on the front side [from residents], the better it will be on the back end."

It's too soon to say when SWAMP might have fertilizer available for communities or individuals to use, or what that distribution will look like.

"There's more guidelines and regulations to go with doing that," Fehr noted, "but we would love to give back at some point. It will take us a full year, though, to really get on our feet with this."

He noted the landfill itself will also be able to make use of the end product to provide cover on full garbage

cells in the future.

"That's something that's going to save us money in the long run. So it's a win for us too, and it can be a win for the communities as well."

It wasn't a cheap or simple process to get these operations up and running, but it will be worth it, observed SWAMP board chair Peter Froese, who serves as a councillor with Winkler city council.

"We had the discussion around was it a good fit," he said. "We decided it was—we had staff, we had some of the equipment, we had space to expand."

Households across the region have really embraced composting alongside recycling to keep their weekly waste output as low as possible, Froese noted.

"So we're excited that we can continue the program," he said. "If the three municipalities can do it together here at SWAMP, it's a win-win for all of us."

"This could be here for another 20, 30 years," Fehr said of the 20,000 square foot cement pad they built for composting operations. All that may be needed is equipment upgrades through the years, though they expect the new equipment will have a good, long run first.

It's money well spent, considering how much material composting will keep out of the landfill itself.

"If we didn't have a place to process this, it's going in the hole," Fehr said. "It all comes down to what kind of longevity can we have here at the landfill. The more years we add, the better it is for everyone."

Unclear what constitutes a compostable material? The municipal websites for Winkler, Morden, and Stanley all have guidelines to help residents know what they and cannot put in their green bins, or reach out to SWAMP if you'd like guidance on what you can drop off there directly.



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

The yard waste pile at SWAMP that will become fertilizer thanks to the landfill's new compost processing program. Right: Staff ask people to consider what they're putting into their green bins—Items like this, a plastic toy, are not compostable.

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"AT THE END OF THE DAY, IT WOULD BE NICE TO GIVE BACK SOME OF THE PRODUCT, BUT WE'D LIKE TO GIVE BACK A GOOD PRODUCT. AND SO THE MORE HELP WE CAN GET ON THE FRONT SIDE, THE BETTER IT WILL BE ON THE BACK END."

Youth entrepreneur gives back with PVHS donation

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A young entrepreneur has paid her success at a recent makers market forward in a big way.

Amongst the booths at the Fawn & Cub Spring Market in Winkler earlier this month was Slimies by Everest, where 10-year-old Everest Warkentin sold her homemade slime.

"I started playing with slime and Play-doh when I was five," Warkentin shares. "And then when I was eight, my mom put me on Facebook for Christmas to sell some of my slime, and that's really where the whole idea came from."

Warkentin has fine-tuned her recipe over the years and recently began selling it at vendor markets.

"This was my first big market," she says. To mark the occasion, Warkentin decided to do some good and donate \$1 from every container of slime sold to the Pembina Valley Humane Society (PVHS).

"I do cat cuddling there, and I've always loved animals," she explains, sharing that her family is home to two dogs, a gecko, and a fish. She gets her cat fix by stopping by the Morden animal shelter regularly to spend time with the cats awaiting adoption.

Warkentin was thrilled that market day was a huge success.

"There were quite a lot of different people [at the booth] because we had this whole big blob of slime—I think it was a half a gallon of slime—so people could feel it and see if it's sticky or not. So that attracted a lot of people," she says. "I sold more than I

was expecting. We raised \$100 for the humane society."

If you missed your chance to buy some slime at this last market, Slimies by Everest will be at another market taking place at the Morden Access Event Centre on Saturday, June 6.

Warkentin says giving back will remain a part of her business plan, with PVHS most likely to remain the recipient, as they're a cause that remains close to her heart.

She and her brother have made multiple donations to the shelter through the years, and enjoy knowing the funds are being put to good use to buy "lots of medication or food" for animals in their care, Warkentin says.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Everest Warkentin stopped by the Pembina Valley Humane Society shelter recently to present animal care coordinator Melissa Winkler with a donation of \$100, part of the proceeds from her successful "Slimies by Everest" booth at a recent vendor market.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Warkentin during a session of cat cuddling at the regional animal shelter, a volunteer job she's done for the past few years.

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getinformed

Locals arrested in interprovincial drug crime ring bust

By Voice staff

Two local men are facing charges in what's being hailed as the largest illicit drug seizure in Manitoba history.

The Winnipeg Police Service's Organized Crime Unit (OCU) announced last week that it had arrested 33 people as part of the culmination of a two-year-long interprovincial drug investigation into an organized crime network that was importing large quantities of cocaine, methamphetamine, and fentanyl into Winnipeg. The drugs were then distributed throughout the Manitoba and North-western Ontario.

Investigators determined that the network was comprised of individuals with international ties associated to the upper echelon of organized crime in Canada, including the Hells Angels, Wolfpack Alliance, and the Mexican Cartel.

The joint operation concluded in March 2026 and focused on multiple

drug trafficking cells operating under a single umbrella organization believed to be sourcing controlled substances from a national supplier.

Police worked to disrupt and dismantle individual trafficking networks while gathering intelligence related to the higher levels of the criminal organization.

The investigation determined that controlled substances were imported from the United States using commercial vehicles and subsequently warehoused in Alberta and Ontario. The drugs were then transported into Manitoba through various methods, including mail services, courier deliveries, commercial transport, and private vehicles equipped with hidden compartments.

As a result of this investigation, which included assistance from numerous police departments across Manitoba, Alberta, and Ontario (including both the Winkler and Morden police services), 33 individuals were



WINNIPEG POLICE PHOTO

Winnipeg Police Service's Organized Crime Unit arrested 33 people as part of the culmination of an investigation that saw over \$37.2 million in drugs being seized.

arrested and are now facing 174 drug trafficking, proceeds of crime, and conspiracy related charges.

Investigators also seized over \$37.2 million worth of illicit drugs (estimated street value), 14 firearms, approximately \$825,000 in currency and 1.35

million illegal cigarettes.

Among the laundry list of arrested suspects from Winnipeg, Brandon, Ile Des Chenes, Edmonton, AB, and several Ontario communities were a 45-year-old man from Morris and a 35-year-old man from Winkler.

Regional Connections hosts "Play It Forward" event Sat.

By Lorne Stelmach

A family-friendly fun event this weekend in Morden is aimed at supporting the food bank program provided through the Many Hands Resource Centre.

Regional Connections is hosting a "Play It Forward" gathering this Saturday, May 30, near the northernmost picnic shelter area in Morden Park from 1-4 p.m.

It will offer some fun activities but is also a food drive connected to May being Pay It Forward Month.

"We decided it was a good opportu-

nity to support other non-profits and also just promote the idea of being a good neighbour," said Katya Shagaliyeva, a settlement lead with Regional Connections. "We decided we really wanted to support these local organizations.

"So the idea is to have a bit of friendly competition, so there will be several stations set up," she explained. "Families can sign up as a team, or they can bring their friends as well ... it will be teams of up to 10 people ... and every participant is encouraged to bring food items or personal care items to support the Many Hands food bank

or 500 Stephen."

Shagaliyeva said it is important for Regional Connections to support organizations like Many Hands and programs like the food bank because they support a lot of the clients that work with Regional Connections as they get settled in their new homes.

"That's why we feel it is important to give back," she said. "Especially with things like housing and food prices going so high now.

"So if people are purchasing food, a percentage of the proceeds will be going to support our programming, so it's giving back but also us receiving

some support as well.

"And also there is another event happening in the park that day as well, so hopefully we get a good turnout," she said, referring to the teddy bear picnic happening Saturday. "This is the first time, but we hope to do it again and look forward to continuing to provide the support for others.

"And it's open to all of the community, but we would like people to register to take part in it."

You can do so by calling 204-822-4387 or emailing hellomorden@regionalconnections.ca.

Province launches survey about daylight saving time

By Voice staff

Got an opinion on the great daylight saving time debate? The provincial government wants to hear it.

A new survey has launched inviting Manitobans to share their views on seasonal time changes and whether Manitoba should adopt permanent standard time or permanent daylight

time.

"Across Canada, a number of provinces and territories are ending the time change and Manitobans have made it clear they want us to look at doing the same," said Municipal and Northern Relations Minister Glen Sismard. "From a lower risk of stroke to when the sun rises and sets, there are

a number of things to consider, and we want to hear directly from Manitobans."

Staying on standard time would mean more light earlier in the morning, while permanent daylight time increases light later in the day.

Whichever route Manitoba may take, a recent analysis by Manitoba

Health has concluded that eliminating the time change would be better for population health than maintaining the status quo. The full report is available at: manitoba.ca/asset_library/en/proactive/20252026/time-policy-factsheet.pdf.

You can fill out the survey at engagemb.ca/time-change.

Community invited to help create mosaic bench back

By Lorne Stelmach

A co-operative project will be both creating pieces of art in the community as well as providing something useful.

The Pembina Hills Arts Council is organizing a community mosaic bench project that will give people a chance to create and contribute a part of one of three benches, with the other two being created by local artists.

It became possible with the support of a successful application from the City of Morden for funding through the Age-Friendly Manitoba program.

Three mosaic benches will be installed in three different locations in Morden, including somewhere on Stephen Street, at Lake Minnewasta, and in Livingston Park.

"And those benches will be really designed and adapted for the needs of seniors, so they will be made in a way that it's really convenient for the seniors," said Anna Ishkhanyan, director of the Pembina Hills Gallery.

"When the gallery came on board with the project, the idea was to not only make the benches but also make sure that they have some inspiration," she said. "The

gallery is helping with that component to make sure that art is integrated here."

People are invited to join in on creating a mosaic that will be featured on the back of one of the benches.

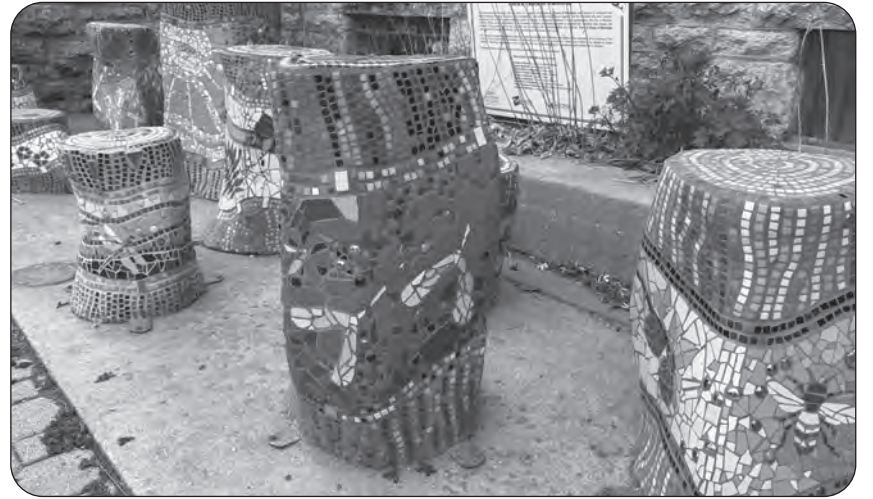
Community members are invited to take part in one of two sessions at the gallery on Saturday, June 6 (2:30-4 p.m. or 4:30-6 p.m.) to paint a small art piece inspired by what Morden means to them or what they love about the city.

The individual pieces will be assembled into a large mosaic spelling out MORDEN and creating a lasting, community-built art piece for everyone to enjoy. You can pre-register online at pembinahillsarts.com.

"The idea currently is to have artwork on the backs of all three benches," said Ishkhanyan, noting they especially wanted the Stephen Street bench to be a community project. "So we invite everyone from Morden who loves the community to be part of it to help create this community mosaic."

She stressed it is open to all ages.

"Any age and background can contribute. You don't need to be an artist," said Ishkhanyan. "We will have instructors to help people who don't really have a lot of



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Pembina Hills Arts Council invites the community down to the gallery Saturday to create small art pieces that will be used to decorate a mosaic bench that will be installed on Stephen St.

art skills.

"You just need to have a bit of a passion for art and the desire to come together to create something for the community."

For the backs of the other two benches, the gallery is inviting artists to submit their work for consideration.

"I think people in this community really love where they live, and they can come together to create something for the community," Ishkhanyan said, urging people to come out to the paint sessions or contact the gallery for more information. "We hope to engage as many people as possible."

'Singing in the Park' takes place in Morden June 2

By Lorne Stelmach

Morden choral students from multiple schools will be coming together for a special musical performance for the community next week.

Singing in the Park is planned for June 2 in the Morden Park bowl starting at 11 a.m. and going for about an hour.

The participating schools include Maple Leaf School, Minnewasta School, École Discovery Trails, École Morden Middle School, and possibly Morden Collegiate.

The event will bring students from

across Western School Division together to share music with each other and the community at large. All are welcome. Admission is free.

The performance will begin with a song from each school and wrap up with a joint song featuring all the kids.

"It's something pretty special for us," said Tim Hodge, music educator at Maple Leaf School.

"It's just a really great way to collaborate across all of these different age groups," he said. "There's not a ton of inter-school things that happen. There's some field days and other events, but for the most part, the

schools are individual ... we thought this was just a great way for everyone to come together."

The idea grew from all of the local music educators getting together for a professional development day, Hodge shared.

"We were trying to think of things that we could do together," he said. "Singing in the park is something that happened before a number of years ago, and it worked out just really well. Everyone just had a really good time."

"And music is something that is just wonderful when it's shared with

a large group of people," he added, noting they were particularly drawn to the idea of all coming together as one mass choir. He estimates there could be between 160 and 200 students taking part.

The numbers are a good indicator of the strong level of interest in and the value of local school music programs, Hodge noted.

"Music education is something that is absolutely for every student ... everybody can come out and sing and have their voice heard and be part of something really fun and special."

RCMP piloting mobile alert system in Morris/Emerson

By Voice staff

The Manitoba RCMP is introducing a new community notification system aimed at improving how important public safety information is shared with residents.

Starting May 21, they launched a pilot project using Rave Mobile Safety, a voluntary mass notification platform that allows local detachments to send timely and targeted alerts directly to community members by text

message, email, or automated phone call.

Selected to test out the system are the Thompson, Norway House, Dauphin, Winnipegosis, Oakbank/Beausejour, and Morris/Emerson detachments.

"Strong communication is an important part of community safety," said Cpl Terry Sundell, RCMP Community Engagement Services. "This new system will help us share important information quickly and directly with residents so they can stay

informed and take appropriate action when needed."

The platform is voluntary and designed with privacy and accessibility in mind. Residents can choose how they receive alerts and can update or remove their subscriptions at any time. Notifications will initially be available in English and French.

The Manitoba RCMP emphasizes that Rave Mobile Safety is not intended to replace the provincial Alert Ready system or emergency services.

In an emergency, residents should still call 911 or their local police emergency line.

The pilot project is expected to run for approximately three months.

Residents interested in subscribing or learning more about the program are encouraged to follow their local RCMP detachment's social media pages for registration information.

Peer to Peer Show coming to Pembina Hills Gallery

By Lorne Stelmach

A long-running regional art exhibition that had been rebranded in recent years is making the rounds and will be at Morden's Pembina Hills Gallery starting next week.

What was formerly the Central Region Juried Art Show is now the Peer to Peer (PSP) exhibition. It is organized by the Golden Prairie Arts Council based in Carman but with the support and involvement of art organizations across Central Manitoba.

This collaborative show brings together works from artists across the region, celebrating the creativity and talent found in our communities, said Nigel Bart, executive director of the Carman gallery.

Bart said they rebranded the exhibition because they felt it was not sustainable as a juried art show, so now it is "peers mentoring peers instead of a jury, an expert jury, mentoring novice artists."

The exhibit launched in Pilot Mound for May and will spend June in Morden before continuing on to

"THERE'S A GOOD VARIETY ... AND ALSO DIFFERENT STYLES."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The Peer to peer exhibition is at art galleries across the region this year, featuring 16 works of art representing a variety of mediums and styles from 10 different artists.

stops in Portage, Holland, Winkler, and Miami in the months ahead.

There are 16 works of art from about 10 artists representing a variety of mediums and styles.

"Some are traditional painters, some are wood turners, and there's some multimedia work, mixed media and photography," Bart shared. "So there's good variety ... and also different styles."

They made an open call for submissions with no particular theme involved, he added.

"It's always intriguing ... I find it interesting in this day and age, of so much creativity ... when you find artists with their own imagination. It's a gift; I think it's a beautiful thing that there are artists creating new fresh work, a new twist."

Bart noted there is a strong collaborative spirit among the many arts organizations and galleries in southern Manitoba.

"It's a very mutually satisfying relationship with Winkler at Winkler Arts and Culture and also with Morden at Pembina Hills Gallery ... and also Tiger Hills and all of the other galleries," he said. "We do have a group from the galleries that meets regularly."

The P2P exhibit will have an official opening reception at the Pembina Hills Gallery June 5 from 7-9 p.m.

Funding boosts English training for Ukrainians

By Lana Meier

The Manitoba government is investing \$500,000 to expand English language training programs for Ukrainian newcomers across the province as part of ongoing efforts to support settlement and long-term integration.

The funding, announced by Manitoba Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism Minister Nellie Kennedy on Vyshyvanka Day, will support programming delivered through the Ukrainian Canadian Congress – Manitoba Provincial Council (UCC-MPC).

"As Manitobans celebrate Vyshyvanka Day and honour Ukrainian culture and heritage, this investment reflects our commitment to ensuring newcomers have the tools they need to thrive, find work and fully participate in communities across our province," Kennedy said in a news release.

"Our government is proud to support the Ukrainian Canadian Congress – Manitoba Provincial Council

as it helps Ukrainian newcomers build strong connections and successful futures in Manitoba."

The UCC is a national organization representing Ukrainian Canadian community groups, with the Manitoba council among the oldest in Canada. Since the start of Russia's war on Ukraine, the organization has helped support thousands of individuals and families who have settled in Manitoba.

According to UCC Manitoba, more than 30,000 Ukrainian newcomers have arrived in the province since the war began.

From July 2025 to February 2026, the organization delivered English language training to approximately 900 adult learners across Manitoba in partnership with community organizations.

UCC Manitoba president Joanne Lewandosky said language training plays a critical role in helping newcomers build stable lives in their new communities.

"English language training is one of the most important tools helping Ukrainian newcomers build successful lives in Manitoba, opening doors to employment, education and full participation in our communities," said Lewandosky.

"We are deeply grateful to the Manitoba government for its ongoing support of Ukrainians forced to come to Canada because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and for investing in programs that help newcomers integrate and contribute to our province."

The new provincial funding will support additional staffing, expanded course offerings and organizational supports aimed at strengthening program delivery in both urban and rural communities.

UCC Manitoba said there has been particularly strong demand for English language training in Winnipeg, western Manitoba, the Morden-Winkler area and the Interlake region.

The organization noted it is committed to offering as many rural courses

as possible where demand exists, although finding qualified instructors continues to be a challenge.

The expanded programming will continue to focus on in-person instruction, as UCC Manitoba does not currently offer online language courses.

UCC Manitoba spokesperson Ostap Skrypnik said language skills remain an important part of helping newcomers become job ready and establish long-term roots in Manitoba communities.

"Employers in general want workers who are job ready. Language is an important part of that," said Skrypnik. "Viable and long-term employment is important for rural municipalities to retain newcomers."

Vyshyvanka Day is observed annually on the third Thursday in May and celebrates Ukrainian culture and unity through the wearing of traditional embroidered shirts known as vyshyvankas.

The **Voice**

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Hands-on canoe program supports watershed education

By E. Antonio

The South Central Eco Institute has been recognized for its work in environmental education and water stewardship after receiving the Red River Basin Commission (RRBC) Endowment Grant, an award highlighting organizations making a meaningful impact across the Red River Basin.

The grant, presented by the Red River Basin Commission's executive committee during its 15th annual North Chapter Fish Dinner Fundraiser Gala earlier this spring, celebrates community-based initiatives that advance environmental awareness, innovation and stewardship.

For program coordinator and Prairie Spirit School Division educator Kent Lewarne, the recognition reflects years of work building collaborative, hands-on learning opportunities that connect students, educators and communities to local waterways.

"I was totally shocked when they called me up," he said. "It is a nice influx that will promote the River of Dreams and the River Watch program this spring and next."

At the heart of the institute's work is a focus on water resource management and watershed education, bringing together academics, government representatives, environmental professionals and community members. Through these partnerships, the organization aims to strengthen understanding of how local waterways connect across the broader Red River Basin.

One of its longest-running initiatives is River Watch Manitoba, a student-driven monitoring program that



A River of Dreams canoe designed by a local student.

has been operating for more than a decade. Students across Manitoba collect environmental data from local water bodies, which is then compiled and made publicly available online for both educational and research purposes.

"In Prairie Spirit, we were looking for a project to really sink our teeth into, and water quality is an issue a ton of schools and community members were interested in," Lewarne said. "With immense support from surrounding watershed districts, we quickly realized this project was going to be something bigger than Prairie Spirit, and the South Central Eco Institute was born."

The program has since expanded to schools across the province, with Lewarne bringing River Watch as far north as Norway House. Upward of 60 Grades 7 through 12 classes participate annually.

"Water is a resource we desperately need to look after," he added. "And the future of our waters is in the hands of these students."

More recently, Lewarne has helped introduce the River of Dreams program to Manitoba youth in Grades 4 to 6. Originally developed by the International Watershed Institute in the United States, the program uses a hands-on approach to teach students about watershed connectivity and river systems.

The initiative invites students to decorate and launch small cedar canoes — each approximately 14 inches in size — into local waterways. Each canoe carries a unique tracking number and a message encouraging anyone who finds it to log its journey online before returning it to the water. Over time, students are able to follow the path of their canoe as it travels through the watershed, potentially making its way toward Hudson Bay.

He added that, thanks to funding from the RRBC, every student across nine classrooms was able to decorate and launch their own canoe this year.



PHOTOS SUBMITTED

Two students from Treherne Elementary School drop their canoes, which they helped decorate through the River of Dreams program, into the river.

"The kids have had an absolute blast with the program, and the teachers absolutely love it," he said. "We've been fortunate to put a canoe in the hands of every student. They can make it their own, and that's what makes this unique — they are making a canoe of their dreams."

He has run the program for two years, launching in three classrooms in the first year and nine classrooms in the second. So far, only one canoe has been spotted upstream, but Lewarne hopes more will be discovered as they travel.

"I want them to go wherever the waterways can take them," he said. "We would love to see them make it out to the sea — that would be my dream for the River of Dreams."

Lewarne said the program is designed to turn abstract environmental concepts into something tangible for students, allowing them to physically connect with the movement of water across regions and ecosystems.

In addition to program development, he is a regular presence in classrooms throughout the Red River Basin, where he leads discussions on water conservation and encourages students to think critically about their role in protecting local environments.

"Kids will only protect what they love, and they will only love what they understand," Lewarne said. "In years from now, they will be the people making decisions about the future of our watersheds, and their knowledge is key — education is the infrastructure that will reach the most

people."

He added he hopes youth will share their knowledge with others and understand that their decisions, opinions and voices matter.

The RRBC Endowment Grant highlights growing recognition of community-driven environmental education efforts across the region. For the South Central Eco Institute, the focus remains on building long-term awareness and stewardship through education, collaboration and hands-on learning.

Looking ahead, Lewarne hopes to expand participation in both River Watch Manitoba and the canoe program, reaching more schools and strengthening connections between communities and the waterways that link them.

"It's my goal to get these programs into the hands of as many students as possible," he said. "Students will be fantastic decision-makers for our basins — they are the key to a healthy future."

Registration for the River Watch program is accepted on an ongoing basis. Participation inquiries for River of Dreams will open in late fall 2026, with school presentations and canoe construction anticipated in early 2027 and launches in spring. All schools across the province will be considered for the spring 2027 launch, with final participation numbers dependent on funding.

For more information on South Central Eco Institute initiatives, contact klewarne@prspirit.org.



A Manitou Elementary School student launches his decorated canoe, imagining it making its way downstream all the way to the ocean.

sports & recreation



PHOTOS BY EDWARD VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE

The local Border Baseball League teams began their season last week. On Friday night, the Altona Bisons hosted the Winkler Whips. The Whips came out ahead 13-5. Altona had previously downed the Carman Cardinals 10-0 in their season opener a few nights earlier. The Morden Mud Hens also won their opener against Carman on Friday, winning it 11-0. On Sunday, the Mud Hens hosted the Whips, doubling up on them 4-2. This week Tuesday sees Morden in Altona and Carman in Winkler. On Friday, the Whips are in Holland. Saturday has Morden hosting Clearwater.

Border Baseball begins



On Friday, the Whips are in Holland. Saturday has Morden hosting Clearwater.

Local MMA coach gets first-round knockout at FFC bout

By Ashleigh Viveiros

RISE Athletics coach Suleiman Bouhata wasn't feeling his best when he stepped onto the mat to battle for the Fierce Fighting Championship Bantamweight World Title in Salt Lake City, Utah, earlier this month, but that didn't stop him from knocking his opponent out in 51 seconds flat.

Unfortunately, the belt still stayed down south—Bouhata was battling a serious cold in the days leading up to fight day and so missed the limit weight by 2.5 pounds, making him ineligible to claim the championship.

Knowing his chance to bring the belt home was off the table, win or lose, was a huge disappointment, but Bouhata didn't let it shake him.

"My lungs were burning before I went in to fight," he shares, noting it made it impossible to do the proper conditioning he'd normally do heading into a match. But he was intent on pushing through it. "I might have a cold, I might be sick, but I won't cancel the fight for this."

Bouhata went up against Salt Lake

City hometown favourite Joel Haro, who entered the fight with a 7-2 professional record.

For Bouhata, it was his first professional MMA fight since injuries sidelined his career back in 2021.

"Haro is waiting for his UFC [Ultimate Fight Championship] contract, so I was the underdog, the goalkeeper of the UFC," he says in explaining how this was the perfect match to make his comeback.

When it became clear he wasn't going to be at his peak, Bouhata and coach John Ramon focused on developing a strategy that would secure an early finish—and, boy, did they get it. The bout was originally scheduled to be five, five-minute rounds, but Bouhata had Haro on the ground in less than a minute.

"This performance showed an incredible level of toughness, professionalism, and composure under difficult circumstances," notes Ramon. "Most people will never see everything that went into simply making it to the cage that night. To overcome



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Suleiman Bouhata overcame illness to knock out his opponent, Joel Haro, in 51 seconds at their FFC fight in Utah May 16.

illness, a brutal travel week, a difficult weight cut, and still perform at that level is something we're extremely proud of."

Continued on page 21

> MMA, FROM PG. 20

It was a triumphant return to the sport, and Bouhata has high hopes for future matches when he's at his fighting best. His next big bout will be in North Dakota in August, and he's already preparing for it.

"I'm going to put on a show and I'm going to try to do better than 50 seconds," he says.

Bouhata has been involved in combat sports since he was a kid.

"I would say I have had a pretty rough life," he shares. "And when you have this kind of life, you learn what you can do. And I found out that I'm very strong ... that I can fight."

MMA gives him the chance to bring all his fighting skills to the table.

Every single match has "a striking part, a wrestling part, and a ground and pound part," Bouhata says, observing these matches are truly "the closest one to a real fight."

"I grew up with it, and I feel like I'm good at it, so that's what keeps me there."

Bouhata, who is the director of combat sports and the head coach of MMA and Muay Thai at RISE Athletics, has been gratified to see MMA and other combat sports really taking off in the area, and amongst people of all ages.

"More and more" people are getting into it, he says. "We have the biggest facility in town—we have a lot of space, an open gym, a fitness side, and tons of coaches, so people come and they find out about all the other things they can do."



Aces best Nighthawks



PHOTOS BY KEAN REDHEAD/VOICE

The Northlands Parkway Collegiate Nighthawks squared off in Winkler against the W.C. Miller Aces in Zone 4 varsity boys baseball action last week. The Aces came out ahead in both games of the double-header, winning them 7-4 and 8-7.

U17s lead busy week for Central Energy teams

By Annaliese Meier

The Central Energy U17 squad led the way during a busy weekend of Manitoba Premier AAA Softball League action, finishing with a 3-1 record over four league games, while the organization's U13, U15 and U19 teams competed in tournaments in Saskatchewan.

The U13 and U15 teams travelled to Warman, Sask., for the Prairie Oasis Softball Classic Tournament, while the U19 squad headed to Saskatoon for tournament action.

At the U17 level, Central Energy opened the weekend May 23 in Manitou with a pair of victories over the Manitoba Angels.

Central Energy earned a 14-7 win in the opener behind a five-RBI performance from Addison Nikkel, who tripled, singled and hit an inside-the-park home run. Taylor Wall, Sinead Convery, Blaine Wiebe and Ella Conrad all added multiple hits in the victory.

The U17 squad followed with an 11-7 walk-off victory later that day. Nikkel again led the offence, going 3-for-5 and delivering an inside-the-park grand slam in the bottom of the eighth inning to seal the win. Wall added an inside-the-park home run, while Taryn Toews and Nikkel each

recorded three hits.

Central Energy split a doubleheader against the Interlake Phillies on Sunday at Swan Lake Diamond. The Phillies claimed the opener 9-5 despite a strong offensive effort from Central Energy, which collected 11 hits. Mya Richard, Payton Manness and Shyanne Goertzen each had two hits in the loss.

The U17 squad rebounded with a 13-8 victory in the second game. Kennedy Funk drove in four runs with a pair of triples, while Taryn Toews and Richard each recorded three hits as Central Energy piled up 17 hits in the win.

Central Energy U17 will now travel to Winnipeg on May 29 for a doubleheader against the Westman Magic at ANSC Boston Pizza. First pitch is scheduled for 7 p.m., with the second game to follow at 9 p.m.

At the Prairie Oasis Softball Classic in Warman, the U13 squad posted a 2-3 record over five games. Central Energy opened the tournament with a narrow 13-12 loss to the Pipestone Valley Cats before rebounding with a 16-6 win over the Melfort Spirit.

The U13 team continued its strong offensive play Saturday with a 17-7 victory, highlighted by Madison K's three-hit performance, including an inside-the-park home run.

Central Energy later dropped a 9-1 decision to Calgary Kaizen before falling 12-2 to the Prince Albert Aces in its final game Sunday.

Central Energy is set to travel to Friedensfeld Community Centre Diamond 1 on May 30 for a doubleheader against the Eastman Wildcats. The first game is scheduled for 10 a.m., followed by the second contest at 12 p.m.

The U13 squad will then head to La Salle Jays Care on May 31 for a pair of games against the Manitoba Angels, with first pitch set for 1 p.m. and the second game to follow at 3 p.m.

The U15 squad also competed in Warman and finished the weekend with a 3-2 record. Central Energy opened tournament play with a 7-0 shutout win over the U15A Aces behind a three-run home run from Reese Fotheringham.

The team then suffered a narrow 2-1 loss in a pitchers' duel against Royal Reign before rebounding with a 9-5 victory over Crush 15U. Central Energy added another 3-1 win over Royal Reign on Sunday before closing the tournament with a 9-0 loss to the Interlake Phillies.

Central Energy will next take the field June 3 at Republic of Manitobah Diamond 9 for a rescheduled doubleheader against the Westman Magic.

The games, originally scheduled for May 14, were postponed because of weather and high winds.

The first game is scheduled for 6 p.m., with the second contest to follow at 8 p.m.

In Saskatoon, the U19 squad went 1-3 during tournament action. Central Energy nearly completed a comeback in its opener before falling 8-7 to the Eastman Wildcats despite out-hitting Eastman 10-7. Emma Klassen led the offence with three hits and two RBIs.

The U19 team then dropped a 5-1 decision to the Sherwood Park Storm before rebounding with a 10-3 victory over the Parkland Predators. Maddy Friesen led the way offensively with three hits, while Hailey-Jo Guffei drove in three runs.

Central Energy closed the weekend with a 9-2 loss to the Saskatoon Selects.

Central Energy will begin its season May 29 with a doubleheader against the Eastman Wildcats at Friedensfeld Community Centre Diamond 1. The games are scheduled for 6 p.m. and 8 p.m.

The following day, the U19 squad will travel to Winkler Parkland Diamond 1 for a pair of games against the Westman Magic beginning at 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

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

Orioles on win streak, Bisons looking for first victory



PHOTOS BY LANA MEIER/VOICE

Left: Orioles catcher Chris Peters makes the out at home plate in his team's 8-6 victory over the Interlake Blue Jays in game two of a double header in Stonewall last Sunday. Above: Interlake's Bryce Meyers is safe at second base.

By Lorne Stelmach

The Pembina Valley Orioles have started a winning streak while the Altona Bisons are 0-6 for the Manitoba Junior Baseball League season so far.

The Orioles took both games of a doubleheader last Sunday against the Interlake Blue Jays in winning 9-2 and 8-6.

In game one with Interlake, Josh Dyck was dominant on the mound for Pembina Valley in racking up 11 strikeouts while surrendering only five hits and two runs over six in-

nings. The Orioles scored eight runs in the fourth inning alone en route to victory.

Game two was a much more even affair, even with the Orioles holding a 10-7 edge in hits.

Haiden Friesen drove in two runs, while Jaren Hildebrand and Chris Peters each collected three hits for Pembina Valley, and Karsten Peters went two for three.

The Bisons, meanwhile, dropped a 4-2 decision to the Winnipeg South Wolves last Wednesday and then lost

both games of a Sunday doubleheader against the Carillon Sultans by scores of 12-1 and 8-5

They came up just a bit short against Winnipeg despite having a slight 6-5 edge in hits.

Lochlan Rempel and Andrew Giesbrecht each had two hits for the Bisons, while Giesbrecht overall went two for four at the plate. Three runs in the bottom of the fifth turned the tide in favour of the Wolves.

In game one with Carillon, the Sultans took a 3-0 lead in the second in-

ning before closing it out with eight runs in the bottom of the fifth.

Hayden Klassen went two for three for the Bisons, who made it close in game two in trailing only 5-4 after collecting four runs in the top of the third inning despite being out-hit 9-2 overall in the game.

The Orioles this week have a Sunday afternoon doubleheader in Winnipeg against the Elmwood Giants, while the Bisons face Elmwood Friday before hosting Interlake for a doubleheader Sunday afternoon.

Hesom battles conditions for strong MJT finish

By Annaliese Meier

Morden golfer Darren Hesom battled through difficult spring conditions to earn a runner-up finish in the MJT Juvenile Boys division at the Maple Leaf Junior Golf Tour's Order of Merit Series held May 17 and 18 at St. Boniface Golf Club in Winnipeg.

Competing in a strong field during

one of Manitoba's busiest junior golf events of the season, the 16-year-old posted rounds of 77 and 82 for a two-day total of 159, finishing second in his division.

The tournament drew a waitlisted field of 87 junior golfers from across Canada and featured challenging weather throughout the weekend, including rain, cold temperatures and

shifting conditions that tested players across all divisions.

Ryder St. Laurent of Île Des Chênes captured the Juvenile Boys title with rounds of 78 and 77 for a 155 total, while Ethan Reimer of Steinbach finished third at 161.

Hesom's strong finish highlighted another impressive performance for Manitoba golfers on the national ju-

nior circuit as the Maple Leaf Junior Golf Tour continues to expand across the province. The MJT is Canada's largest junior golf tour and provides opportunities for athletes aged 11 to 19 to compete for provincial, national and international qualifying spots.

The next Manitoba stop on the MJT schedule will be the Zeal Series at Larters at St. Andrews on June 6-7.

Carman Golf & Curling Club hosting PGA Scramble this Saturday, May 30

By Annaliese Meier

Golf fans have the opportunity to watch some local talent compete for a chance to advance to the national stage as the Carman Golf & Curling Club hosts a qualifier for the PGA Scramble presented by BMW May 30.

Now in its 11th year, the event is considered Canada's largest grassroots amateur golf tournament, with more than 185 qualifying events taking place across the country.

Teams of four amateur golfers aged

19 and older with an official Golf Canada handicap compete in the 18-hole scramble-format tournament. Successful teams advance to one of 13 regional finals later this summer, with regional winners earning the chance to compete in the nationals at Cabot Links in Nova Scotia this fall.

"The RBC Scramble has become one of our signature events," said Dean North of the Carman Golf & Curling Club. "The members and guests all love the format."

Interest in the event has continued to grow locally, with North noting nearly 30 teams registered for this year's qualifier.

"We are the biggest RBC Scramble event in Manitoba," he said. "Amateurs love the Texas scramble format with their friends," he said. "The tournament is also informal in that amateurs can have an alcoholic drink while they play."

The event also offers golfers from smaller communities a unique oppor-

tunity to compete for a national title.

"The RBC Scramble is one of two events held in Canada that allows a group of friends to qualify for a national championship," North said.

Organizers are expecting a lively atmosphere on tournament day.

"Fun, relaxed and competitive," North said.

In addition to standard qualifying spots, the PGA Scramble also guarantees two national championship berths for all-female teams.

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NUMBER 3 IN A SERIES

Visionaries

By Shaun Friesen

In the summer of 1883, waves of excitement rippled through the villages and farms of the West Reserve. The railway had arrived in Gretna, its steel strands guiding the world, with its allure and changes into the heart of the Mennonite world. The Ogilvie elevator was reaching towards the heavens, announcing the dawning of for-profit agriculture. Surplus grain could be produced and sold. No longer would wheat have to be hauled in wagons along the Post Road to Emerson. Stores and services were popping up along the streets of Gretna. Life would be fuller, richer, easier. Yet, there were those who saw the threat, and feared the end of this beginning.

By 1928, radical changes had swept the land. The West Reserve which had kept non-Mennonites out, dissolved in 1898. The open field system and village agreements, the core of Mennonite communal life, were gone replaced by individual farms competing against each other in the free market capitalistic economy. Between 1922 -1926, thousands of Reinlanders and Sommerfelders who left for Mexico, were replaced by Russlaender refugees fleeing Stalin's oppression in Russia. The emigration to Mexico had left the Waisenamts in a weakened state, their assets depleted. Prior to 1922 the Bergthaler and Sommerfelder Waisenamts combined for over 3 million dollars in assets.

An extension of the church, the Waisenamnt provided the structure which managed the transfer of estate assets, and protected the needs of widows and orphans. In addition, it functioned as a bank providing

1883: THE ARRIVAL
OGILVIE ELEVATOR
CENTRA STATION
RISE OF FOR-PROFIT AGRICULTURE
GRAIN EXPORTS

EARLY 20th CENTURY: DISSOLUTION OF COMMUNAL LIFE
VILLAGE AGREEMENTS → OPEN FIELDS
INDIVIDUAL FARMS
1898: OPEN FIELD SYSTEM ENDS
1920s: EMIGRATION TO MEXICO

1929: CRASH & DEPRESSION
WASENAMT BANKRUPTCY: ASSETS DEPLETED
FARM ECONOMY COLLAPSE
UNEMPLOYED WORKERS
HEAT, BARTERING
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A NEW BEGINNING: THE COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT
ROOTED IN ROCSDALE PRINCIPLES
VISIONARY LEADERS ESTABLISH NEW STRUCTURE
MEMBER OWNERSHIP
OPEN MEMBERSHIP
ONE MEMBER ONE VOTE
HIGH QUALITY PRODUCTS
EMPOWERING COMMUNITY RESOURCEFULNESS, SHAPING THE FUTURE

THE WASENAMT: A FAITH-BASED SYSTEM OF TRUST
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ASSETS
MANAGED ASSETS, PROTECTED WIDOWS & ORPHANS, TRUSTED BANKING

Mennonites with a traditional and trusted structure in which to invest their money, while offering loans at reasonable rates to the community. Money was invested at 2% interest, while loans charged 3%. Investments could be withdrawn at a cost of 2% so long as there were sufficient assets.

In 1929 the stock market crashed, ushering in the Great Depression. A lack of assets forced the Waisenamts into bankruptcy. Most investors lost everything. This iconic symbol of community, and cooperative values vanished with nothing to replace it. The farm economy which had become dependent on wheat collapsed. There was no market at any price. Many farms were lost. One story tells of a farmer who received 45 cents for 10 chickens. When he returned home his wife sent him back to town to get the chickens back. Many non-farm community members found themselves out of work. Times were desperate. People did what they could. Prips, a roasted grain beverage, replaced coffee. Clothes were mended and re-mended. Farmers resorted to burning grain and manure to heat their homes. Bartering became common practice.

From the ashes of this crisis the Cooperative Movement arose to offer a solution. With its ideals rooted in the 1848 Rochdale principles of community and cooperation, a group of visionary leaders established a structure that allowed the community a way to work together to improve the lives of everyone. Though radical to some, the Rochdale tenet that people and community were more important than profit and institutional power and control, resonated with the predominantly Mennonite community of Altona. The principles of: member ownership, open membership (no discrimination based on wealth, gender, religion, political affiliation), one member one vote, high quality products, and the value of education, offered a way for members to help themselves and the community.

The Cooperative Movement guided by committed leadership provided members with a way to better meet their needs, while empowering a new level of cooperative community resourcefulness, which shaped the future of the community. This is a grand story, to be continued in the June 25 edition.

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