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Getting dunked

The Community Exchange's Paul Peters hits the dunk tank water in the agency's first community block party last weekend. For more photos, see Pg. 12.

PHOTO BY LORI PENNER/VOICE



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Winkler prepares to host wildfire evacuees

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The City of Winkler stands ready to potentially receive several hundred evacuees from Manitoba's raging wildfires.

With a state of emergency having been declared in the province and upwards of 17,000 people forced to flee their homes in the affected areas, the Meridian Exhibition Centre was transformed into an evacuation centre last week.

"We recognized that the vast majority of these evacuees are going to end up in Winnipeg, maybe in Brandon ... but given the sheer numbers, we reached out and suggested if they were looking for more space, we were available," Mayor Henry Siemens said, noting they're working with both the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization and the Canadian Red Cross.

Members of the local fire and police departments, city staff, and volun-

teers got to work setting up hundreds of cots inside the fieldhouse at the exhibition centre last Thursday.

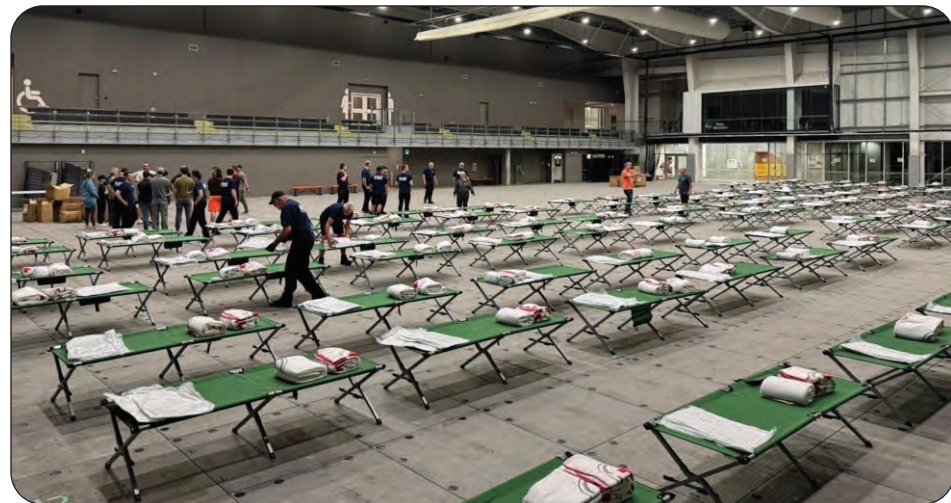
"We scrambled like crazy," noted Siemens. "We quickly put in the hard surface floor [over the indoor turf] and got the cots set up."

Once word got out, the community at large quickly stepped up to offer support.

"We had Gardenland Co-op immediate reach out and say, 'We'll provide food, we'll make that happen,'" shared Siemens. "And we've had church groups reach out to ask, 'What do you need? Can we provide activities?'"

Winkler is also working with the City of Morden on this, as the Access Event Centre there has a full kitchen that can be used to prepare large quantities of food as needed.

"Honestly, it's been overwhelming the response that has come from absolutely everyone," Siemens said. "It's so good to see the type of communi-



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

The field hall at the Meridian Exhibition Centre in Winkler has been transformed into an evacuation centre for those fleeing the wildfires in northern Manitoba.

ty we have ... stepping up and saying, 'Hey, our neighbours are hurting right now, and we want to help.'"

City staff are ready to greet the evacuees whenever they arrive, Siemens noted, "recognizing that many of the people are coming in from very, very stressful, intense situations—they've literally just left everything they know behind with no idea if it'll be there when they come back. So we want to make sure we support them and care for them and offer kindness in any way that we can."

As of press time, Winkler had not yet received any evacuees.

"We were told a couple of times this weekend that several hundred were coming, but ultimately they were able to find accommodations in Winnipeg and didn't need to come," Siemens said on Monday.

"The situation evolves hour by hour," he noted. "From what we understand, the fact that we don't have

anyone yet is a very good thing—it means the Winnipeg evacuation centres are able to handle the load ... we don't have clear direction on if/when that might change.

"We will be ready if needed."

As of right now, organizers have everything covered to provide evacuees with what they need, but if additional help or dona-

tions are required, they will let the community know through the City's website and social media platforms.

Siemens said people who want

to help are urged to make a donation to the Canadian Red Cross in support of wildfire relief efforts.

He also noted that all programs and rentals at the Meridian Exhibition Centre for the immediate future are cancelled. Further details will be released once it becomes clear how the situation will unfold.

"WE WILL BE READY IF NEEDED."



Winkler firefighters were hard at work last week laying flooring over the turf and setting up cots for several hundreds evacuees.



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Future doctors visit Morden-Winkler for Rural Week

By Lorne Stelmach

A group of first-year medical students spent a week in Morden-Winkler to get a taste of both rural health care and rural life.

The annual Rural Week initiative had the University of Manitoba students spend time last week at the clinics both communities as well as at Boundary Trails Health Centre. Similar groups were based all across Southern Health-Santé Sud as well as other health regions across the province.

"They come and have a good learning experience as well as a lot of fun," said Dr. Leanne Nause.

"Some of our doctors have even been through on this Rural Week where the initial interest in coming back to rural Manitoba happened," she noted. "So this is why we love this week, and we love to see the students come here. They are very enthusiastic to learn."

There are a lot of experiences packed into the week, Nause noted.

"I had students in the clinic, and we did some hospital work today [Friday]. We had students in the operating room ... and they've had a number of dinners and barbecues. They also always have a good time doing ziplining.

"I like that it shows them what can happen in a rural setting. Many different types of doctors and health care providers come to rural Manitoba and any type of practice that they want to set up, they should consider a rural setting," Nause suggested. "It's also about what rural life brings and what rural patients are like ... I hope that they got the idea that it's a little bit of a different feel."

And Nause noted the students might be surprised to see how much is available here in terms of programs and services.

"We are, by no means, without ... we have a very good hospital here and lots of resources for our patients," she said. "They're surprised we have dialysis, chemotherapy, full ORs, general surgery, orthopedic surgery ... they're usually quite surprised that it's so broad in terms of our medicine here."

Even student Kodley Bouachantha, who is from Morden, was somewhat surprised to see how much things have grown and changed here.

"The week was really great. It was great to reconnect with my rural roots. It's been a while since I've been in Morden," he said. "I've seen that things have really expanded, and the city has really gotten diverse as well," he said. "I see how culturally diverse



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

First-year medical students from the University of Manitoba spent last week learning the ins and out of rural life and rural medicine at the C.W. Wiebe Medical Centre, Menzies Medical Centre, and Boundary Trails Health Centre.

Morden is now ... it's amazing to see.

"It also means it needs more health care providers, so it's something I will be thinking about when I'm thinking about my future," he added. "I can see all the different services that are available here ... and there's a huge expansion of the hospital, which I'm sure will even bring more services."

Jay Wieler, who is from Winnipeg but has relatives in Winkler, was equally impressed.

"It was really good. It was a lot of fun after a year of just being in classes all the time to finally get out and see a clinic and be out there in the real world ... start meeting some patients and see how that plays out," he said.

"It's grown here quite a bit ... and it seems like the medical side of it has as well with the big expansion of the hospital," Wieler said, noting the scope of the practices and services available here now. "Winkler and Morden have a lot more options in terms of the pro-

grams and services here.

"This was our first big clinical experience, and it was really good," he

added. "I would definitely love to come back for our rural electives in the third and fourth years."

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Morris Legion marks Decoration Day

By Sean Conway

On Saturday, June 1, the Royal Canadian Legion Morris Branch No. 111 held a Decoration Day service at the Morris Cemetery.

"The event is an act of Remembrance for those who served and returned," said Legion member Tim Lewis.

"The service is to recognize those who went to war, returned home after the conflict and built lives for themselves and have since passed," added Bill Chalmers.

Fred and Sharon Kelesnik attend the event every year.

"Elmer and Bea Rempel were our neighbours in Morris. We come and tend the graves to prepare for the ceremony," shared Sharon.

"Elmer was a Normandy vet," explained Fred. "He suffered a wound, recovered, and went back into action."

"They were a second set of grandparents to our kids," noted Sharon. "We come and replace the tattered and faded flag, replace the solar light each year. We like to look after it."

A parade of Legion members and of-

ficers from the R.C.M.P. and C.S.B.A. began the service. The playing of the national anthem and reading of names from the cemetery, followed by the names from the cenotaph, gave cause to the gathering. Trumpeter Erin Hamblin from the Morris School played Last Post and Rouse.

The wreath-laying ceremony was followed by refreshments and a light lunch at the Morris Riverview Golf Course.



PHOTOS BY SEAN CONWAY/VOICE

Royal Canadian Legion Morris Branch No. 111 held a ceremony at the Morris Cemetery June 1 to mark Decoration Day.



Walking for Alzheimer's



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Salem Home in Winkler held its annual Walk for Alzheimer's May 28, with many of the personal care home's residents taking part. Staff and volunteers, including a class of Gr. 6 students from Emerado Centennial School, provided the manpower to push dozens of wheelchair-bound residents around the block to raise awareness and show support for the Alzheimer's Society of Manitoba. "We want to bring as many people as we can to go on this walk so that we can just show the community that even if people have dementia or Alzheimer's, they're still a person. They're right here in the present—and that is not any different than anybody else," shared director of community engagement Alana Thiessen. Community walks take place in Altona June 4 and Darlingford June 21.

Winkler COPP looking for more volunteers

By Lorne Stelmach

Winkler's Citizens on Patrol Program (COPP) plays a vital role in the community, and it is recognized with an annual grant to the volunteer organization.

Winkler Police Service Chief Ryan Hunt last week presented the \$4,500 to local COPP co-ordinator Dustin Brown.

The funding comes from the City of Winkler through the Winkler Chamber of Commerce to help cover costs of the long-running program.

"IT'S BEEN A LONG, GOOD RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CITIZENS ON PATROL, THE WINKLER POLICE, AND THE WINKLER CHAMBER."

"We use it to cover administrative costs, some equipment costs. Right now we're working on updating some of our patrol equipment and any meetings that we have come out of that budget as well," explained Brown, citing the examples of their volunteers needing things like flashlights and safety vests.

The program, which has volunteers patrol the community and advise police of concerns and incidents without directly getting engaged or intervening, has been operating in Winkler for close to 30 years.

"It's been a long, good relationship between Citizens on Patrol, the Winkler police, and the Winkler chamber. It's worked really well, and we appreciate the partnerships," said Brown.

"It's fantastic," agreed Hunt. "I always say it's nice to have that extra set of eyes out there. When the bad guys are driving around, they have to realize they not only have to watch out for a police car, but that car they just saw around the corner might be



SUPPLIED PHOTO BY LILI KRUSHEL

Winkler Police Chief Ryan Hunt presents Winkler Citizens on Patrol coordinator Dustin Brown with the \$4,500 the City of Winkler earmarks for the volunteer-operated program each year.

somebody that's reporting to the police.

"It's fantastic just to have that connection to the community too. Just all around, it's a good program," he added. "And Dustin's been running it now for quite a few years, and we appreciate working with him as well."

The program currently has about eight volunteers, so they would like

to add to their roster.

"We are currently looking for a few more members, so if anyone's interested ... as long as they're 18 and pass a criminal record check, we would like to hear from them," said Brown.

Anyone wanting to get involved can reach out to the Winkler chamber or head online to winklerpolice.ca for more details.

More Winkler measles exposure sites announced

By Voice staff

Manitoba public health officials are warning of yet more potential measles exposure sites in the Winkler area.

Anyone who was at the C.W. Wiebe Medical Centre urgent care entrance area on May 22 from 10:40 a.m. to 1 p.m., the Best Western Winkler indoor pool on May 22 from 7 p.m. to 1 a.m., the Winkler Sommerfeld Mennonite Church on May 23 from 11:30 a.m. to 6

p.m., or Moonlite Auto Body on May 23, May 26, or May 27 from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. is advised to monitor for symptoms of measles and, if they occur, isolate at home and contact your health care provider for direction on care.

As this illness is a highly infectious communicable disease that is spread through droplets in the air formed when coughing or sneezing, those affected are advised to call ahead before going to a clinic or hospital for care so

steps can be taken to reduce the exposure of other people to the virus.

Measles symptoms generally appear seven to 21 days after exposure and may include, initially, a runny nose, drowsiness, irritability, and red eyes. Small white spots may also develop on the inside of the mouth or throat.

Several days after the initial symptoms, a red blotchy rash appears on the face and progresses down the body.

Immunization is the only means of protecting people from contracting measles, health officials stress, urging people to contact their health care provider to ensure they are up to date on their shots.

You can learn more at www.gov.mb.ca/health/publichealth/diseases/measles.html.

As of May 24, Manitoba's confirmed measles case count was at 72—up from 60 the week before.

Improvements coming for Minnewasta trail

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Parts of the Stanley Trail at Lake Minnewasta are getting an upgrade this summer.

The Stanley Trail Association will be installing boardwalks along the pathway around the Morden lake thanks in part to funding from the Trans Canada Trail's Trail Care Grant Program, which has earmarked \$21,250 to proj-

ects across Manitoba this year.

"What happens on the trail, especially on the south side, is there's some hydraulics happening there, water coming in, so it's always soft and muddy," explained association member James Friesen. "So we're going to put some boardwalk sections in there so that walkers and cyclists can get across without damaging the trail and getting all muddy as well."

Work on the project will run throughout the summer.

In total, this year's Trail Care Grant Program awarded \$248,250 to 222 community groups across the country.

"The dedication of volunteers is at the heart of the Trans Canada Trail," noted Stacey Dakin, chief program officer at Trans Canada Trail. "These grants empower local trail groups to

continue their work in keeping the Trail safe, accessible, and welcoming for everyone, while building their volunteer networks to get even more people involved in this ongoing nationwide project.

"The hard work of volunteers across the country connects communities and contributes to a deeply meaningful shared national experience."

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

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PUBLISHER
Lana Meier



MARKETING & PROMOTIONS
Brett Mitchell



EDITOR
Ashleigh Viveiros



REPORTER
Lorne Stelmach



REPORTER
Lori Penner



REPORTER
Siobhan Maas



SALES
Gwen Dyck



PRODUCTION
Nicole Kapusta



PRODUCTION
Tara Gionet



DISTRIBUTION
Christy Brown

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• FAITH FOCUS

Songbirds

You may have noticed that at this time of year in our climate there is a choir concert taking place in many back yards and parks near our homes.

The daily practice starts early, has many voices, and for many of us can be a source of pleasure—a pleasant indicator of the season we are in.

After waking up several mornings to the approximately 4 a.m. concerts

outside my bedroom window I decided to do some more reading about birds as it might be discovered in the Bible.

Only some of those birds live in our neighbourhoods all year. In the Bible the birds mentioned can include “resident birds, summer breeders, winter visitors, or passing migrants.” The prophet Jeremiah listed small, medium, and large birds of different families.

Not all birds that we see or hear around us are members of the choir. Some have their own song. A couple years ago in our backyard we heard unusual frenzied bird conversations going on and then we

heard a deadly silence. Shortly after that silence began, a Cooper Hawk swooped in and landed in our bird-bath. It became clear to us that the birds had warned each other and that no bird was singing because they did not want to be eaten for supper!

Job indicated that birds are among the witnesses of the existence, wisdom and power of God, who created the world (Job 12:7-13).

Psalm 8 lists the birds of the sky as part of the created world which God has placed under our care as stewards of the earth. The opening verse and the closing verse of the Psalm declare “Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in the all the earth.” Psalm 84:3 speaks of how “Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her

Continued on page 8



By Randy Smart

Letters

REFLECTIONS ON VISIBILITY AND IDENTITY

In response to Inna's letter last week, “No room for hate” [*Voice*, May 29, Pg. 6], thank you for using the analogy of bright red hair—it helped me reflect on my own experiences.

As a young child, I remember teasing others who were different in some way: wearing glasses, having different hair or skin colour, or being from another country.

But as I grew older, many of those same children became my friends. I stopped noticing the differences that once stood out to me, and I live in peace with all of them.

But your analogy made me consider this: what if those same friends spent one month every year waving

their red hair in front of me, saying, “Look at me! Look at me!”? How long would it take before I couldn't help but notice their red hair again? Would it still be easy to live in peace, or would it create new tensions?

Thank you for making me think about how visibility and identity interact—especially in today's world.

**Andy Fehr,
Reinland**

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

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

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

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

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NEWS DESK:

Ashleigh Viveiros Editor
204-332-3456 news@winklermordenvoice.ca

Lorne Stelmach Reporter
204-823-2655 lstelmach@winklermordenvoice.ca

MAILING ADDRESS:

Winkler Morden Voice
Box 39, Stonewall, MB R0C 2Z0

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Big Bros bringing mega bike to Morden-Winkler June 21

By Lorne Stelmach

Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Pembina Valley is bringing the "mega bike" to Morden and Winkler this month.

It puts the fun into fundraiser for the organization, suggested executive director Jenelle Neufeld.

"It's a great team-building exercise," she said of the giant bicycle, which will be in Morden and Winkler on Saturday, June 21.

"It's a 30-person bike including the head driver, so it takes a lot of teamwork to get the bike going, and that's how we're kind of hoping that businesses will view it as well, as a team-building exercise for their employees."

The plan is for the bike to be in Winkler for the first half of the day followed by a lunch in Bethel Park before it then goes to Morden for the afternoon and a day's end wrap-up party.

The specially-designed bike was for-

merly used by the Heart and Stroke Foundation as a fundraiser. Its owner then reached out to the Big Brothers Big Sisters national organization to see if it was interested in putting it to use.

It offered a good opportunity for another fundraiser for agencies across Canada, Neufeld said, and is a fun way to support their various youth mentoring programs.

"Last year it did not happen, but now this year it's happening again," she said, noting they had brought it to Altona a few years ago and had Red River Mutual on board as a participating sponsor.

"This year we're really hoping to get more businesses from both Morden and Winkler" involved, she said.

Depending on the sponsorship level, businesses can get either the full bike or half of the bike.

"People can also sign up individually. They just have to raise a minimum



SUPPLIED PHOTO

This giant bike is coming to Morden-Winkler in a few weeks, and Big Brothers Big Sisters are looking for teams to fill the seats.

of \$250, but we're really hoping it's more of a business sponsorship kind of thing," Neufeld said. "It's just a great way to come together as a team. You get a lot of recognition through the bike. You can all dress in your business shirts ... you also get the

name of your business on the front of the bike."

To secure your seat on the bike, call 204-325-9707, email jenelle.neufeld@bigbrothersbigsisters.ca, or go online to pembinavalley.bigbrothersbigsisters.ca.

Regional museums receive welcome provincial funding

By Lorne Stelmach

A number of local museums are among 34 across Manitoba which recently received provincial funding.

The Manitoba government selected 32 initiatives to receive grants through the Community Museum Project Support Program. Beneficiaries in this region include the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame, Neuberghthal Heritage Foundation, Pembina Manitou Culture and Heritage Association, and the Pembina Threshermen's Museum.

The \$315,000 in overall funding was announced in advance of International Museum Day May 18, and a representative of the Pembina Manitou Culture and Heritage Association expressed his gratitude for the \$4,185 provided for restoration of historic photos and images that will go on display in the former La Riviere CPR station that was moved to Manitou to be restored.

"We've actually received funding from donors as well to do some of the work, so it's not just government funding," noted archivist Al Thorleifson, who noted they have close to 30 historic photographs and images

to go on display.

"What we're doing with this grant money is restoring a number of heritage maps and photos and posters," he said, citing a map of Canada from 1830 as one prime example.

"We have no idea how it came to Manitou, but it's been here for at least 40 years we know for sure," he said. "It's a major restoration."

Another valuable example is an old historic town site map.

"In the 1870s, these town site maps were actually drawn in India ink on cloth, and this one is of what is called Snowflake, but it's not actually the site of Snowflake," Thorleifson said. "It was off the settlement that was started on the Missouri trail just on the height above the Pembina Valley, and it was originally called Hamilton."

The grant is a welcome boost as they work towards welcoming the public to the restored station this year.

"Our hope is that the station is going to be open for the summer. We've got everything ready," he said. "It's going to become more of a gallery rather than a museum."

Another beneficiary is the Pembina

Threshermen's Museum, which received \$5,720 for a website redesign.

"It's great. It's very important for us to get the support," said board chair Marlene Loewen.

"We have been talking about redoing our website for a few years," she noted. "The one we were using was not really user friendly for handheld devices, so we decided to apply for a grant and see if we could get the money to redo our website."

"Hopefully, in the new year, we'll have a new website up and running ... hopefully this new one will be a lot better for people," she said, adding it feels good to see the province is stepping up to support museums.

"We were going to spend the money anyway, but this is a bonus for us that we didn't have to take it out of our account to do it," she added. "So we have other projects then we can use money for then."

The Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum received \$9,000 in support of building a collection database that will eventually be available to the public online through musetoba.ca.

"We haven't gone live with it yet. We're probably around 35 to 40 per

cent done," shared administrator/manager Jim Mutcheson. "It's very labor intensive. It's mostly done when we have time away from the regular schedule of things."

"It's going to be a great database for us," he said. "We hope to have it completed enough to get on to it and go live by fall perhaps ... it's huge for us."

Another recipient in the region was the Neuberghthal Heritage Foundation, which gets \$5,009 for its Stories and Threads: Indigenous and Menonite Women's Circles project.

"Museums are more than buildings and things. They're living bridges connecting us to our roots and to each other," said Sport, Culture, Heritage and Tourism Minister Nellie Kennedy in announcing the funding recipients.

"This program empowers Manitoba's heritage institutions to preserve our diverse stories and transform them into powerful tools for community building and shared understanding. When we honour all voices from our past, we pave the way for a more inclusive and united future."

The **Voice**

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What's *Your* story?

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Internship brings local history to life for Gr. 12 student

By Lori Penner

While most high school internships take place in busy grocery stores or bustling office environments, W.C. Miller Collegiate Grade 12 student Alyssa Ewankevich found her footing in a quieter, more contemplative space—one filled with yellowing documents, dusty photos, and stories waiting to be uncovered.

Since last fall, Alyssa has spent her Mondays volunteering at the Altona & District Heritage Research Centre, logging nearly 100 hours as part of the school's internship program. The experience, she says, has been both eye-opening and life-affirming.

"I've always been fascinated by the past," Ewankevich shared. "Just learning about how different people have lived, how cultures change over time—it's like we're all part of this huge, interconnected story. I love that we're all on the same planet, yet our lives are so different."

It was that curiosity that led her to the town's archives—a less conventional choice for a high school student, according to her teacher Kerry Enns.

"When Alyssa told me she wanted to do her internship at the heritage centre, I was a bit surprised," Enns admitted. "As a history teacher, I know how hard it can be to get students engaged in historical material. But Alyssa? She dove in. And this kind of experience can be the start of a very meaningful path."

The internship program at W.C. Miller allows students to earn up to two high school credits by spending approximately 100 hours in a real-world work environment. Enns said the goal is to help students gain relevant skills and explore potential career interests.

At the heritage centre, Ewankevich's work days were filled with tasks that would make any archivist proud. From cataloging photographs and organizing historical magazines, to inputting data and labeling books, she approached every detail with care and curiosity.

"I loved looking through the old photos—especially imagining what it must've been like living here in the

70s," she said. "Seeing images of Friezens when it had a stationery store in the mall, or when the streets were just being paved—it really made the past come alive."

Ewankevich, who moved from Winkler to Altona in 2021, said the internship gave her a deeper appreciation for her adopted hometown.

"I've discovered so many interesting details about Altona. I used to think of it as just another small town, but now I realize it's full of stories. That's what history is to me—people's stories."

And it wasn't just the content that made her time meaningful—it was the people.

"The volunteers here welcomed me with open arms. They were so kind and eager to teach me everything. It's just a really warm environment to be part of."

Volunteer Liz Wieler echoed that sentiment.

"Working with Alyssa has been a joy," said Wieler. "She's cheerful, detail-oriented, and so inquisitive. She understands that history isn't just facts—it's about people. She brought a fresh perspective that reminded all of us why we love doing this work."

Wieler explained that much of the centre's work involves documenting and preserving journals, letters, and materials from settlers who came to the area in the 1800s.

"Some of the stories we've uncovered—journeys from Russia and Ukraine, records of how communities were built from scratch—they're fas-



PHOTO BY LORI PENNER/VOICE

W.C. Miller Collegiate Grade 12 student Alyssa Ewankevich has loved her internship experience at the Altona & District Heritage Research Centre.

inating. And it's detailed work. Alyssa really took the time to understand what she was doing."

Volunteer Art Wiebe, who has been involved with the archives for over a decade, says Ewankevich's participation is part of a long-term vision.

"One of our goals has always been to connect with young people. We're thrilled W.C. Miller partnered with us on this. And Alyssa's been great—so much so that we've asked her to write something for next year's students, to help them understand what this internship can be like from a student's point of view."

Wiebe added that having students like Ewankevich involved brings value beyond the task lists.

"This kind of partnership brings generations together—teens and seniors learning from one another. That's what preserving history is all

about. We need to reflect on both the triumphs and the mistakes of the past if we're going to move forward."

Ewankevich agrees.

"Even stuff I didn't think I'd enjoy, like Mennonite history, became really interesting once I saw the people behind the names. It's important to learn where we come from—otherwise, we risk repeating our mistakes."

Although she hasn't finalized her post-secondary plans, Alyssa says her time at the centre has solidified her interest in working in a historical field—perhaps in a museum, or as an archivist.

"If I had the opportunity, I'd take it in a heartbeat," she said. "There's something so fulfilling about preserving the past so others can understand it."

> FAITH FOCUS, FROM PG. 6

young – a place near your altar." In that reading the Psalm is a celebration of the fact that we as people can draw near to God. "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God."

There are other Psalms (Old Testament songs) which make reference to the habit of songbirds we enjoy. In Psalm 104:12 we read "...The birds of the sky nest by the waters; they sing among the branches." Psalm 50:11 poetically expresses the voice

of God speaking about the created world and one of the exhibits in the text is "I know every bird in the mountains, and the insects in the fields are mine."

We need to acknowledge the mention of birds in the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament. In Jesus' day some people sold birds. "Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than

many sparrows." (Luke 12:6,7).

Sometimes we are preoccupied with what we think are the BIG questions when it comes to considering a meaningful relationship with God. Listen to the birds. God gave them a song to sing and he has given us the Bible—a source to discover the song of freedom and joy that we can sing for him by his grace every day.

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

Manitou Opera House endowment fund off to a great start

\$43,000 and counting raised already

By Lorne Stelmach

A special concert recently marked the start of building long-term support for the Manitou Opera House.

The May 24 show at the opera house featuring a group called 43 Collective came about as a result of the Pembina Manitou Area Foundation raising the idea of establishing a designated endowment fund for the historic building.

"It's to help look after the building for eternity, and we thought that was a great idea, so we ran with it," said Lindy Sharpe.

A number of volunteers in March started to canvas the community and area businesses for donations.

"We brought together \$43,000 plus for that night," said Sharpe, who noted the Saturday night concert was where they wanted to announce how

much they had collected.

"We offered the lure that if they donated a thousand dollars, they would get their name on a donor board plus 10 invitations to the concert."

By intermission that evening, the tally was sitting at around \$42,100.

"While I was sitting in the crowd during the second set, I got a text that someone would make up the difference to \$43,000," shared Sharpe. "And the irony of that was we hired a band called 43 Collective."

Although based out of Brandon, three of the band members have connections to Manitou, she noted.

"It had dawned on us the day of concert ... we thought wouldn't it be cool if we could get \$43,000 ... but now we're even beyond that because the donations are still coming in," Sharpe added.

She is pleased now to see this fund in place that will provide lasting benefit for what is not only a heritage building but also one that is a real community hub.



SUPPLIED PHOTO

The 43 Collective performed at the Manitou Opera House May 24. At the show organizers announced that \$43,000 had been raised for a new endowment fund created in support of the historic building.

"That's a huge success story for us. We have an endowment fund now, and those funds it generates will go towards the operational costs," said Sharpe. "It's my hope that maybe we could do some kind of fundraising concert once a year just so the pro-

ceeds of that feed the endowment fund to keep it growing."

"Just to see the support from our community and our area is just phenomenal. We want to keep live music and entertainment going here."

Golden anniversary for Montcalm Heritage Festival promises a jam-packed weekend

By Lori Penner

What started as a small celebration of local culture 50 years ago has grown into one of southern Manitoba's most anticipated summer events—and this year the Montcalm Heritage Festival in St. Joseph is pulling out all the stops.

The festival, hosted on the grounds of the Musée Saint Joseph Museum June 6-8, will mark its milestone anniversary with an expanded lineup of activities, music, food, and heritage demonstrations that celebrate the region's deep roots and strong sense of community.

"We really wanted to make this year's festival extra special," said Camille Fisette-Mulairé, executive director of the museum. "We've added more performers, more events, and a few surprises. It's going to be an amazing weekend for all ages."

The celebration kicks off Friday night with a community party at the Bridge Pavilion featuring live music from classic country artist Gerald St. Laurent. Guests can enjoy food and drinks on the picturesque historical village grounds.

Saturday offers a full day of family fun, starting with a hearty pancake breakfast at 8:30 a.m., followed by a parade at 1 p.m.

"We encourage kids to decorate their bikes and join in the fun," said

Fisette-Mulairé. The parade will include vintage vehicles, antique farm equipment, colourful floats, and lots of small-town charm.

Visitors can tour the museum buildings throughout the day, which showcase an impressive collection of regional artifacts and exhibits.

Saturday afternoon also features a wide variety of interactive events: children's games, a bean bag toss tournament, face painting, a treasure hunt, and the always-popular Prancing Pony Petting Zoo. A bouncy castle will keep the younger crowd entertained, while others can watch vintage tractors and engines in action, or take in artisan demonstrations in blacksmithing, carpentry, leather-smithing and more.

A special feature this year is the artisan showcase at the Parent Tourism Centre, where two local authors will offer readings.

"We want people to see history come alive," said Fisette-Mulairé. "Watching these craftspeople and machines in action brings a whole new level of appreciation."

As evening falls, festival goers can enjoy a BBQ supper with steak, salmon or chicken and all the sides for \$30—a highlight of the weekend that's become known for its incredible homemade flavour.

"St. Joseph really knows how to cook," Fisette-Mulairé laughed.

Entertainment continues through the evening with a mix of music and comedy. Comedian Mariette Kirouac will bring the laughs, followed by performances from Joe Creek Singers, Spence Traditions, The Wagons, Justin, Bandaline, Don Amero, and Kirouac herself. Fireworks are set to cap off the night, pending fire ban restrictions.

Sunday begins with a Roman Catholic mass at the local parish church at 9:30 a.m. followed by a traditional brunch served on the museum grounds.

"It's all the favourites people love," said Fisette-Mulairé. Brunch admission is \$15 for adults, \$5 for kids aged 6-12, and free for children under five.

Tours and children's activities will run throughout the afternoon. That evening, another BBQ supper—this time featuring ribs or chicken thighs—will close out the weekend, along with performances from Justin, Marie-Josée Clement, Paradize Road, Almost Famous, Les Barn Boys, and The Revisions.

Throughout the weekend, children's performer Marijo will be wandering the grounds, delighting kids with interactive shows, bubbles, and shaving cream fun.

MORE THAN JUST A FESTIVAL

Fisette-Mulairé says festival week-

end offers a special opportunity for former residents and families to reconnect with their roots.

It takes a lot of hands to bring the event together every year.

"For a town of just 55 people, it's amazing what we pull off," she said. "We have over 190 volunteers who come together to make this happen. It's an incredible show of community pride."

She attributes much of the festival's success over the years to long-time volunteer and organizer Renald Parent who passed away on May 15 at the age of 82.

Parent, she said, had a deep passion for history and was actively involved with the Musée St. Joseph Museum.

"He was a visionary, always working on projects to better his community. He will be missed."

The festival also honours the Métis, First Nations, and settler histories of the region, with programming that highlights cultural heritage and French traditions.

Campsites are available nearby for those wishing to stay the weekend.

"Everything outside of meals is free to attend," stressed Fisette-Mulairé. "It's a fun, affordable way to bring people together and celebrate who we are."

For more information or to book a campsite, call 204-737-2244.

Winkler Adopt-a-Plot looking for volunteers

By Ashleigh Viveiros

If you've got a green thumb and/or a bit of time on your hands to put it to good use, Margaret Penner wants to hear from you.

The former Winkler Horticulture Society head is involved in community beautification these days by coordinating the city's Adopt-a-Plot program, which sees volunteers take on the weeding and tidying of the various flower plots around town through the summer.

The program has been operating with great success for years, but saw about a dozen senior volunteers hang up their trowels this summer.

While Penner has found several new people eager to step into the vacant roles, there's still very much a need for more.

"I have 19 or 20 people right now, and I could definitely use five or six more to round it out," she said, noting they'd love to see more younger people get involved, as many of the

long-running volunteers are getting up there in years and are hoping to pass on the baton.

"The lady that does this particular patch here is 82 years old," Penner shared during a conversation at Parkview Gardens on Grandeur Ave. last week.

Volunteers are given a small section of garden to oversee and are asked to check in on it on a regular basis from now into August to pull out any weeds and report broken or dying plants.

The plots needing care are all over town—at Parkview Gardens, Winkler Park, the cemeteries, Greg Ens Memorial Park, and the Meridian Exhibition Centre, to name just a few.

It's been a blessing to be able to find some new people for the crew this year, Penner noted.

"I really do think there is some providential leading in this sometimes," she observed, sharing how a conversation she had at the MCC Thrift Shop with a newcomer from Belize

translated into the lady getting involved with Adopt-a-Plot. "She was saying, 'I wish I could volunteer somewhere ... I don't speak English that well, but we have a farming background' ... she and a friend took a section to do together."

Another newcomer couple, this time from Ukraine, came with a background of working in a greenhouse and were eager to do some-



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Winkler's Adopt-a-Plot program gives residents the chance to get their hands dirty in helping with community beautification. Ruth Ens has been tending to this stretch of flower beds in Parkview Gardens for over two decades.

thing to give back to their adopted community. They are now overseeing the care of all the flower beds on the Winkler Arts and Culture Centre grounds.

"And she has a friend that is going to come and help too," Penner said.

One of the program's longtime volunteers is Ruth Ens, who has tended to a stretch of flowers in Parkview Gardens for about 25 years.

"I wanted to be part of the beautification of this area," she said, noting she and her husband lived in a house adjacent to the gardens for decades before downsizing last year. Although they now call another neighbourhood home, volunteering with the Adopt-a-Plot program remains a great way for her to continue gardening (her new place doesn't have a yard) while also giving back.

"It becomes not a job, but a joy. You come out here and you get to see the flowers, how they progress," she shared, noting weeding in the initial few weeks after planting takes the most time, but after that it's mainly a matter of staying on top of things. "As the flowers grow they fill in the spots and it's mainly the edges you have to watch, so it's not that much work."

She estimates she spends well under an hour a week tending to her small plot. It's time well spent, Ens stressed, and she'd recommend getting involved to anyone who is able to do so.

"It makes your day," she said. "I would challenge people to take a turn at it. Or even when you come by on your walk, if you see a weed, pull it. We're all working at this together. It's not just a few individuals that are doing it—it's all of us. Pick up a piece of garbage, pull a weed and you'll feel so much better."

The flower beds have all been planted and so volunteers are needed as soon as possible to cover the remaining unfilled plot assignments.

If you're not gardening-savvy but are willing to learn which weeds need to be pulled, Penner would welcome your help. A lack of gardening tools also should not be a deterrent to someone wanting to get involved, she stressed, noting arrangements can be made in that situation.

"If they're at all interested, contact me," she urged.

Penner can be reached via a call or text to 204-362-2552 or an email sent to pennmd2@gmail.com.



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'A Bug's Eye View of Neurodiversity'

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A new exhibit on display in the upstairs gallery at Winkler Arts and Culture is designed to give you a unique perspective on life—in more ways than one.

Insect Inside: A Bug's-Eye View of Neurodiversity launches at the Park St. gallery this Thursday, June 5. An opening reception featuring artist Brooklyn Thiessen is planned for 7 p.m. that evening.

This interactive exhibition features several larger-than-life insect sculptures, tactile stations, and specially-arranged lights to enhance the sensory experience.

It's meant to give viewers a small sense of what it's like to live a neurodivergent life, explains Thiessen.

"I wanted to kind of make people feel what it's like to have a different perspective," she says. "I am autistic myself and I've always been fascinated in bugs and I find there's a lot of connections between neurodiversity and bugs."

For example, the difference in how people view moths versus butterflies.

"Moths are often seen as flighty, jumpy, unpredictable," Thiessen observes. "They're seen as kind of less-than because they're different, when really they serve the same purpose as butterflies. But butterflies get the good rap and moths get the bad one."

Many of the giant bugs on display serve as similar metaphors.

"Like the caterpillar: it's about transformation, metamorphosis, finding yourself and becoming your authentic self," Thiessen says.

The show also incorporates sensory experiences.

"One thing I really wanted to incorporate was different aspects that are interactive, like the sensory bins—it gives people stuff to play with, tactile things that you can explore and have fun with in a safe environment,"

Thiessen says, adding there's also special lighting features that are meant to not overstimulate viewers—something many neurodivergent people struggle with.

There are also artworks that represent how a person living with autism might view time or emotions. Other pieces encourage people to feel the varied textures or play seek-and-find for specific elements within the art.

"I really wanted people to really experience and play with everything," Thiessen says, noting each piece will have a bit of an explanation beside it on how it ties into neurodiversity.

For Thiessen, who heads up Winkler Arts and Culture's after-school programming, this show is a dream come true.

"I've always been into art, it's been a special interest of mine," she shares. "If I were talking to my young self, I don't think I would ever have thought that I would be an artist having my own exhibit in a gallery like this. I'm really following my dreams."

Insect Inside will remain on display until July 5.

PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Artist Brooklyn Thiessen with some of the giant bugs she made for her "Insect Inside" exhibition at Winkler Arts and Culture, on display until July 5.



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Food bank addresses donations shortfall

By Sean Conway

Board members of the Red River Valley Food Bank held a special meeting May 27 to develop a plan to reduce costs.

The year-end financial statements for 2024 showed that there was a decrease in donations of \$16,033 and an increase in expenses by \$19,263 compared to 2023. Total number of visits was up by 14.8 per cent and the cost of groceries per visit was up 11 per cent.

"Donations in 2024 were less than donations in 2023, and the number of clients have increased," said director Pat Rempel. "Realizing something had to change, we called a board meeting."

Clients can use the services of the food bank every two weeks, going home with a hamper full of food assembled by volunteers.

The organization started in the basement of a local church in the early '90s. One of the original founding members is Rosalie Fulford, who remains an active board member today.

"The goal was to give people something to tie them over," Fulford said. "It was never meant to supply a full grocery order. When we started, you were lucky to get Kraft dinner and tomato soup. Later on the hampers got bigger as there was more money through fundraising and donations."

The meeting organizers invited Pat Schmitke,

owner of the Morris Bigway grocery store, to get his input on ways to cut costs. Bigway supplies all items purchased at cost and donates meat items every week.

"Your goal should be to get as much food as you can for each dollar spent," Schmitke urged the board. "Purchasing generic products instead of name brand and making bulk purchases when items you require are in the weekly flyers are two ways to reduce food costs."

The meeting focused on the client selection list—which gives clients some agency on what food their family most needs/wants—to determine what items the food bank will continue to stock. Due to their cost, they removed 17 items from that list.

The committee also put the restriction "for children only" on some items and reduced the quantities of others that will continue to be distributed.

"It was hard to cut items," said board member Liz Giesbrecht, noting they did try to take a measured approach. "Reducing coffee from two cups to one cup allows us to still provide coffee, just not as much."

Facing lower donations, the board has developed a campaign to promote community giving at their annual fall food drive. The food drive will use a promotional bag sponsored by Sun Valley Coop, Red River Seeds, Super Thrifty, Rempel Insurance,



PHOTO BY SEAN CONWAY/VOICE

Pat Rempel, Judy Brown, and Liz Giesbrecht at work in the Red River Valley Food Bank, which is dealing with rising need and fewer donations than in the past.

Albright Ventures, Morris Area Foundation, Fehr's Cabinets, and realtor Cheryl Demarcke to get the message out about the growing needs of the agency.

A fresh corn sale event planned for August will kick-off the food drive. A cash donation to the food bank will get you a promotional bag full of corn. Bags will be available at local businesses for distribution.



PHOTOS BY LORI PENNER/VOICE

The Community Exchange (TCE) in Altona brought people together Saturday with their first Block Party. The event included fundraising lawn

Block party fun



games and a dunk tank, with chances to dunk Police Chief Dan Defer, Altona CAO Dan Gagne, Rhineland Reeve Don Wiebe, and TCE executive director Paul Peters. The celebration also included cotton candy, bouncers, games, and chalk art for the kids. Far left: Penny Gilson took flight on the bouncers. Middle: Ada Wiens chose a butterfly at the face painting station.



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2025

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

INVITATION



DATE: 10 June, 2025
TIME: 7:00PM
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Speaker Mathew Norris RN
Manager Health Services
Morris General Hospital

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getinformed

Road 30 NE collapses in RM of Morris, near Rosenort

By Siobhan Maas

A section of Road 30 NE southwest of Rosenort has collapsed into the Little Morris River, between the dike and River Road South.

"About two weeks ago we were first notified of what presented as a road slide on Pleasant Valley Road that quickly became worse," shared R.M. of Morris Deputy Reeve Mervin Dueck. "On Friday the 20th, things took a turn with the whole road collapsing. The pavement has dropped into the hole and a geyser continues to push water up."

With higher water levels in the Morris River due to recent rains and no indication of erosion until the road slide took place, the Rosenort Fire Department shared via their Instagram account that the river water slowly ate away at the road from underneath.

Dueck described the collapse as the width of the road—approximately 100 feet, 75 feet wide, and 15-20 feet deep—when he visited the site in the middle of last week.

"Even though I haven't been there in a couple days, the road continues to collapse into the hole," he shared.

On a site visit Sunday evening, the washout seems to have stabilized somewhat, although cracks are seen in the road surface indicating the potential for future collapse.

The Morris River backs along many Rosenort properties. The road closure is impacting two homes located between the washout and the diversion.

One impacted resident who declined to be named isn't too worried about the closure.

"The representative spoke to us in anticipation of rain and has an eye on things. The ground is so dry right now that even a bit of rain shouldn't be much of problem."

"Gravel on the diversion has created a roadway for the residents to get out," assured Dueck. "We would need a 2-3 -inch rain to impact the route right now."

However, this solution remains a temporary access fix for the affected residents and no help for those who travel into Rosenort via this route.

The R.M. has reached out to Manitoba Water Infrastructure and Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure for aid.

"Unfortunately, on Wednesday, we have found that the province is washing their hands of helping us," Dueck said. "They say the Morris River is not a provincial waterway. They were quick to respond and we are very disappointed."

"There are lots of steps in the process and many regulations. It's a mess. They are making it as difficult as possible to make it possible to fix the road and to fund it."

Dueck estimates the repairs could reach between \$500,000 to \$1 million dollars, including hiring engineers and consulting



PHOTOS BY SIOBHAN MAAS/VOICE

Officials say they're working on long-term solutions for this hole that opened up on Road 30 NE near Rosenort last week.

the Department of Fisheries, as the river is a fish habitat.

"We are hoping to get higher up the political food chain to get results," he said. "The R.M. is still working on recovering another half million in provincial funds owed following flooding in 2022. No one can budget for this."

Dueck reminds all affected residents that "no can expect a quick a fix. We can't dump gravel into hole. [Long-term solutions] will need to be engineered and [we will need to]

find a way to fund it.

"This will most likely be a winter project, not something fixed in a month."

Both the R.M. and Rosenort Fire Department ask residents to avoid the area and take an alternative route in the meantime.



Public Notice is hereby given that Enbridge Pipelines Inc. (Enbridge) intends to conduct the following Pesticide Program from June 1, 2025 – November 15, 2025, to control noxious weeds on Enbridge ROW's, temporary workspaces, stations, and various facilities along the Enbridge Mainline and Bakken corridors.

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- Indaziflam
- Chlorsulfuron
- Fluroxypyr
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The **Voice**

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PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

There was plenty of family fun Saturday as the Morden Family Resource Centre hosted its annual Teddy Bear Picnic. Originally planned to take place in Morden Park, the event was moved indoors to the Access Event Centre due to the heat and smoky conditions. The picnic supports the centre's fundraising efforts, but it was also about having a blast with all the games and activities, including a number of stations where all manner of stuffed toys got some tender loving care from local health care professionals. If you missed out on the fun in Morden last weekend, the Winkler Family Resource Centre has its Teddy Bear Picnic this Saturday, June 7, in Winkler Park from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Stanley man killed in two-vehicle collision

By Voice staff

One man was killed in a two-vehicle collision in the RM of Stanley last week.

Emergency crews were called to the intersection of Road 5 North and Road 25 West near Osterwick at approximately 6:15 a.m. on Monday,

May 26. They found two SUVs in the south ditch. The lone driver of one of the vehicles, a 41-year-old man from Mor-

den, was taken to hospital with serious but non-life-threatening injuries.

The driver of the other vehicle, a 64-year-old man from the RM of Stanley, was pronounced deceased at the scene.

The initial investigation shows the 64-year-old was travelling east on Road 5N when he collided with the other SUV, which was travelling south on Road 25W. There was no stop sign in either direction.

Pembina Valley RCMP along with RCMP Traffic Analyst and Criminal Collision Investigation Team (CCIT) continue to investigate.

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Gretna girl needs votes to advance in Jr. Ranger contest

Top 15 voting deadline is June 5; daily support needed

By E. Antonio

Seven-year-old Gemma from Gretna has made it to the second round of the Jr. Ranger Competition and now needs community support to keep going. The online contest, open to nature-loving kids aged

4 to 12, offers a grand prize valued at US\$40,000, including US\$20,000, mentorship sessions with wild-life expert Jeff Corwin, and a feature in Ranger Rick magazine.

To stay in the running, Gemma must place in the top 15 of her group by June 5. Anyone with a Face-

book account can vote once daily at www.jr-ranger.org/2025/gemma-40db.

Bonus votes can also be cast by making a donation to the National Wildlife Federation through Gemma's voting page.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Gretna's Gemma, 7, hopes to win the Jr. Ranger Competition, which carries a prize package worth US\$40,000.



Scan the QR code to vote for Gemma.



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Winkler teacher named MB Teachers' Soc. vice-president

By Lorne Stelmach

A Winkler teacher is adding to his already impressive resume with his recent election as vice-president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS).

Joel Swaan sees it as being particularly important to have rural Manitoba represented at the table with MTS, which he noted has not had a rural-based president for something like 40 years.

"There's rural voices at the table as far as the provincial executive," he noted. "Half of our teachers in the province are teaching in rural Manitoba, and the farther away that you get from the central hub of resources and decision-makers, the harder it can be in the classroom. My goal is to try to bring that perspective and learn more about that perspective."

Swaan determined early on in his teaching career that elementary grades were where he wanted to focus because he saw the opportunity to be a role



SUPPLIED PHOTO
MTS vice-president Joel Swaan

model, especially in the arts.

He and his wife moved to southern Manitoba 14 years ago, and he has not only served as a teacher in Garden Valley School Division but also run school safety patrol programs and directed junior high musicals at Parkland Elementary School.

Since moving to the area, he has played euphonium with the Prairie Red Coats Band, sung with Prairie Singers, and acted with Candlewick Productions and Flatlands Theatre in addition to serving six years on the Flatlands board. His current volunteer work is as a Scouts Canada volunteer leader with 1st Carman Beavers Colony.

Swaan and his wife live in Morden where their three children attend French Immersion.

Swaan has been involved with the local teachers' association since arriving in Winkler, beginning as a collective bargaining committee school representative. He then added education finance chair to his portfolio, replacing it with collective bargaining chair before becoming vice-president and then president in 2016.

He served as half-time president for four years until stepping back when he was elected to the Manitoba Teachers' Society provincial executive in 2020. He returned to the presidency full-time in January 2023, having spent just under 20 years in the classroom.

His relationship with the Manitoba Teachers' Society also began the year he moved here.

"My journey initially began with a need for me to know what was going on and to know that decisions were being made in another room that were going to affect my teaching career and a desire to be part of that, to find out how the decisions were being made and how the leadership was governing," said Swaan.

"It eventually moved into more of an advocacy role, thinking about the people who weren't in the room and making sure that we found ways to support the teachers who couldn't all be there ... leadership takes on responsibility to take care of others.

"It moved very much into how can I make sure that other people are getting the help that they need," he added.

His involvement as an advocate for teachers has continued to grow, and he sees MTS as having an important role to play in two key areas.

"It's a union, but it's also a professional organization, so the two pieces are taking care of teachers as far as the economics, the finances and health plans and those kinds of things," he said. "It's also around curriculum support, resources in the classroom, advocating with government. It's both of those sides of the profession, which to me is just really a holistic way of looking at people as far as what do they need to do their job."

Pembina Valley Rendezvous coming up June 21-22

By Lorne Stelmach

The annual Pembina Valley Rendezvous and Trade Fair has been going for almost 25 years now, and the annual celebration of everything connected to the trapping trade continues aiming to help keep some of these pioneer era traditions alive.

The event hopes to not only show the old ways and how it all used to be

done but hopefully offer some education as to what still goes on with the trapping culture.

"We're just trying to demonstrate a little bit of the history of the way that people used to live back in the day," said lead organizer Dennis Rex, noting it is something of a lost lifestyle, although some people still make their livelihoods from it. "It's more so up north than down here, but there are

still quite a few down south here too."

The Rendezvous takes place in Darlingford June 21-22 on the grounds of the former school which now houses the local heritage museum.

It features a variety of demonstrations, competitions, and other activities. Some of the feature events include outdoor seminars and demonstrations on such skills as blacksmithing, flint knapping, and trapping and skinning and competitions ranging from archery to knife and tomahawk throwing.

Most of the demos will happen on the Saturday, which also includes the fish fry dinner at 6 p.m. Tickets for the dinner are \$25 for adults, \$10 for age 6 to 12, and free for kids five and under.

There are also a couple draws happening Saturday and Sunday and hopes for a live band Saturday afternoon. As well, there will be pancake breakfasts each morning. The activities conclude with a Sunday morning church service at 10 a.m.

There will be a variety of vendors located in the curling rink. Spots are available for \$20, with an extra \$10 to rent a table. Anyone still interested in a table rental can call or text 204-823-1903 or email pembinavalleyfurcouncil@gmail.com.

"Tailgating is allowed, and we're hoping to have some sort of concession booth," Rex noted. "Buskers are welcome as well, and there are some free unserviced camping spots with free admittance.

"We hope we can pull off a bit of an archery competition," he added. "The ladies fry pan toss is usually on Sunday, and we hope to have a few outdoor demonstrations."

There will be two draws for rifles, with Saturday being a card draw and Sunday being tickets that can be purchased for a chance to win a 50 calibre muzzle loader.

Rex hopes overall it can be a fun learning experience for people who come to take in the event.

"We are trying to show there is humane trapping for the furs and stuff," he said. "It is a renewable resource if we look after it properly.

"They can't use some of the traps that they started out with," he noted. "Things have really changed ... and that's kind of what our trapping demos are for too."

For more information, you can contact Rex at 204-246-2202 or check out the Pembina Valley Rendezvous and Trade Fair page on Facebook.



VOICE FILE PHOTO

The Pembina Valley Rendezvous and Trade Fair takes place in Darlingford in a few weeks. It will feature a variety of demonstrations and competitions around the trapper lifestyle.

sports & recreation



PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Winkler hosts Zone 4 track meet



The Zone 4 track meet took place at Garden Valley Collegiate in Winkler last week, with athletes from across the region competing. Clockwise from top left: The boys 100 meter junior varsity final; Vanessa Krahn of Altona leads the pack in the girls 80 meter junior varsity hurdles; Northlands Parkway Collegiate's Taya Wall in the girls varsity discus event; fellow Nighthawk Stanley Funk in varsity javelin; Morden Collegiate's Ky Jenner in the girls high jump pentathlon; Collin Bartel of Rosenort in the varsity boys 100 meter hurdles.



Storm fall 1-0 to Lucania

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Storm are 0-2 in the early goings-on of Division 1 action in the Manitoba Major Soccer League.

The team dropped a 1-0 decision to Lucania United FC2 May 27 in Winnipeg.

Coming up, Winkler takes on Force SC in Niverville this Sunday, June 8 ahead of a three-game home stretch against AK Academy June 15, Grant Park Sporting Club June 22, and Bonivital2 June 29. Game time is 5 p.m. all three Sundays at the 15th St. field.



PHOTOS BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Above: Winkler's Liam Giesbrecht slides in safely at home, beating the tag by Altona pitcher Colin Waldner on the wild pitch. Left: Waldner gets tagged out at second by Winkler's Bill Fehr, who went on to throw it to first for the double play. The Whip won it 4-2.

By Voice staff

In Border Baseball League action this past week, the Winkler Whips downed the visiting Altona Bisons 4-2 Friday night.

It followed up on Winkler's 3-0 loss to the Pilot Mound Pilots a few nights earlier.

Altona, meanwhile, posted a 14-14 tie with the Carman Cardinals earlier in the week and went on to fall 10-9 to the Baldur Regals on Sunday.

Morden's Mud Hens also lost their lone game of the week, falling 7-3 to the Cartwright Twins Friday night.

This week, Winkler and Altona got a rematch on

the Bisons' home turf Tuesday. Morden was also slated to host the Cardinals that night. Results were not available at press time.

The Whips then host the Mud Hens Friday night while Altona plays in Pilot Mound and the Mud Hens play in Carman Sunday.

Rick Wiebe Memorial Weekend is June 13-15

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The annual Rick Wiebe Memorial Weekend takes over the Rocking W Ranch grounds northeast of Morden June 13-15.

The event is returning to its home location after a few years in Carman, shares Rocking W Barrel Racing Productions CEO Dusty van der Steen, and they're expanding its scope to include more activities than ever before.

"We have moved it back to the family farm, and we're so excited to have it back home," she says. "And this year for the charity event itself, we have added a little more to it."

"We're having the charity barrel racing, as we always do, but we're also having charity team roping and breakaway roping events," van der Steen says. "It just makes it to where everybody in the family, if they're rodeo families, can all participate."

It's something her late father, Rick Wiebe, the weekend's namesake, would definitely have gotten a kick

out of.

"My dad supported my barrel racing, planning events and competing, but he also really loved team roping ... he was a team roper at heart," shares van der Steen. "So I'm pretty pumped that we can add this to his memorial event."

The charity team roping, breakaway roping, and barrel racing take place throughout the day on Saturday, June 14, with buckles, saddles, and cash up for grabs as prizes.

Funds raised that day will go to support South Central Cancer Resource, an agency van der Steen stresses helps so many local people through their cancer journey.

"They're not government-funded, so it was really important for us to support them as they support cancer patients and their families when they need it."

Also on that weekend are Friday evening's Pride of the Prairie barrel races featuring Manitoba-bred horses and then the Dash for the Cash open



VOICE FILE PHOTO

This year's charity event will include barrel racing, team roping, and breakaway roping.

and junior barrel races on the Sunday.

Spectators are welcome to come watch all the fun. Admission is free

and there will be food vendors on site.

For full event details, head to rockingw.com.

PV Orioles, Altona Bisons post MJBL losses

By Lorne Stelmach

It was a tough week for both the Pembina Valley Orioles and Altona

Bisons.

The Orioles came up short in all three of their games this past week to see their record fall to 2-6, while the

Bisons lost two more to remain winless through eight games.

Pembina Valley started with being humbled by a 13-0 shutout at the

hands of the St. Boniface Legionaires last Wednesday. The Sunday double-

Continued on page 20

Local teams compete in baseball, softball provincials

By Voice staff

Several local high school teams competed at the provincial baseball and softball championships over the weekend.

On the boys side, both the Morden Collegiate Thunder and the Garden Valley Collegiate Zodiacs were 2-0 in the round robin to finish first in their respective pools.

Morden then got knocked out of the running in the playoffs by falling 13-7 to the Steinbach Sabres. GVC, meanwhile, then downed the Neepawa Tigers 20-1 before coming up short against the Sabres 4-3 in the semi-fi-

nals. Steinbach went on to lose the gold to the Garden City Gophers 13-1.

On the girls side, the Northlands Parkway Collegiate Nighthawks finished first in round robin action with a 2-0 record while the Morden Thunder came in third at 0-2.

The Thunder then fell to Churchill 4-2 in the first round of playoffs, while the Nighthawks went on to down the Olympiens 4-2 to earn a seat at the semi-finals against St-Joachim/Réal-Bérard. They lost that match 12-2 (the co-op team went on to win gold) and then fell 5-1 to the Stonewall Rams in the third-place game.



PHOTOS BY LANA MEIER AND JO-ANNE PROCTER/VOICE

Above: Brielle Thiessen connects with the ball in her teams' 5-1 loss to the Stonewall Rams in the MHSAA softball provincials bronze medal game.



Garden Valley Collegiate's Haider Friesen fires one across the plate in the Zodiacs' 4-3 loss to the Steinbach Sabres May 31



Morden Thunder's Tyler Fehr safely steals second base in his team's 13-3 victory over the Gooselake/Grandview Raiders in baseball provincial action in Grosse Isle.

Winkler native hoists KHL's Gagarin Cup

By Voice staff

Winkler native Byron Froese hoisted the Gagarin Cup with his team last month in the Kontinental Hockey League.

Froese, who could not be reached for comment by press time, has been playing with Yaroslavl Locomotiv in the Russian league this season.

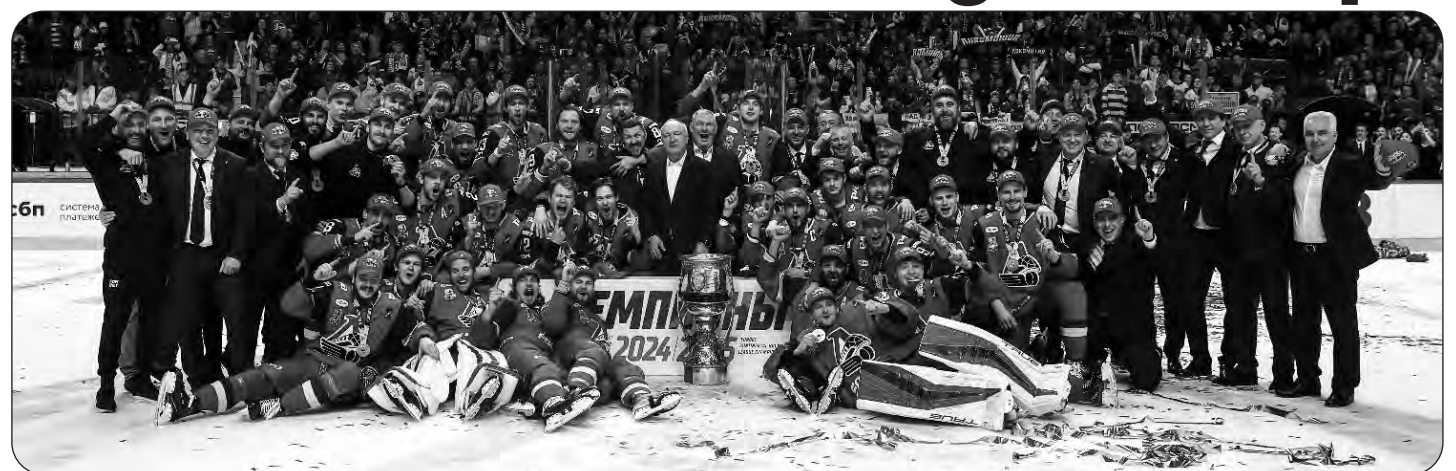
The 34-year-old forward previously suited up for several NHL teams after getting drafted by the Chicago Blackhawks in 2011. Last summer he signed a one-year contract to play abroad with Locomotiv.

On May 21, the team won its first KHL championship by downing Chelyabinsk Traktor in five games in the

finals. The last match was a thrilling 2-1 overtime victory for the Yaroslavl team.

Froese played 61 games with Locomotiv this season, contributing 17 goals and 16 assists. In 19 games

in the playoff run, he had four goals and four assists en route to the team's championship win.



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Ride For Dad plate unveiled to support prostate cancer fight

By Annaliese Meier

Motorcyclists in Manitoba now have a new way to show their support in the fight against prostate cancer.

Manitoba Public Insurance has unveiled a new Ride For Dad specialty licence plate, with proceeds directed to the Manitoba Prostate Cancer Support Group. The announcement was made Saturday during the annual Ride For Dad kickoff event in Winnipeg.

"Working with groups like Ride For Dad, and the many others we've partnered with over the years, to create specialty licence plates helps generate critical funding for charities in the province," said Satvir Jatana, president and CEO of MPI. "We are proud to support communities across Manitoba and groups like Ride For Dad and MPCSG, who are making a direct impact on the lives of people impacted by prostate cancer."

The plate — the 15th design available under MPI's Specialty Plate Program — will cost \$70, with \$30 from each sale going to MPCSG. The organization offers education, awareness

and support to Manitobans affected by prostate cancer.

Justice Minister Matt Wiebe, who is also responsible for MPI, praised the partnership.

"Prostate cancer affects thousands of Manitobans, and our government is pleased to partner with MPI and unveil the Ride For Dad specialty licence plate in support of this very important cause," said Wiebe. "These plates are one way Manitobans can show solidarity in the fight against cancer and support life-saving research and education right here in our province."

Since its inception, the Specialty Plate Program has raised more than \$5.5 million for local causes.

Ride For Dad co-chair Moe Sabourin said the plate is already generating excitement in the motorcycle community.

"The announcement of an official Manitoba Motorcycle Ride For Dad licence plate has the motorcycle community buzzing and will support prostate cancer awareness and education throughout the province," Sabourin said.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Officials gathered to unveil the new Ride For Dad specialty licence plate, which will support prostate cancer awareness and education in Manitoba. Pictured, from left: Justice Minister Matt Wiebe, Kirk Van Alstyne, Maria Campos, Carmen Nedohin and Moe Sabourin.

> ORIOLES/BISONS, FROM PG. 18

header then saw the Orioles lose 5-3 and 11-4 to the Elmwood Giants.

Altona meanwhile were edged 7-5 by Interlake Friday and then fell 7-4 to St. Boniface Sunday.

Against the Orioles, St. Boniface drove home three runs in the first inning then followed that with three more in the second and then five more in the third before closing things out with two runs in the fourth with the game being called after five innings.

Josh Dyck took the loss in allowing eight runs on seven hits through two and one third innings. Hits overall were 13-3 in favour of St. Boniface.

The Orioles came out of six innings clinging to a 3-2 lead in game one with Elmwood, but the Giants then scored three runs in the top half of the

seventh for the win. The Orioles had a slight 7-6 edge in hits, and Sam Blatz gave up five runs on six hits through six innings.

In game two, the Giants sealed the deal with five runs on three hits in the top of the seventh. Brayden Fehr surrendered one hit but four runs over two and two-thirds innings, and Karsten Peters and Jared Hildebrand each had two hits.

Altona and Interlake were tied at five after five innings, but the Blue Jays scored one more run in each of the sixth and seventh innings. Hits were 8-6 for Interlake, and Haden Klassen pitched four innings in relief for Altona and gave up four hits and one run.

The Bisons then outthit St. Boniface

7-6, and their comeback after trailing 7-1 going into the sixth inning came up short. Liam Geirnaert went two for three and picked up two RBIs.

The Orioles were to host the Bisons Wednesday then visit Winnipeg South Friday. Altona then is to host St. Boniface for a Sunday doubleheader.

Plett honoured for 15 years of service



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Winkler city councillor Marvin Plett (second from left) was honoured recently at the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' annual convention in Ottawa for his 15 years of service as a board member.

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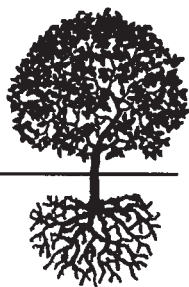
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The **Winkler Morden**
Voice

X

CROSSWORD

- CLUES ACROSS**

1. Marsh plant

6. Southern constellation ("The Peacock")

10. Foginess

14. Home to Fools' Day

15. Absence of the sense of pain

17. Popular November holiday

19. Consume food

20. Buddy

21. Long-haired goat-antelope

22. Japanese honorific

23. Actor Malek

24. One point south of southeast

26. Illegal acts

29. As fast as can be done

31. Prevents harm to young

32. Exclamation of satisfaction

34. African nation

35. Slow-moving animal

37. Oh, goodness!

38. A team's best pitcher

39. Cleanser

40. Radioactivity units

41. Expectorated matter

43. Cover a wide range

45. The central area of a church

46. California capital (abbr.)

47. Dutch painter Klaver

49. 007's creator

50. Impression of dishonesty

53. Northeastern sports rivalry

57. Cloths

58. Stalin's police chief

59. Hostelries

60. Bitterly regret

61. Anwar __, Egyptian statesman

- CLUES DOWN**

1. Satisfy

2. European health advocate

3. Expression of annoyance

4. Strong liquor

5. Large red deer

6. Holder of less common religious beliefs

7. West Indian shrub

8. Family of proteins

9. Wealthy, influential business leader

10. Low spirits

11. Approves food

12. Monetary unit of Iran and Oman

13. Mary __, cosmetics

16. Expressed in pithy maxims

18. Relaxing spaces

22. The NFL's big game

23. Proof of payment (abbr.)

24. Starchy preparation of dried orchid tubers

25. Indicates near

27. Minneapolis suburb

28. Herring-like fish

29. Doctors' group

30. Pouches

31. Bread dipping in sauce

33. Commercials

35. A reminder of past events

36. Affected by injury

37. Geological time

39. Stationary part of a motor

42. Brings together

43. Of sound mind

44. Personal computer

46. Without (French)

47. A bank might give you one

48. Agricultural testing organization

49. A small island

51. Murres

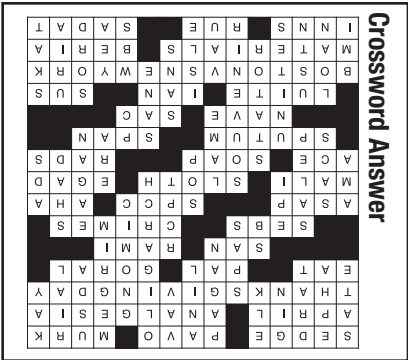
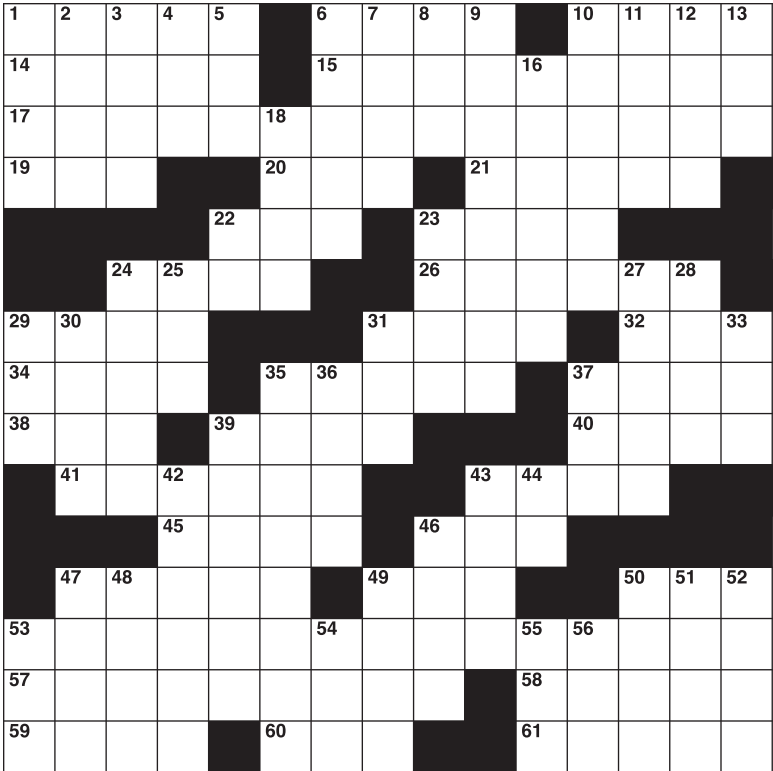
52. Card game

53. A measure of human health

54. Australian airline (abbr.)

55. One point south of due west

56. Affirmative



FARMLAND TENDER

FARM LAND FOR SALE BY TENDER

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Franz Hoepfner Wiens Law Office
Box 99, 1 – 880 J 15th Street
Winkler, MB R6W 4A4

LAND:

North ½ of SE ¼ 36-3-5 WPM excepting public road plans 587 MLTO and 1580 MLTO (78.17 acres)

South ½ of NE ¼ 36-3-5 WPM excepting Plan 74564 MLTO and public road plans 587 MLTO and 1580 MLTO (73.15 acres)

(The above sketch is for illustrative purposes only)

CONDITIONS OF TENDER:

1. The parcels of land described will be sold "as is".

2. Tenders must be received on or before 5:00 PM on June 19, 2025. The successful bidder will be informed by 5:00 PM June 23, 2025.

3. Highest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

4. Preference will be given to tenders submitted for both parcels. However, tenders for a single parcel may be considered.

5. Possession is November 1, 2025.

6. Tender must be accompanied by a refundable deposit of \$10,000.00 (cheque made payable to Franz Hoepfner Wiens Law Office).

TERMS OF SALE:

1. The successful bidder(s) will be required to enter a formal agreement covering terms and conditions of sale.

2. Possession is not authorized until acceptable arrangements for full payment are made following acceptance of tender.

3. If the balance of the accepted tender is not paid on the due date, the deposit paid may be forfeited as liquidated damages.

4. Successful bidder will be responsible for real property taxes commencing January 1, 2026.

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For further information contact Franz Hoepfner Wiens Law Office at 204-325-4615 – fhwlaw.ca/tenders.

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OBITUARY



Edward (Ed) Carl Youdan
July 3, 1946 – February 24, 2025

Edward (Ed) Carl Youdan was born on July 3, 1946 in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, England, to William Edward and Patricia Youdan (née Duffy).

Ed grew up in England with his parents and two brothers, David (Christine) and Martin (Lynn). In 1977, he moved to Canada with Mary and their two children, Gareth and Amanda.

After the divorce, Ed met Ginger (Hilda) at Sahara Nights in Regina. They married on November 13, 1992 and together they raised foster children, Ryan, Davis, and Jessica (Robert). They cherished their time traveling in their trailer and creating lasting memories.

After retiring from Inco, Ed and Ginger settled in Morden, where they enjoyed welcoming friends and family to their home, often gathering on their big deck. In the late summer of 2024, they moved to Homestead, where they embraced the community and participated in many social activities. Sadly, Ginger passed away in September 2024.

Ed will be deeply missed by his stepchildren Audrey (Ken), Robert, Sharon, Stacy (Ed), and daughter-in-law Erin (Gareth).

He was a loving grandfather to Nikita (Vitaliy), Aslan, Mathieu (Alicia), Jacob, Darcy, Eric (Ben), Alanna, Casey (Hamoon), Max, Joshua, Jordan, and Jade (Zack), and a proud great-grandfather to Veeka, Nikola, Ataliyah, and Ariyah.

Ed was predeceased by his parents, Ginger, and grandson Joey.

His loved ones and extended family will forever cherish his memory.

Service will be held on June 16th at St. John the Evangelist, 2 Academy Dr. Morden, Manitoba, at 10:30 a.m.

In remembrance donations can be made to Canadian Cancer Society, Lung Association, or to a charity of your choice.

OBITUARY



Ken Heppner
April 16, 1969 – May 23, 2025

Ken was born April 16, 1969 to Ed and Diane Heppner in the Altona Hospital. He grew up on the family farm and after graduating high school he moved to Altona, eventually buying his own house and living there for a few years.

He eventually moved to Winnipeg, where he worked as a Red Seal Journeyman carpenter. He worked on many large projects in the city, as site supervisor and was proud of his career. He was a hard worker and met many friends along the way.

He eventually purchased a small house near Morris where he lived for the past few years. He worked less as his physical and mental health declined.

He was admitted to the hospital last October and eventually returned to his home community. His health stabilized for a short time and actually improved enough for him to start to enjoy visits from family and friends.

Suddenly, his health declined and he passed away Friday, May 23 at the Altona Memorial Health Clinic.

He leaves his mother Diane Heppner; brothers Wayne Heppner and Gerry (Tammy) Heppner and sister Debi Schroeder (Jack); as well as three nieces, two nephews and one great-nephew to mourn his passing.

He was predeceased by his father Ed Heppner and brother Rick Heppner.

A big thank you to all the hospital staff at St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg, Boundary Trails Hospital in Winkler and Altona Hospital during the hospital stays for my son, Ken Heppner.

-From Diane Heppner and family

OBITUARY



Harry Neufeld

Harry Neufeld, formerly of Hochfeld, passed away May 27, 2025 at his residence in Salem Home at the age of 79.

He is survived by his wife Anne Neufeld (nee Klassen), his son Roger (Helen), grandchildren Mike (Kristen) and Nicole, and great-grandchild Myla, one sister and two brothers.

He was predeceased by his parents, Herman and Maria Neufeld, as well as four brothers and four sisters.

A funeral service was held on Sunday, June 1, at Winkler Sommerfeld Church, with the burial taking place at Hochfeld Cemetery.

Wiebe Funeral Home, Winkler
in care of arrangements
www.wiebefuneralhomes.com



OBITUARY



Ernest Peters

Ernest Peters, age 70, of Winkler, Manitoba, passed away on May 18, 2025 at the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia with family by his side.

Ernest, also known as Ernie, was a man of faith who loved making others laugh with his jokes and stories and cared deeply about his family, friends, colleagues and community.

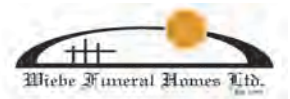
He is survived by his loving wife Irene Peters; daughter Tanya Derksen and partner Manju Sharma; son Derek Dexter and wife Sherriann, kids Raine and Cadence; son Clinton Peters; and daughter Tracy Friesen and husband Tyler, kids Ava, Charlotte, and Isabelle, plus his father John I. Peters and siblings Jake, John, Anne Enns, Harry, and David Peters and their families.

He was predeceased by his mother Katherina Peters, brother-in-law Frank Unger and his wife Marge, and nephew Mark Peters.

A memorial service was held on Thursday, May 29, 2025 at the Bethel Bergthaler Mennonite Church in Hochfeld at 2 p.m. with a private interment at Westridge Memorial Gardens prior to the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations in memory of Ernest can be made to Boundary Trail Health Centre Foundation.

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Students celebrate culture with food, fun, and shared stories

By Lori Penner

École Parkside School in Altona was bursting with colour, music, and delicious aromas on May 28, as Gr. 7-8 students took the lead in hosting “Celebrate Us”—a morning dedicated to honouring the many cultures represented within the school community.

This immersive event gave students the opportunity to learn from each other by experiencing cultural “parties” that showcased everything from traditional dances and games to festive foods and personal stories. Each student was invited to attend two different cultural celebrations throughout the morning, followed by a powwow demonstration at École Elmwood School in the afternoon.

Parkside teacher Kat Braun Liu-Asomua said the idea for the day evolved from a similar event held a few years ago.

“We started this to be immersive,” she explained. “At our earlier Culture Day, we tapped into the stories of parents and families—asking where

they came from and what brought them here. This year, since we were partnering with Altona area schools for the powwow, we decided to focus on celebration and asked the students: ‘How do different cultures celebrate?’”

The response was enthusiastic. Nine student-led cultural parties were planned and hosted, including French Canadian, Samoan, Mennonite Easter, two Filipino celebrations, two Eid parties, and a Quinceañera. Each group worked collaboratively to decide which traditions, foods, and games they wanted to share.

“We encouraged them to think about what makes their culture special to them,” said Braun Liu-Asomua. “Some of

the students were born here, while others moved to Canada later. This was a way for them to reconnect with their roots and also step into the adult role of hosting—at 12 and 13 years old, that’s a big ask. But they did a fantastic job.”

The day also served as a lesson in what Braun Liu-Asomua calls “cross-cultural literacy.”

“WE ENCOURAGED THEM TO THINK ABOUT WHAT MAKES THEIR CULTURE SPECIAL TO THEM.”



A dancer from Sons of the Drum performs for students from Elmwood, West Park, Parkside, Rosenfeld, and Gretna schools during a cultural demonstration at École Elmwood School on May 28, featuring performers from across Treaty One Territory.

PHOTO BY LORI PENNER/VOICE



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

École Parkside School students got to share their cultures with each other at the Altona school’s Celebrate Us festivities last week.



“They worked hard at understanding how to approach others with respectful curiosity,” she said. “Nobody’s asking them to change who they are. This is about sharing: This is who I am. This is what’s normal to me. It’s an invitation to be curious and learn about each other.”

Each party reflected a unique cultural lens. Mika Martonito hosted not one but two Filipino celebrations—one for Independence Day and one for a traditional birthday party.

“For Independence Day, we did a traditional dance using two wooden bamboo sticks,” said Martonito. “You have to avoid the sticks while dancing to the beat. It was really fun to share our history and how we fought for independence.”

Helala Al Hussein hosted an Eid al-Fitr celebration, which she described as “a celebration for all Muslim countries and Syrian families.”

She explained, “After fasting for a whole month during Ramadan, we celebrate for three days with food, family, and friends. I’ve never hosted a party that big before and I really enjoyed it.”

Greg Aristizabal and his group highlighted the Quinceañera—a Latin American tradition celebrating a girl’s transition from childhood to womanhood.

“It’s like a sweet sixteen but bigger,” Aristizabal said. “We had chips, salsa,

cake, and gummy bears. I learned that during the party, a group of 20 to 30 people will often dance with her.”

Myla Froese helped host a Mennonite Easter celebration, complete with homemade paska buns and a spirited round of Dutch Blitz.

“We also shared a bit about why we celebrate Easter,” she said. “One of my friend’s grandmas made the paska.”

Braun Liu-Asomua said the students not only had fun but grew from the experience.

“They brought leadership and authenticity,” she said. “They solved problems, communicated across differences, and celebrated each other’s stories. And everyone was well-fed from foods around the world.”

After lunch, students walked to nearby École Elmwood School, where they joined their peers from other local schools in experiencing a powwow demonstration—another powerful example of cultural celebration and connection.

Braun Liu-Asomua said the day was a meaningful reminder that in a diverse world, understanding and respect go a long way.

“Our students work together now, and they will as adults. The more they learn about each other now, the better prepared they’ll be to build respectful communities in the future.”