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THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2026
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Bruce Penner from Back Alley Cycle was Mr. Fix-it at ACAN's active transportation event last week. For more, see Pg. 14.

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VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE

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Winkler Community Fdn. distributes \$255K

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The Winkler Community Foundation gathered Thursday to distribute its 2026 grants, totalling \$255,961.

The selected community programs and projects run the gamut in their fields of focus, encompassing everything from accessible housing improvements and health-care equipment to recreation infrastructure and cultural initiatives.

"Today brings together the people who give, the people who do the work, and the impact that connects it all. And that's something worth celebrating," observed foundation executive director Myra Peters.

The annual grant reception is about celebrating not just the impactful work of the foundation's recipients, but the journey taken to make these grants possible.

"It's about partnerships, because none of this happens on its own. These projects exist because generosity meets action, and then you take it and you run with it," Peters told the assembled recipients. "As a foundation, we have the privilege of stewarding gifts that have been given over



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Representatives from nearly 40 different community groups were in attendance at the Winkler Community Foundation's annual grant reception last week to share \$255,961 in grants.

many years. Gifts from individuals, from business, from families who really care about this community. Those gifts are invested and every year give back again and again."

The grants are issued from the interest generated by the foundation's various endowment funds, which includes its broad-in-scope community fund as well as several more funds focused on specific charities or causes. The original donations are never

granted out, but instead give back in perpetuity.

"It's pretty amazing when you think about it," noted Peters. "A gift made once keeps giving year after year after year."

Over the past three decades, the Winkler Community Foundation has distributed over \$3.6 million to a host of community projects and initiatives.

Among the recipients this year was Central Station Community Centre,

which received just over \$10,000 for its poverty reduction project.

"This project is going to make a huge impact on the future of people and the poverty that people experience, or hopefully don't experience, in the future," said Krista Rempel, social impact director with the community centre. "We're looking at creating real systemic changes, but also approaching poverty from the ground up."

Continued on page 5

TOWN OF ALTONA CELEBRATES

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 1 2026

ALTONA CENTENNIAL PARK

1:00 PM - 18U AAA SOUTH CENTRAL VS MIDWEST - ACCESS FIELD

1:30 - 9:00 PM - FREE SWIMMING AT ALTONA AQUATIC CENTRE

4:30 PM - CHALK DRAWING CONTEST

4:00 - 8:00 PM - FOOD TRUCKS

CUCINA FILIPINAS & THE BIG DAWG SMOKIE

4:00 - 7:00 PM - KIDS ACTIVITIES

INFLATABLES, PETTING ZOO, SCAVENGER HUNT

4:00 - 7:00 PM - CANADA DAY PHOTO BOOTH

5:00 - 7:00 PM - FREE KIDDIE CARNIVAL

6:30 PM - FREE WATERMELON + ROLLKUCHEN

7:30 PM - OPENING CEREMONIES

7:45 PM - LIVE BAND - 2ND ST BAND

8:45 PM - MANITOBA SUNFLOWER QUEEN QUEST INTRODUCTIONS

9:00 PM - LIVE BAND - TO BE DETERMINED

10:00 PM - CLOSING REMARKS

10:00 PM - FIREWORKS (AT DUSK/WEATHER DEPENDENT)



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10:45pm	O Canada
11:00pm	Lakeside Fireworks

Morden
morden.ca/canada-day

Pride community, allies march in Winkler

By Ashleigh Viveiros

A bit of rain couldn't dampen the spirits of the hundreds of people who came out Saturday to celebrate Winkler's first-ever Pride march and rally.

The Parkland hill was filled with a sea of rainbows as members and allies of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community gathered together in solidarity and support.

In addition to a barbecue, vendor market, stage performances, and a short march around the area's walking paths, several speakers also took the stage to share their stories and reflect on the importance of seeing Pride celebrated in the Pembina Valley.

Jack Knight is a transgender man living in Carman who feared being his authentic self in the small community.

"I hid, I was ashamed, I treated being queer as a hush-hush topic," he said, noting he was afraid that "one wrong move and someone could hurt me. I believed I was alone."

Things changed when Carman hosted its first Pride celebration last year and Knight saw the outpouring of support the event received.

"I realized that I was doing nothing by hiding who I was," he said, explaining the importance of living his own truth so that others can feel safe to do the same. "Simply seeing another queer person can do wonders for who you are, and that's why Pride is so important, especially in places like Winkler."

"Places like Winkler stay more conservative and less accepting towards gay people because no one speaks up," Knight stressed. "If we

don't have Pride here, no one will, and things will stay the same. And if things stay the same, people believe that they still have to hide when they don't. Queer people are everywhere. Always have been and always will be. You aren't alone, you are loved, and you are exactly who you're supposed to be."

For Sebastian Saunders, born and raised in Winkler, coming back home to take part in a Pride celebration was an emotional experience.

"When you're taught that who you are is against God, you grow up kind of hating yourself," he reflected.

"You try to hide who you really are and fit the mold of what is pure and right. So for almost 20 years of my life I tried being a perfect Christian girl."

But doing so never felt quite right. Saunders knew in his heart that he was a boy from a very young age but couldn't reconcile those feelings with the teachings of his childhood.

"I felt like a freak," he said, noting he never felt at home in his body nor with the personae he had create to protect himself. "I would fabricate crushes on boys my age so the girls my age and I had something to talk about ... it felt like every fake crush I talked about, the more I was chipping away at the real me and becoming a shape and a form that looked nothing like the real me."

A cancer diagnosis as a young adult left him reevaluating his life.

"Through it all, the scariest part of it was that I could die when I wasn't fully myself. My family and my friends could be burying a person they didn't

"YOU AREN'T ALONE, YOU ARE LOVED, AND YOU ARE EXACTLY WHO YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE."



PHOTOS BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

The 2SLGBTQIA+ community came together for the first time in Winkler Saturday to hold a march and rally in celebration of June as Pride Month.

really know at all," Saunders said. "I promised that I'd live freely, be my true self, and live my truth if I survived."

"I am who I needed to look up to as a kid. I am who I needed to see live a happy and authentic life when I was a kid," he said of his life today, stressing that "representation matters."

"Winkler is my hometown, so I feel

super proud and happy that finally we are having a Pride event here," Saunders said. "This is one of the coolest things I think I've ever been a part of. It feels like a very full circle moment ... honestly, I'm talking to my little self in the crowd being like, 'Hey, buddy, you're going to be okay. Don't die. You need to be here. You are important. You are loved.'"



Carman's Jack Knight (left) and former Winklerite Sebastian Saunders (above) share what seeing Pride celebrations taking place in their communities means to them.

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Manitoba School Trustee Elections

get informed

Syrian family building new life in Morden

By Lorne Stelmach

A Syrian couple from the middle eastern sect of the Druze community have been building a new life here with the support of a Morden family.

Luay Abou Rashid and Yara Hamza normally about now would have been celebrating Eid al-Adha, or the Festival of Sacrifice, but it is not a time of celebration for them right now given the level of suffering among their people back home.

"This year it was no happiness," said Rashid, who came to Canada in 2023 but was originally from the southern Syrian province of Suwayda. "It was very different and painful for us.

"Because of the last events in Suwayda, our community decided not to do any festivals and only to make some gathering for candle lighting and remember them," he said. "Before 2010 ... Syria was a beautiful country ... but the regime was very dictatorial, very hard."

"Everything changed ... I lost everything in two days," said Hamza.

"I was very moved when I heard

about the decision of the Druze leaders not to celebrate Eid in solidarity with families who had lost homes and loved ones," wrote Sally and Keith Marsolais, who have welcomed and supported the couple here. "When I think about how difficult holidays can be for people who are grieving, and what it might mean for an entire community to pause celebrations and grieve together, it feels like such a purposeful and meaningful act of care and solidarity."

Rashid had lived in Damascus before the troubles led him to leave and return to Suwayda. He then went to Lebanon and then a bit later was in the Democratic Republic of Congo before returning to Lebanon while searching for a way to leave and start a new life somewhere else.

It was through an organization called Talent Beyond Boundaries that he was able to then immigrate to Canada. Hamza was able to join him here just last year.

The couple reflected on how the violence in Syria and for them particularly in Suwayda has impacted nearly

every family to some degree, so what is usually a time of celebration instead has become a time to remember and honour those who have been killed and who are suffering.

"I am trying to support them as much as I can," Rashid said of



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Syrian immigrants Luay Abou Rashid and Yar Hamza with Sally and Keith Marsolais.

his family and friends back in Syria, where they continue to face "a lot of pressure, no jobs, everything is restricted."

They continue to pray and hope for peace in their homeland.

"I hope next year will be better for people and for Syria to be more stable and the people to like each other more," Rashid said.

"I hope that we finish all of this," said Hamza. "I hope that we return, love each other as we were in the last years, forget all these difficult times with each other, rebuild our city again.

"We need to return to our lives."

Rashid and Hamza voiced their thanks for the love and support they've received from the Marsolais family. The Marsolais, in turn, share that hosting the couple have broadened their worldview significantly.

"Our experience in sharing our home with Yara and Luay has been incredibly positive," they say. "Before this, we didn't know anything about Druze people. We had never even heard of them, so there were definitely assumptions we had made without realizing it. Because of that, it has been really meaningful to learn more and to better understand where Yara and Luay come from.

"One of the most rewarding parts

has been realizing that simple acts of kindness and inclusion can truly make a difference, not only for Yara and Luay here but also for their family and friends back home who are still suffering. Hearing that our support here in Morden has had an impact on their family back home has been very meaningful and rewarding for us.

"As parents with adult children ourselves, I can only imagine how worried their families must have been to say goodbye and have them move so far away. To hear we have lightened their burden of worry even just a little, is such a gift," they continued.

"If anything, this experience has reinforced for us how important it is for people to open up their homes and their lives to others, to step outside of their comfort zones and to see how much we can learn from one another. We believe people everywhere want the same basic things - a good life, safety and opportunity for their families—no matter where they come from," they continued.

"We have also seen first hand how difficult it is to leave everything behind and start over somewhere new. At the same time, we have been incredibly impressed by the work ethic and determination of this family. We have seen how committed they are to building a future here while still caring deeply for and supporting loved ones back home.

"This experience has also made the world feel much smaller. We now pay close attention to the news from that region, and whenever something happens there, we immediately think about the people we know and care about," the Marsolais concluded. "We count ourselves lucky to be able to play a part in helping a family build a new sense of home here in Morden."

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Dunston community set to begin major historical upkeep project

By Lorne Stelmach

A tight-knit rural community outside of Morden gathered Sunday for an annual event that brings people together at a historical site.

The community picnic was held at the Dunston United Church, which is the last remaining building from what long ago was the community of Nelsonville.

"Nelsonville was at approximately 1,000 to 1500 people when the railway came through ... but the railway went and bought land at Morden and put the railway through there," said committee chairperson Grant Spencer. "So after that, the majority of the buildings got moved to Morden ... and there was other buildings that even got moved to Miami.

"So this building has got a lot of

memories to it, and it has been kind of a centre for the Dunston community."

The spring picnic often draws upwards of 100 community members, but people can use the site year round as well.

"We now have a baseball diamond ... the land's been donated to us by Miller Farms, and in August we're going to put up a backstop in there, so people can come and enjoy it at other times, other than the picnic time," Spencer shared. "Families can come in here and have a picnic and have a baseball game and enjoy it."

And the Dunston community is now raising funds to do a vital project for the upkeep of the building.

"We've done a bunch of fundraising to be able to lift the church off its old foundation," said Spencer. "It was built in 1895, and the foundation was



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The Dunston United Church annual community celebration took place Sunday.

fieldstone, so we're in the process of having that lifted off, and a new foundation will be put underneath it, and there'll be a new step and a wheelchair ramp, and then the building will be scraped and painted and be fresh and ready to go again.

"It's a fairly major project," he observed. "It's about a \$55,000 job, and we had \$20,000 from the community, from the local people in the community raised, and then between other government programs, we had \$7,000 from the Miami and Area Foundation; we had \$10,000 from the community builders program, RM of Thompson,

and we had \$2,500 that we just received from the Morden Thrift Store.

"We're quite, quite excited to get that support, and then we had a heritage foundation step up and we're getting a grant for \$23,000 from them, so we have the funds in place," he continued. "The work is going to start on July 6. They're going to lift the building off and start working on the foundation."

Spencer noted there are a lot of families in the area with strong connections to the site.

Continued on page 7

> GRANTS, FROM PG. 2

The funds will specifically support programs that help individuals and families improve their financial literacy, find both emergency and longterm housing, and better their mental health.

Without funding like this, this work couldn't happen, but the grant means so much more, Rempel said.

"It's pivotal, because financially we need the money to do all this, but the encouragement and the support of knowing that your community is behind us, that means a lot. It means we're moving in the right direction and our community believes in what we're doing."

Regional Connections Immigrant Services received \$10,000 as well, which executive director Steve Reynolds shared will be used to help more newcomers achieve their Canadian citizenship.

"The last couple of years, it's become pretty apparent how unstable immigration can be and the system can be," he said, noting obtaining citizenship provides newcomers with a greater sense of stability. "It's a big step in their integration, and there's a lot more of interest in doing that now."

The foundation's grant will allow them to hold citizenship classes to help newcomers prepare for the test, and to hold community celebrations for those who successfully

obtain their citizenship.

"We wouldn't be able to do this like at all without this funding," Reynolds said. "It's not part of our regular programming. It's a real gap with the immigration system changes, and so this helps us address that gap and promote citizenship locally."

Winkler Bible Camp received \$5,000, which they'll be using to purchase a long-needed ice machine.

"We do 1,200 meals a day during the summer camp, and what we've done previously is buckets of water in the freezer, which take up tons of space, to cool the water so we can have not lukewarm water," shared executive director Dale Wiebe, noting it will be in action in just a couple of weeks.

Seeing all the different organizations in attendance at the reception was heartening, Wiebe noted.

"It's a lot of money coming right back to helping people do good," he said. "Southern Manitoba is such a benevolent area, and so just seeing it all happen and the amount of people, all the different community groups here today, makes you realize all the good work that's being done."

For the full list of grant recipients, head to winklercommunityfoundation.com.

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OUR SISTER PUBLICATIONS



• **FAITH FOCUS**

Reflecting on one's core values

The principles you believe are true and important will guide your life. If you were to summarize what you believe your core values are in two sentences what would you say?

The Gospels record three conversations between Jesus and individuals who were asking him questions about what was most important. In Mark 12:28-34 we read:

“One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had giv-

en them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?” “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

“Well said, teacher,” the man replied. “You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, ‘You are not far from the kingdom of God.’ And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.”



By Randy Smart

The answer Jesus gave was rooted in the teachings already taught in the Old Testament passages of Deuteronomy 6:4-7, and Leviticus 19:18. The core values are to love God and to love your neighbour.

I love the concept of learning to love God with our whole person—our heart and soul, our mind and strength. We feed that part of our person as we seek a wholesome awareness of God from a time-tested source (the Bible), and guidance through regular counsel from the Scriptures. These values can be fostered when we spend time with people who also are seeking to learn and understand what it means to love God with all of our person. Walking into a church building does not automatically teach us to love God. We need to listen and learn about the two core values so that we can practice in private, and also live it

Continued on page 7

Letters

FOCUS ON THE GOAL

MP Branden Leslie, recently in Altona for a Passport Clinic, has made clear his stance on the industrial carbon price. He argues that as it goes up so will the cost of living, which echoes concerns many of us share.

Yet as MP Leslie has also pointed out, the real drivers of food inflation are global: wars in Ukraine, Iran and other places. Add to that emissions from the climate crisis itself, which fuels extreme weather: this year's Super El Nino is forecast to result in widespread famine and global food insecurity. The carbon price's impact on oil sands? A mere Timbit per barrel—dwarfed by the \$20

per barrel spike from the Iran conflict.

Instead of opposing carbon pricing, we should ask: What are other cost-effective ways to cut emissions and transition away from fossil fuels? Clean energy investments. Polluters pay for their emissions. The Groceries and Essentials Benefit to help those most vulnerable.

Industrial carbon pricing isn't the villain—it's a tool. And like any tool, it works best when we focus on what we're trying to fix: human-caused climate change.

**Virginia Cail,
Altona**

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The power of words

There are two dozen countries worldwide that have more than two official languages.

For example, Bolivia has 37 official languages, India has 22, Zimbabwe has 16, and Switzerland has four. Even within Canada Nunavut has four official languages, although federally we have two: English and French.

I was watching the installation ceremony for Canada's 31st governor general, Louise Arbour (I didn't do it on purpose, it showed up in my feed), and noticed there were portions of the ceremony in Anishinaabeg and Inuktitut alongside English and French.



By Peter Cantelon

This makes me wonder if Canada should be considering adding Indigenous languages as part of a new selection of official languages.

I realize there are people out there who still groan at the reality that we have two despite the fact that there are people all over the world who speak numerous languages without difficulty.

In many ways native English speakers are in the minority as predomi-

nantly unilingual people. In fact, linguistic research shows that English speakers are the most unilingual on the planet. We have had it easy. Everywhere we go on our travels others have taken the time to learn English.

Of course, this reflects historic colonial power but there's no reason why we shouldn't consider adjusting. After all, there are numerous benefits to knowing more than one language. Studies have shown that people who speak more than one language have greater cognitive performance, improved executive function, improved literacy in children, better access to employment and more.

I wish my grandparents had passed along their language. My grandparents on my father's side spoke Yiddish and Ukrainian. My grandmother on my mum's side spoke Italian. Often, I stood in awe of her when I was a child and she would stop to chat with a friend in Italian out on the street.

When I am out in the community locally, I envy the people speaking Low German, Russian, Spanish, Hindi, and Tagalog, etc.

As part of our nation's somewhat slow and ponderous movement toward reconciliation perhaps including Indigenous languages as official languages should be considered. One of the biggest benefits here would be the preservation of the languages and thus supporting an important part of Indigenous cultures.

Frankly, the only reason I know the

French I know is mostly due to bilingual packaging on food and other products. This was in the era before cell phones when you would read a shampoo bottle or toothpaste while "spending time" in the bathroom.

Making Indigenous languages official would increase the likelihood of adding them to school curriculum as electives. Imagine being able to enroll a child in Cree Immersion for example. In Manitoba where the Indigenous population is nine per cent this would definitely be welcomed by many.

Given Nunavut's example, Man-

itoba need not wait for the federal government to make a move. As a province we could make Indigenous languages official. Still, it would be far better for this to be a national choice.

At the very least this is a conversation government should be having. Maybe consider sending this column along to an MP, MLA, or other elected leader along with your own thoughts. Who knows, perhaps this isn't a far-fetched idea. Maybe we can make it a reality.

Miigwech bizindawiyeg. Thanks for listening.

> DUNSTON, FROM PG. 5

"My dad had 11 siblings in his family, and all of them went to church here, so it means a lot to our family," he said. "Our family's been farming here for 130 years or so, and most of the people that are coming here are families that were settled in here, so this matters a lot to people in this area."

"And we knew we needed to do something about the foundation, so we took it upon ourselves get working on that."

Spencer and others are motivated to keep up the building and the site.

"It is important to me ... and that's why we want to make sure that the

building stays structurally sound," he said. "Seven or eight years ago, we put brand new shingles on the roof, and we want to keep the church in good shape."

And there are some more plans in the works.

"Next year, we hope to have a veterans memorial site in here," Spencer said. "Right now, I've got four flags from the Morden Legion from members that lived here ... and next year we hope to have a memorial. We hope to have that all inside the church next year."

"This is important. It's a wonderful spot."

> FAITH FOCUS, FROM PG. 6

out in our public life.

Learning to love our neighbour should be a continuing area of skill development. We need to be consciously aware that there are others near us who are also walking through many life experiences. No two stories are quite the same, but the opportunity to care for one another is always present. How is God equipping you to be a helper and blessing to those

people whose lives cross your path?

We need to learn to love God in every realm of our life. When we do that God will open our spiritual eyes to recognize the ways he is equipping us to internally and practically learn to graciously show love and kindness to our neighbours.

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

Letter policy

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

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

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

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

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RRC Polytec Winkler campus celebrates class of 2026

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Red River College Polytech's Winkler campus honoured the hard work of over 50 graduates at its 2026 convocation June 10.

Held at the P.W. Enns Centennial Concert Hall, the ceremony saw diplomas and certificates handed out in the school's various business management, community services, education, and health sciences programs in addition to several mature student high school diplomas earned through the local Adult Learning Centre.

College president and CEO Fred Meier congratulated the graduates for making it to this milestone.

"I know that the path that you've taken to get to the moment that we are in today wasn't always an easy one. I'm sure there were many challenges that you had, there were many sacrifices that you've had to make," he said. "But through it all, you persevered."

The grads will begin their careers in an ever-changing world, Meier reflected, but time at the college has prepared them for it.

"We are living in a time of rapid transformation, where digital skills and communication and collaboration are more important than they have ever been before. The pace of



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Alumni Arlen Thiessen, who works as a police constable in Winkler, addresses the class of 2026 at the RRC Polytec Winkler campus convocation last week.

change may feel overwhelming, but it also offers an incredible potential for innovation and for impact. It's clear that the education that you've received has prepared you to not only adapt but to also thrive in this environment."

He urged the graduates to never stop learning, to embrace changing technologies, and to never underestimate the power of human connection.

"It's your curiosity, your willingness to learn, and your ability to connect with others that will truly set you apart."

After the presentation of certificates and diplomas, Arlen Thiessen

welcomed the former students to the alumni.

Thiessen studied carpentry at the college in 2008 and later returned to pursue a diploma in business administration.

"Both experiences had a lasting impact on my life," he shared, observing that his "path has not been a straight line, but every step has helped shape who I am today."

After many years working first hands-on in construction and then behind the scenes running the business, Thiessen decided it was time to pursue a new challenge. He became a constable with the Winkler Police Ser-

vice in 2023.

The skills he learned at RRC Polytech are ones he continues to use in his new career, Thiessen reflected.

"Looking back, one of the most important lessons I learned at RRC was the value of adaptability. The education I received in the practical, real world were directly connected to the challenges I faced in my career.

"It taught me that your skills are never limited to one job, one industry, or one path," Thiessen said. "If you're willing to keep learning and keep growing, those skills can open doors you may never have expected. Being an RRC Polytech graduate has given me a strong foundation at every stage of my career and my journey.

"From the job site to the office to public service, it helped me build confidence, problem-solving skills, and the ability to work with people from all walks of life. Those lessons continue to serve me every day."

Thiessen's advice to the graduates is that they remain open to any opportunities that might present themselves.

"Your career may not unfold exactly the way you had planned, and that is not a bad thing," he stressed. "Keep learning, asking questions, work hard, and do not be afraid to take a new direction."

Prairie Dragonfly cuts ribbon on new home

By Lorne Stelmach

A Morden business that offers a variety of health and wellness related services celebrated its expansion into a larger space last week.



PHOTO BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Cutting the ribbon on the Prairie Dragonfly's new location at 131 7th Street.

The Prairie Dragonfly held an official opening and ribbon cutting Thursday at its new location at 131 7th Street.

Owner Kaylee Meakin, who is a registered massage therapist and spinal flow practitioner, said it was exciting

to see the growth in terms of what they can provide for the community.

"My dream was always to create a community of wellness and specifically for new beginnings for moms and families," said Meakin, who specializes in prenatal and postpartum care. "I wanted to create a space where it was welcoming for new families where they can get the support that they need for whatever part of their life journey that they're in."

She is working with registered nurse Kendra Guevin from Two Peaks Consulting, who is a certified lactation consultant, as well as Sidney Sinclair, who is a certified counsellor.

"I also carry some baby gifts in the front, so that was kind of just a side project that I came up when I had young kids of my own ... there wasn't very many options for quality baby gifts in the area, and I didn't always want to have to go to Winnipeg or order online, so it was a service that

I thought I could provide," Meakin said.

The response and support they have received thus far tells her that these services are very much needed here.

"It's been very well supported. Our community is amazing," Meakin said. "I see moms driving an hour to see me ... so I'm very grateful. There's always a need for more, to do better, to be feel better. You shouldn't have to live in discomfort in pregnancy and beyond."

She holds on to the thought of considering further expansion in the future.

"Maybe in terms of services for sure. I have some extra space here," said Meakin. "I am looking for other services to provide, possibly reflexology, but incorporate it into that wellness part of this business. We'll see."

"This was my dream, so we'll see where it goes from here."

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

Female leaders share their experience in politics

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Pembina Valley Women in Leadership's first speaker event filled the multipurpose room at the Boundary Trails Health Centre last Wednesday night with people eager to hear from four trailblazing women.

With the 2026 municipal election coming up, the evening featured a frank discussion around the challenges and victories that can come with a life in politics in the hopes more women will consider throwing their hat in the ring this fall.

Morden-Winkler MLA Carrie Hiebert served as the panel's facilitator, asking questions of participants Hilda Froese, who served for many years on the Garden Valley School Division board of trustees, Portage la Prairie Mayor Sharilyn Knox, former Winkler city councillor Karina Bueckert, and former Gladstone mayor and Agassiz MLA and cabinet minister Eileen Clarke.

The four shared numerous stories from their respective times in office, and reflected on what it's like to venture into what remains a very male-dominated environment.

"Fifty per cent of the population are women, but we don't have nearly that many representing us in our municipalities and all of the different levels of government," noted Hiebert.

All four panelists got involved in politics out of a desire to make a difference, and they found they were able to do just that. But it isn't always an easy job, they shared, and it's important potential candidates educate themselves on what they're getting into.

"I think a lot of people go into ev-

ery one of these roles thinking that they're going in to do the work. To be the ones being the managers, telling staff what to do and all of that, and that's not a role at all," Knox said, noting every level of government has experienced management teams already doing that work. "What your role is on school boards or in the province or on municipal is to make decisions, make policy decisions, and to have a good team of staff that are helping you make those decisions."

Entering politics at any level as a single-issue candidate is a recipe for disaster, the foursome observed.

"I'd encourage many of you to seek a place as an elected official, if that is your calling," Froese said. "But don't seek a place in an election, in an elected position, if you're unhappy regarding a single isolated issue ... do not try to get elected on an agenda-driven item. The workload and the opportunities for change are much greater than a single concern."

"I always tell people: figure out your why," Knox said. "What's your real why as to why you want to do this? Is it because you want to better your community? Is it because you think you have skills and abilities to help move things forward? You really have to understand that why, because it is a commitment."

A solid support network is key if you're going to go down this path, observed Bueckert.

"Find your people and build your circle," she said. "I was very isolated. I didn't realize how alienated I was as the only female on council."

But bringing the female perspective to the decision-making process is in-



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Pembina Valley Women in Leadership members Carolyn Friesen, Sally Marsolais, Leah Klassen, and Ang Braun with panelists Hilda Froese, Sharilyn Knox, Karina Bueckert, and Eileen Clarke and facilitator Carrie Hiebert.

tegral, she stressed.

"There's a lot of things that women think about as a default that men don't," Bueckert pointed out. "When somebody approaches a policy change, a request for anything like that, I would think about how it impacts somebody differently than a man would. And that's why it's important for us to both be at the table ... we need to have more than one vote that has a different opinion and a different experience and background."

"There really are gender differences, and I believe you need all voices around the table," agreed Knox. "Not just men and women, but all different types of voices, because when you're sitting around that table, whether it's municipal or provincial, you're working for the whole population. So you need voices from the whole population, and you [need to] to get different perspectives."

A good politician always needs to be prepared to listen to the concerns of their constituents, including those who may not agree with your decisions, noted Froese.

"I think the first thing we have to realize in an elected position is that we have many bosses, like thousands.

That means all the ones that voted and even those that chose not to vote," she said. "There's always generally someone who is disappointed with the decisions that are made."

She said she made a point of trying to have fruitful discussions with people to better understand their concerns and keep them in mind in the decision-making process.

Clarke reflected on the challenges of juggling family obligations with the time commitment municipal and then provincial politics called for. But she truly felt she was able to make a difference in providing a rural, female perspective.

"If you have an interest, it's worth the challenge," she stressed of politics. "It's worth taking the risk."

"I've worked with a lot of young people and I always say, if you can't see it you can't be it," noted Knox, stressing women in politics serve as a role model for others considering stepping up to serve in the future. "We don't have to lead like men—we have to lead like ourselves. And we have a voice around the table ... you just have to make your voice heard. Even if it shakes, you make it heard and you can make a difference."

Back 40 hits Suncatch Plaza next weekend

By Lorne Stelmach

The Back Forty Festival returns next weekend in its new location and new format.

This year's edition brings significant changes as the festival moves from its longtime home in Morden Park to its new stage in Suncatch Plaza downtown. It is also running over two evenings at the end of June rather than the first weekend of the month, as in past years, and admission is now totally free.

The festival kicks off the evening of

Friday, June 26 at 6 p.m. with a lineup that starts with local band Lakes and Pines followed by Stellar and then The Irvin Miller Band, along with a few "tweener" acts.

Stellar is a Winnipeg-based indie folk band known for rich harmonies, emotional songwriting, and an energetic live presence. The group blends alternative folk and indie rock influences into a sound that is both intimate and powerful.

At just 22 years of age, Miller is quickly gaining recognition as one of Manitoba's most exciting young

performers. Elevating the room with his blend of traditional sounds like rhythm & blues, old-school country, soul and gospel, he conjures a songwriting ability seldom found in artists of his age group, pairing that with his soulful voice and relaxed charisma.

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

With her latest project, songwriter Cassidy Mann steps away from her typical indie-pop synth style into

a more honky-tonk leaning rockin' vibe.

Over the past five years, Field Guide has quietly built a reputation as one of Canada's most compelling new songwriters. With a sound that blends folk intimacy, indie production and timeless pop sensibilities, he's taken his music from a Winnipeg basement to international stages and festivals.

In addition to the music each night, there will be a vendor market and food trucks set up on site.



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

The Filipino community gathered in Morden Saturday to celebrate Philippine Independence Day. It's been 128 years since the Southeast Asia nation declared its independence from Spanish colonial rule, and the anniversary has become a day of celebrating Filipino heritage and culture. Because of the weather, the event's music and dance performances were moved indoors to the Morden Activity Centre (right) while traditional food was served up under tents in the parking lot (above).

Celebrating Philippine Independence Day



Winkler Medical Clinic celebrates first year

By Ashleigh Viveiros

Winkler's newest medical centre cut the ribbon Friday to celebrate its first year of operations.

The Winkler Medical Clinic, located at 2-344 1st St., opened its doors last June with five Winnipeg doctors who take turns driving out to see local patients.

"The welcome that we've received in the community is great," said Dr. Dorothy Ogunlana.

Joining Ogunlana at the practice are Drs. Akin Akinsola, Ehi Oseghale, Daniel Frimpong, and Kweku Essilfie-Quaye.

The group heard about the need for doctors in the Winkler area, including from some of the patients at their Winnipeg practice who were driving in from Morden-Winkler to see them.

"A group of us came together and



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

Winkler Medical Clinic staff were joined by local dignitaries Friday in cutting the ribbon in celebration of their one-year anniversary.

said we could do this," Ogunlana said, noting not only would it be better for their existing patients but also help meet some of the needs of the

growing community. They have built relationships with many new patients over the past year, she said, and have room to see more.

"We've found out that most patients have not seen doctors for years, comparing to Winnipeg where they have access to doctors," Ogunlana said. "We found out that, in the rural area, it's different."

They offer both booked medical appointments and a walk-in clinic.

"We're just so happy to have you here," noted Morden-Winkler MLA Carrie Hiebert in her remarks ahead of the ribbon cutting. "It meets such an important need. It takes a lot of the pressure off the local doctors that we already have here. It just helps our community, helps the citizens in our community have an option."

"You have made a difference in Winkler, and we're appreciative of that," noted Mayor Henry Siemens. "We thank you for that commitment to our community."

Buttercup Project addressing stray, feral cat population

By Lorne Stelmach

An initiative of a couple volunteers in the community is making an impact in helping address the issue of stray and feral cats while also assisting cat guardians with low cost spay and neuter procedures.

The Buttercup Project is named in honour of Sonya Froese's late feline companion. The initiative to address the rising cat population in Morden was started up by Froese and Mi-

chelle Budz, who runs Town and Country Grooming, where Froese used to bring Buttercup.

"While we came together over Buttercup, it's also kind of funny because Buttercup really, really hated other cats," Froese said with a chuckle. "So the humorous part is that we get to honour her memory by reducing other cats in the area."

Froese had been involved in supporting the trap neuter and release program of the Pembina Valley Hu-

mane Society, but she together with Budz decided to go out on their own.

"Their program was Morden specific because it was funded by city council. We wanted to be able to help people throughout the Pembina Valley region, so we went out on our own and just kind of started this last year," she said.

"We also wanted to offer a low income, low budget spay and neuter program also," added Budz. "We're going to take one step at a time with

that, but we need to really get this going."

Froese feels they have gotten their initiative off to a good start.

"We just did our spay and neuter clinic just over two weekends ago, and we spayed or neutered 16 cats, got them the rabies shots ... about half of them were also given the extra vaccines," she noted.

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Saturday, June 27, 2026

7-9am Free Pancake Breakfast sponsored by Miami Merchants
 Miami Community Hall
 9am Miami Ag Society Food Booth
 Next to the Grandstand
 9am 4-H Open Cattle Show
 11am-2pm Kids Fair
 Features obstacle course, bubble dance party, and face painting
 11am-3pm Ricklyn Farms Petting Zoo
 11am-5pm Southern Bounce-a-rama
 Noon-11pm Beer Gardens
 2pm Heartland Rodeo Association Rodeo
 Cost included in your Saturday admission fee
 2pm Kids Bike Parade
 In front of Grandstand

Sunday, June 28, 2026

11am Miami Ag Society Food Booth
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 1pm-4pm Southern Bounce-a-rama
 2pm Heartland Rodeo Association Rodeo

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Fun at Paddlefest

Despite less than ideal weather, some people still made it out to Lake Minnewasta Saturday for the annual Morden Paddlefest. The event offers an opportunity for people to try out canoes, kayaks, and paddleboards kayaks for free, and the Manitoba Paddle Association was again out with its dragon boats. It is also a good chance to promote the Morden Paddle Club, which offers rentals at the lake throughout the summer months.



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

> BUTTERCUP, FROM PG. 10

Of those cats, maybe were five were rehomed. They have also been working with partners in Winnipeg.

Budz noted it makes a difference for them to have a local facility to support their efforts.

"With the Town & Country Grooming facility, we were actually able to set up our spay and neuter clinic in there, so that space is going to good use too," she said. "We're hoping to do this program twice a year with the spay and neuter program in spring and in fall."

And Froese noted the potential impact in terms of the numbers of stray cats in the area.

"There are about 200 cats euthanized every single year. And before we get upset at any of the pound people for doing that, we are the reason that happens. We have not been responsible caretakers for cats, so we're trying to reduce that and put our funds towards the spaying and neutering."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

"We see the need for the cats that are remaining to be healthy. That's where the vaccines come in," said Froese.

"So we're reducing disease, just in the area even for our own cats ... there are people who do let their cats wander," she said. "So they would have lesser exposure to some of these diseases and stuff too, so it helps in that way. And it just helps to reduce the number of cats because we have such an overpopulation here."

The **Voice**

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Foundation distributes nearly \$84K in grants



SUPPLIED PHOTOS

Altona Community Foundation president Haydon Friesen (left in both photos) presents reps from the Rhineland Area Food Bank (left) and The Community Exchange (right) with grants. The two agencies are part of 19 community groups and projects that received foundation funding this spring.

By Lorne Stelmach

The Altona Community Foundation recently put almost \$84,000 back into the community.

There were 19 successful grant applications along with two more that were continuing multi-year commitments. With a total distribution amount of \$83,895, foundation president Haydon Friesen said it feels good to be making such an impact in the community.

"We're very happy with it," he said. "Anytime you can push some of these

projects over the finish line to make sure that they are operating in our community, it's great to see.

"This granting cycle we were able to support almost every single one of the applications in some form or another," Friesen noted. "Not everybody got exactly what they were asking for, but there isn't always enough funds to go around for everything that everyone was asking for ... but we're still very happy with what we were able to contribute.

"We had a few new grant applications, new grant applicants that we

haven't had before, so that's always great to see, as something that we work on as a board is trying to attract new applicants and helping out areas where we might not necessarily have supported in the past."

The approved grants cover a broad spectrum of projects and organizations.

"It ranges from sports, arts and culture to seniors, Genesis House, Blue Sky—you name it, you'll see it on the list," Friesen said.

A lot of these organizations and projects really rely on receiving this

kind of support.

"We're not able to fund 100 per cent of the projects all the time, so any help that we can provide these organizations financially to ensure that they're able to complete these projects or to ease the burden on them from a financial standpoint, we're very happy to do so," Friesen said.

He noted two of the projects—\$8,500 to Altona Soccer for its new fields and \$5,000 to the Kiddie Sunshine Centre for its new building—carry over as part of a multi-year commitment.

Continued on page 28



PHOTOS BY EDWARD VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE

The Altona Community Action Network hosted a "Walk, Bike, & Roll to Work (or School) Day" the morning of June 9, encouraging the community to leave their cars at home and get active outside. To further tempt people, they were serving up free watermelon and roll kuchen and offering free bike tune-ups. Organizers say they were pleased with the turnout—about 70 people stopped by.

Celebrating active transportation



get informed

Youth council rep reflects on a fruitful term

By Holly Thorne-Wiebe

As her term as Altona town council's youth representative comes to an end, Azeb Kauenhofen is walking away with a deeper appreciation for local government, a stronger connection to her community, and a newfound confidence in sharing her voice.

The Gr. 11 student at W.C. Miller Collegiate admits her journey to council happened almost by accident. "I didn't know a lot about it at first," she said with a laugh. "A friend of mine had done it before and always spoke highly of it. Then my vice principal mentioned it to me, and I thought, 'Sure, why not?'"

That decision led Kauenhofen into a role that gave her a seat at the council table for the past several months, providing youth perspectives on municipal issues and community initiatives.

While she expected the meetings to be serious, she quickly discovered a welcoming and supportive environment.

"You're talking about serious things because you're helping run a town," Kauenhofen said. "But everyone was so kind and approachable. They

made it feel comfortable, even while discussing important issues."

One of the biggest surprises was realizing just how much responsibility municipal leaders carry.

"They deal with so many decisions that affect everyday life," she said. "Things like events, pricing, community projects, and services. I didn't realize how involved council is in making things happen in town."

As the designated youth voice at the table, Kauenhofen was often asked for her perspective on community matters that impact younger residents. While speaking up didn't come naturally at first, she gradually grew into the role.

"I've always been someone who's happy with whatever everyone else wants," she admitted. "At first it was hard to say, 'This is what I think.' But eventually I realized that's exactly why I was there."

After attending several meetings, she became more comfortable contributing ideas and asking questions.

Her experience also challenged some assumptions she previously held about government and decision-makers.

"As kids, we sometimes look at government and think adults don't understand what younger people want. But what I found was a group of people who genuinely care. They were already thinking about youth and families when making decisions."

Rather than feeling like she was there to educate council, Kauenhofen says the experience ended up teaching her just as much.

"It was really validating," she said. "It was nice to know there are adults who care about what younger people think and who are working hard to make the community better for everyone."

The role complemented her involvement in student council, where she enjoys helping represent classmates who may be less comfortable sharing their opinions.



VOICE FILE PHOTO
Azeb Kauenhofen's term as Altona's youth rep wraps up this month.

Continued on page 28

Our mistake

Our story on Gallery in the Park's launch of its season last week included several spelling and date errors we'd like to correct. Our story on from Clyde Finlay and Sylke van Niekerk. Gallery curator's Renae Friesen's first name was also misspelled, and the correct date for the start of the second season later this summer is Aug. 7, not 6th. We regret these errors and any confusion they may have caused.

The June 4 gala featured the unveiling of a sculpture by Quebec artist Galina Stetco and the launch of exhibitions *Gossamer & Ground* and *Journey into Brassica* by artist Kathy Levandoski. Also featured at the gallery right now are exhibitions

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Your FARM



St. Claude's Strong Woman still standing tall after nearly three decades



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Jacqueline, the iconic straw-bale figure that welcomes travellers to St. Claude, has stood along Highway 2 since 1997. Created by local residents Claude and Colleen, the landmark celebrates the community's agricultural roots and honours the strong farm women who help keep Manitoba agriculture thriving.

By Lana Meier

For nearly 30 years, a towering straw bale and a determined mannequin have greeted travellers entering St. Claude with a simple message: "We're Strong on Farming."

The landmark, known affectionately as Jacqueline, has become one of the community's most recognizable roadside attractions and a symbol of the area's deep agricultural roots.

Standing along the north side of Highway 2, Jacqueline has held her straw bale high since 1997, welcoming motorists and celebrating the farming industry that helps sustain the region.

The idea began as a way to draw attention to St. Claude's welcome sign while highlighting the importance of agriculture to the community.

"It began as the idea with the declaration of being strong on farming next to the sign as a nice welcome and to get attention," said Colleen, who helped create the landmark with her husband, Claude. "We thought it was a unique idea to welcome travellers and are pleased that others liked it."

Creating Jacqueline became a com-

munity effort. Family members, friends and neighbours contributed their skills, helping with welding, concrete work and finding and dressing the original mannequin.

Before Jacqueline existed, an earlier version of the roadside figure was a plywood cutout with a burlap sack face that also attracted attention and was featured in several newspapers.

The couple may not fit the traditional image of farmers themselves. While Claude spent much of his life connected to agriculture as a dairy farmer at heart, Colleen describes herself as a town girl who "knows absolutely nothing about agri-

culture."

As former restaurant owners, however, they saw firsthand how closely local businesses depended on the success of farmers.

"Businesses prosper when farming is successful," they explained.

They recall the days when local farmers would gather in coffee shops to discuss spring seeding, harvest yields and rainfall totals. Those con-

"BUSINESSES PROSPER WHEN FARMING IS SUCCESSFUL."

Continued on page 17

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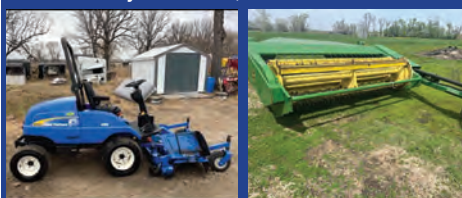
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Continued on page 18

Province invests \$650K in Wildlife Haven upgrades

By Haley Cvar

The Manitoba government is investing \$650,000 in capital improvements at the Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Centre, a move aimed at expanding the facility's ability to care for injured, sick and orphaned wildlife.

Premier Wab Kinew announced the funding, noting the investment will help modernize Manitoba's largest wildlife rehabilitation facility while supporting long-term wildlife stewardship efforts across the province.

Your FARM



Celebrating the hard work of farm women

From Pg. 16

versations often brought laughter and a sense of community.

One memorable story involved a practical joke in which a farmer secretly added two inches of water to another farmer's rain gauge, creating a lively debate among the morning coffee crowd about just how much rain had actually fallen.

The original mannequin was named



Strong winds sent Jacqueline's straw bale tumbling during storms in 2024 and again in 2026.

Jacques and was created to mark Claude's 40th birthday. He featured a burlap face, strong features and a sturdy build.

When Colleen later celebrated her own 40th birthday, Jacques underwent a transformation and became Jacqueline. Since then, the figure has served as a tribute to Manitoba's farm women.

For Colleen, that tribute carries special meaning.

Until moving to the dairy farming community and later working with seniors in the local care home, she said she had little understanding of the strength and sacrifices of farm women.

"It is the farm women who were full-time mothers plus milked cows, all while caring for their children and keeping the household running, especially during seeding and harvest when they milked cows alone," she said.

Through conversations with local residents, she heard stories of mothers pulling children to the barn on toboggans or sleighs while completing chores, or allowing youngsters to play in calf pens while they milked cows.

"I can't even imagine their struggle and feel they should be celebrated," she said.

The couple said Jacqueline honours the many women who play essential roles on farms and in rural communities.

"An old saying goes, 'Behind every successful man is a woman,'" they noted. "All men have had the

influence of a strong woman — their mothers."

Continued on page 18

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Your FARM



> STRONG WOMAN, FROM PG. 17

Over the years, Jacqueline has become much more than a roadside decoration. She has developed a personality and a history all her own.

The structure has endured harsh Manitoba winters, summer heat, powerful winds and heavy rain. At one point, vandals set fire to her straw bale, but she survived the incident and continued welcoming visitors.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, someone thoughtfully fitted Jacqueline with a face mask.

Perhaps one of the more unusual maintenance calls came when a passing motorist alerted the couple that Jacqueline's right breast had dropped to her knee.

An investigation revealed a family of mice had made a home inside the Styrofoam form, causing it to break

apart. Repairs were quickly completed and, according to the owners, the replacement was "perkier than a silicone implant."

The structure has also become a haven for wildlife.

During one renovation project, a pair of Canada geese nested atop the straw bale. Work immediately stopped and did not resume until five goslings had hatched and safely left the nest with their parents.

Despite several challenges, Jacqueline remains resilient.

Her straw bale was blown away during a Father's Day windstorm in 2024 and again during strong winds in May 2026. On both occasions, however, the mannequin remained standing and escaped damage.

The landmark has become so well known that residents often use it as a point of reference when giving directions. Visitors regularly stop to take photographs, and many people immediately recognize St. Claude as the community with "the strong woman."

Recently, the welcome sign received a fresh coat of paint and Jacqueline was outfitted with a new straw bale, ensuring she remains ready to greet travellers for years to come.

Colleen believes the landmark also reflects the history of the area's early settlers, many of whom arrived from

European countries in the late 1800s with little more than determination and hope.

"Many of these names remain today and thrive because of their love and connection to agriculture," she said. "I think generations before us would smile and be proud in knowing their love of the farming way of life contin-

ues today."

Now approaching three decades along the roadside, Jacqueline remains a tribute to Manitoba farmers, the pioneering spirit of the region's early settlers, rural resilience and the farm women whose hard work helped build communities across the Prairies.

> HAVEN, FROM PG. 16

"Wildlife Haven rehabilitates injured, sick and orphaned wildlife so they can return to the wild, and we're supporting them in this important work," Kinew said. "These upgrades to the centre will help support long-term sustainability and our shared stewardship of Manitoba's wildlife."

Founded in 1984, Wildlife Haven has cared for more than 55,000 animals. Annual admissions have grown dramatically over the years, increasing from approximately 200 animals in the 1980s to more than 2,000 each year today.

According to the province, the funding will support a series of capital improvements, including repairs to the centre's main building and raptor enclosures, safety upgrades, modernization of its contact centre, and construction of two new outdoor enclosures for aquatic mammals and waterfowl.

"We're grateful for the opportunity to improve our services and campus thanks to this support," said Zoé Nakata, executive director of the Wildlife Haven Rehabilitation Centre. "We're excited for the first step in working with the Manitoba government to continue protecting the wild animals of our beautiful province."

The province noted that Indigenous collaboration remains a key component of Wildlife Haven's work. The centre incorporates traditional Indigenous knowledge into wildlife rehabilitation practices, including animal care and release methods, while working with Indigenous communities across Manitoba.

The investment is part of a broader provincial commitment to animal care and rehabilitation infrastructure. The Manitoba government has also committed \$5 million toward a new animal health centre at Assiniboine Park Zoo.



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The Voice

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Do you have a suggestion for our news team?
 Is there someone you would like to see recognized in the newspaper for their accomplishments - athletic, academic or community service.

"It was a very good year"

CFDC holds AGM

By Lorne Stelmach

The past year was a good one for the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre in Morden in most respects.

Visitation increased, the museum ended up in a good financial position, and there is continuing optimism as more fossil discoveries continue to be found.

"Since the pandemic, it has been growing every year," executive director Adolfo Cuetara said of their visitation rates. "The best year was the year before 2024 when the growth was bigger, and from 2025, it was just barely a little bit more visitation, just like 70 people more but still as high as 2024, so it was a very good year."

Cuetara believes the major factor is the programming such as dig tours, and admissions overall were proportionally bigger at almost 16 per cent more than the year before.

He said their programs are continuing to benefit and grow a lot with the field station set up in their main dig area.

"That is making all the difference. Without the field station that we have there, it would be unthinkable to do this kind of activity," he said. "It's been growing exponentially in the

last three years, double amount of people from the previous year, and this year is looking in the right direction as well because we already have a lot of bookings for the summer."

The museum had 125 dig tour participants in 2025 compared to 67 in 2024, and there were 540 kids who enjoyed day camps as well as almost 1,000 students who came by as part of 35 school tours.

"Most of the success was due to the marketing campaign that we did last year, and that that's why we won that award [from Tourism Manitoba]," said Cuetara. "We are attracting people from outside. We got people last year from Netherlands, France, and this year already we have had from New Zealand ... so it's giving us international visitation. So all together, it was just a very good year. It's going to be difficult to surpass those results."

And the CFDC recorded a surplus of just over \$62,000 following three years of relatively minor deficits, so it is in a solid position with an accumulated surplus of over \$172,000 over the last five years.

"In the long term, we are growing. We are growing in results, growing in visitation, growing in stability, and we are reducing the dependency on the operational grant from the city," Cuetara said. "That's one of the main



SUPPLIED PHOTO

One of the new displays at the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre.

objectives to the strategic plan, to try ... to generate [income] and reduce the dependency on public funds. That's the purpose of all these activities."

And it makes a big difference that they keep making more discoveries which continue to keep bringing more attention and interest to the CFDC.

"We'll see what this year is bringing us. You never know. We have a very good spot in the property with lot of fossils," Cuetara said. "That's the most exciting part ... that the people are not expecting to find so many neat things ... they're just blown away because they realize that, okay, this was just underground until I came to dig it up."

They are also continuing to work on

a new exhibit around one of their discoveries that could be unveiled soon.

"This is going to be one of the biggest more comprehensive displays that we ever had ... it's going to be very spectacular," suggested Cuetara, who noted they can use technology to scan and digitize all the elements and reconstruct the missing parts and create a complete replica skeleton.

"Then the last stage is to create a life like creature just to show how that animal would be when he was alive, and we are working on that last stage right now. It's just building a lifelike sculpture of that animal to put just by the side of the skeleton, so all together it is going to be really spectacular."

WES Youth in Philanthropy donate \$952 to Central Stn.

By Ashleigh Viveiros

The hard work of Winkler Elementary School's Youth in Philanthropy (YIP) students resulted in a \$942 donation to Central Station last week.

At a school assembly Friday, the Gr. 7-8 students presented the community centre's Anita Wiebe with the funds, which they raised by organizing a bake sale in March.

"When we were deciding what projects we'd support this year, we had many organizations to choose from," shared Gr. 7 student Mine Ugbarugba. "We decided to support Central Station because it helps families in our community who need extra support."

Ugbarugba and fellow Gr. 7 student Zendaya Fehr share that they got involved in YIP because they wanted to do something to give back.

"I think Youth in Philanthropy is a pretty good thing to do," Ugbarugba

said. "You get to see things around Winkler and what people need for support."

"I've always loved to help the community," said Fehr. "I just love giving back to people in need, and I love to help people. This is a great opportunity for me."

The sale raised \$471, which was matched by the Winkler Community Foundation to bolster the final donation total. The kids also got the chance to volunteer at Central Station's weekly community meal to learn more about the organization's work.

The money will be used by Central Station to purchase an iPad and software that can be used by its various community programs.

It's a great gift, especially coming from a group of dedicated and caring kids, said Anita Wiebe, executive director of Central Station.

"It's been really neat to see kids who have either been connected to Cen-



PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH VIVEIROS/VOICE

The Winkler Elementary School Youth in Philanthropy group presented Anita Wiebe from Central Station with a donation of \$952 Friday.

tral Station or who are learning about Central Station for the first time, that they see the value in the work that is being done in supporting the community," she said. "For kids to start un-

derstanding philanthropy in Gr. 7, Gr. 8, that's setting our community up for success long-term, understanding the value of supporting the community."

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

Students role play in "Maverick Court"

By Siobhan Maas

"All rise for the judge," the court clerk called to the 14 Gr. 11 and Gr. 12 Law 40S students, the accused, and the defense and Crown witnesses at Morris School June 4. Teacher and judge Daniel Lehman presided over the one-hour trial in "Maverick Court."

"These mock trials are a great way to practise their public speaking skills, think on their feet, and put into action the theories they've been learning," shared Lehman of the popular annual event. "We attended a few cases at the Manitoba Law Courts in mid-March and within two weeks of our visit saw an alleged murder get thrown out from lack of evidence."

For the sixth year, students spent several days participating in the mock trials, with themes ranging from theft and assault to uttering threats. The teens take on the roles of lawyers, court clerk, jury members, or members of the press. School staff, former students, and local business leaders act as witnesses to the crime.

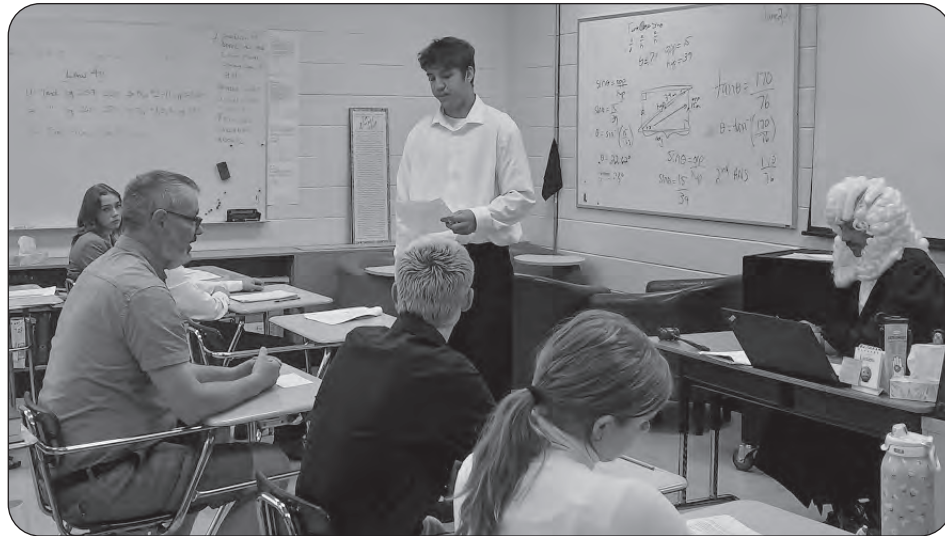


PHOTO BY SIOBHAN MAAS/VOICE
Defense lawyer Wesley Duke questioning defense witness Phil Jackson, played by Kevin Stevenson (blue shirt), in this year's Maverick Court.

"There is more pressure in the real-life interactions with people from our community and the students get to move past the scripts they've prepared and reapproach a question if they don't get the answer they want," explained Lehman.

Acting as a defense witness, school staff member Kevin Stevenson added, "You can't help but feel a bit of tension [as the court progresses] because no one knows if the accused has actually committed the crime. The students learn the seriousness of com-

mitting crimes and hopefully learn to not associate themselves with people who get in trouble."

The June 4 court tried "Keri Jones" with the theft of a pink mypod shuffler after leaving a store without providing payment.

"You must prove that Jones is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt," reminded Judge Lehman as the jurors left the room.

Following a 10-minute deliberation, the session ended in a hung jury of 3-3, for the first time in Maverick Court history. Lehman encouraged the jurors to take an additional 24 hours to think over if the accused had a legal right to the mypod, permission to take the item from the store, and determine guilt using only evidence provided in the court room, its weight, and common sense.

The following morning, Jones was found guilty 5-1.

Additional trials for other various crimes were held on June 8 and 9th.



Celebrating heritage

Musee St. Joseph was the place to be Saturday and Sunday as it hosted the annual Montcalm Heritage Festival. The weekend was chock full of activities, including a parade, multiple community meals, stage performances, dances, and, of course, the chance to tour the museum's many historical buildings.

PHOTOS BY EDWARD VINCENT ARCENAL/VOICE



sports & recreation

Bisons post first win, Orioles hit losing streak

By Lorne Stelmach

The Altona Bisons finally got one into the win column this week after a regular season that clearly has been challenging for the team.

They got their first win last Wednesday by edging the Carillon Sultans 11-10, but they then fell 16-4 to Carillon two days later.

The Bisons drove home six runs in the bottom of the fourth inning to take the lead before the Sultans got five runs in the top of the fifth to make it close. The game was tied at 10-10 in the seventh when Liam Geirnaert singled to score one run.

It was a high scoring affair, with Carillon having a slight 14-13 edge in hits overall. Geirnaert led the way with three RBIs and going three for four overall.

In the next game, Carillon took command early with seven runs in the first and building up a 16-2 lead after four innings. Hayden Klassen had two RBIs for Altona while Caden Krahn and Reece Fehr each had two hits.

The Pembina Valley Orioles, meanwhile, saw their overall record slip after losing four games this past week. After falling 4-1 to Interlake Wednesday they were edged 2-1 Friday by Winnipeg South before losing both ends of a Sunday doubleheader



PHOTO BY RICK HIEBERT/VOICE

Pembina Valley Orioles first baseman Jaren Hildebrand tags out Interlake batter Keenan Allen in last Wednesday's game in Winkler, which the Blue Jays won 4-1.

against Carillon by scores of 8-4 and 1-0.

Even though the Orioles out-hit Interlake 6-5, they still fell to the Blue Jays as Interlake collected four runs in the top of the fifth inning. Ty Magarell went one for three with one RBI.

Against Winnipeg South, the game was tied at one when the Wolves drove home one run in the bottom of the seventh inning.

In game one with Carillon, the Ori-

oles were ahead 4-3 after five innings, but the Sultans drove home five runs in the bottom of the sixth inning to earn the victory. Jackson Friesen, Jaren Hildebrand, and Harden Friesen each had two hits for Pembina Valley.

Game two was scoreless until the bottom of the eighth when a sacrifice fly drove home the winning run for Carillon.

Josh Dyck took the loss despite allowing just one run on one hit in three

and one-third innings of work on the mound.

Pembina Valley sits in fifth place on a 6-7 record while Altona is in the cellar at 1-13.

Pembina Valley was visiting Altona this past Tuesday then Interlake Thursday followed by Winnipeg South Saturday. Altona also has a Saturday doubleheader with Elmwood and then St. Boniface.

Mud Hens edge out Whips, Bisons down Cardinals

By Voice staff

The local rivals had a close game last week, but the Morden Mud Hens edged the Winkler Whips 6-5 last Tuesday in Border Baseball League action.

It was the only game of the week for Winkler, while Morden went onto fall 7-4 to the Cardinals in Carman Friday.

Altona also squared off against Carman, defeating them 15-5.

Altona leads the East Division at 4-1

followed closely by Winkler at 4-2, Morden at 3-4, and Carman at 1-6. The West Division has Clearwater on top followed by Cartwright, Baldur, and Holland.

This week, Winkler was set to visit

Carman Tuesday and then host Morden Friday, while Morden was set to host Altona Sunday afternoon. The Bisons were also scheduled to host Carman Friday night.

The **Voice**

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Jiu-jitsu athletes bring home the hardware

By Voice staff

A team of competitors based out of RISE Athletics in Winkler had a standout weekend at the recent jiu-jitsu provincial championships.

The event held June 6-7 in Winnipeg saw the 20 local participants bring home an impressive total of 31 medals.

RISE was represented by five athletes from the adult team and 15 from the kids and youth team. Many athletes competed in two separate divisions: Gi and No-Gi.

In the Gi division, athletes wear the traditional jiu-jitsu uniform and belt, and a major part of the strategy involves gripping and controlling the opponent's uniform to set up take-downs, control positions and submissions.

In No-Gi, athletes typically compete in athletic wear such as rash guards and shorts, where they are not allowed to grip clothing. This creates a different style of match with its own unique challenges, faster movement and different control strategies.

Across both divisions, team RISE earned eight gold medals, 18 silver, and five bronze.

The team's gold medalists now recognized as Manitoba provincial champions for their respective age and rank divisions include Amy



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

RISE Athletics youth (left) and adult (right) teams brought home 31 medals from the jiu-jitsu provincial championships.

Wiebe in Gi and Spencer Sullivan in No-Gi in the adult category, Simon Penner, Cole Payne, Erina Isableo and Dorian Fox in No-Gi, and Oskar Unruh in both the Gi and No-Gi youth categories.

Head coach John Ramon said the results were a reflection of the commitment shown by the athletes and the entire team at RISE.

"Our athletes have been training very hard, and it showed this weekend," he said. "I am very proud of everyone who stepped on the mats and represented RISE. It is not just the competitors who make these results possible. It is also all of their team-

mates who push them, support them and help them prepare every week in training."

Ramon also emphasized that while competition is a great opportunity for those who want to test themselves, it is not a requirement to train in jiu-jitsu.

"One of the great things about jiu-jitsu is that it can be for everyone," said Ramon. "Some people train because they want to compete; some train for fitness, confidence, self-defence or simply because they enjoy learning. The schedule can be flexible, and competition is never mandatory, but it is always available for those who

want that challenge."

Following the provincial championships, the RISE team will continue training and preparing for future opportunities while also welcoming new students to try the sport.

"We encourage anyone who has been thinking about trying jiu-jitsu to come in and experience it," said Ramon. "For kids, it is an amazing way to build confidence, discipline, focus and resilience. For adults, it is a great physical and mental challenge. We are proud of our team, and we are excited to keep growing the sport in our community."

Elm Creek's Schroeder joins PWHL expansion team San Jose



By Annaliese Meier

Elm Creek native Corinne Schroeder will continue her professional hockey career on the West Coast after signing with PWHL expansion franchise San Jose.

The signing follows an emotional expansion process that saw Schroeder left unprotected by the Seattle Torrent, where she played during the 2025-26 season.

The signing comes after an emotional expansion process that saw Schroeder left unprotected by the Seattle Torrent, the club she played for during the 2025-26 season.

"It was very emotional for me to not have been protected by Seattle," Schroeder said. "The turnaround between Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the expansion process was very quick, so that also was very difficult mentally and emotionally to start evaluating new options."

Despite the uncertainty, the Manitoba goaltender attracted interest from multiple expansion teams.

"It was very exciting to have interest from

multiple expansion teams, especially San Jose," she said. "I really enjoyed my time in Seattle last season, so staying on the west coast was very appealing to me and made San Jose an ideal spot for me."

Schroeder said she is eager to embrace the challenge of helping establish another franchise while continuing to grow the women's game.

"IT'S INCREDIBLY REWARDING TO HAVE FOUND A NEW HOME WITH SAN JOSE ..."

"It's incredibly rewarding to have found a new home with San Jose, and to have the opportunity to build a new franchise and grow the game of hockey in the Bay Area," she said.

The move marks the latest chapter in an impressive hockey career that has taken Schroeder from rural Manitoba to the

highest level of women's professional hockey.

Before joining Seattle, she spent two seasons in New York, first with the league's inaugural New York team and later with the New York Sirens.

PWHL PHOTO
Elm Creek native Corinne Schroeder tracks the play for the Seattle Torrent during the 2025-26 PWHL season. The veteran goaltender recently signed with expansion franchise San Jose after posting a career .921 save percentage and establishing herself as one of the league's top netminders.

A banner year for local goalie coach and his rising stars

By Ashleigh Viveiros

As a coach, there's not much that beats seeing a young athlete you've worked with for years succeed.

For goalie coach Tim Morison, the windup of the hockey season over the past few months has been one highlight after another, as no less than four of the young men he's helped mentor have either hoisted championship trophies over their heads or come close.

It started back in April, when the Winkler Royals swept the Senior A Provincial championship in two games against the Killarney Shamrocks. Between the posts for the Royals were Travis Klassen and Matthew Thiessen, who both went through Morison's goalie training program years ago.

Then, last month, Morison was with the Niverville Nighthawks as they won the national junior A championship in Prince Edward Island, bringing home the Centennial Cup. He served as the team's goaltending coach for this year's campaign and got to experience the big win alongside Carman netminder Ben Chornomydz, who Morison has worked with for over a decade.

And just a few weeks ago, Morden native Raiden LeGall, another of Morison's athletes, was with the Everett Silvertips as they won their first Western Hockey

League title and then took a crack at the Memorial Cup. They were runners-up for the national title after being defeated by the Kitchener Rangers in the final.

"I've been running my goalie company for 17 years and have been working with Pembina Valley goalies and teams throughout this [time]," said Morison. "To have two goalies that I've trained since they were eight years old and now 19 competing and winning national Canadian championships is a pretty cool thing to see."

Walking alongside athletes from such a young age is an amazing experience, Morison shared.

"It's cool just to see them grow up. And, honestly, hockey is just one side of it," he said. "Watching them grow up into good human beings and positive members of our communities is really what I strive for."

"Some of the first guys that I ever started training ... they've gone from students to best friends to people who have stood up at my wedding," Morison added. "There's a real bond there. We're like family now."

Both Chornomydz and LeGall are frequently giving back, working with younger players at Morison's goalie camps to inspire them to reach for new heights. LeGall also spearheaded a fundraising campaign this season that raised \$14,000 for grief support and mental health programming in Winkler and Washington, where he plays with the Silvertips.

"All the kids that I grew up training are coming back from playing the WHL, coming back from playing junior hockey, college hockey, to work for me [at summer camp] and it's so cool to see," Morison reflected. "Last year was probably my best year of just being able to sit back and go, wow, what have I done here? It's just this community of goalies where everybody appreciates everyone else."

"I get send texts, pictures all the time of these eight, nine-year-old kids staying up late to watch Everett play on TV, or they're cheering on Raiden ... they're superstars to the younger generation, and it's awesome."

A WHIRLWIND OF EXPERIENCES

The season was quite a rush for Chornomydz, who got to hoist both the MJHL's Turnbull Cup and the Centennial Cup with the Nighthawks.

While as backup goalie he saw little ice time, Chornomydz made sure he was contributing to the team's morale however he could.

"You want to be a good teammate," he said. "Telling the boys 'good shift' and 'keep working hard.' Really just being a positive guy on the bench."

Chornomydz feels his second year of junior hockey was a fruitful one. He was between the posts for 20 out of 58 games in the regular season.

"I think this year was the year that I grew the most," he said, noting he hopes to step up more with the Nighthawks next season.

Reflecting on his work with Morison, Chor-



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Goalie coach Tim Morison and Ben Chornomydz after winning the MJHL championship with the Niverville Nighthawks. The team went on to win the national junior A championship as well.

nomydz noted Morison was there when he first realized goalie was the role he wanted to pursue in hockey.

"That was my first ever skate and camp, and it was at Tim's camp in Morden," he recalled. "He's been incredible, right from the start until now. I think it's pretty cool that I can say he's been my guy the whole way through, and not just on the ice but off the ice too. Driving to Carman, to Winkler, whatever, and just talking about hockey, talking about life. It's so important to have a guy like that who, he's your goalie coach, but he's also someone you can just talk to whenever you need anything."

LeGall feels the same way.

"He's definitely been more than just a coach to me. He's become family over the years," he shared.

"I fell in love with hockey during those camps, and it was the highlight of my year every year," LeGall said, noting he hopes to take a page out of Morison's playbook and continue to be involved in mentoring the next generation. "It's pretty cool to be on the other side of it and to turn around and give back and be to the kids today what the older guys were to me when I was that age."

This season was LeGall's last in junior hockey. He's heading down south to play for Minnesota State while he majors in sports management.

Reflecting on the past few months, LeGall said it's been a whirlwind.

"It was really cool. I don't think two years ago I would have ever guessed that I'd be winning the WHL and getting to go to the Memorial Cup, so it was a really cool experience altogether. We had a great group of guys and it was a blast."

Like Chornomydz, he also didn't see too much ice time in the post-season, but he was pleased with his regular season contributions.

"I played 38 games this season and I had a great season," LeGall said. "I got a lot of experience this year and I'm looking forward to moving on to the next thing."

"HOCKEY IS JUST ONE SIDE OF IT. WATCHING THEM GROW UP INTO GOOD HUMAN BEINGS AND POSITIVE MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITIES IS REALLY WHAT I STRIVE FOR."



SUPPLIED PHOTO

Raiden LeGall hoists the trophy after his team, the Everett Silvertips, won their first Western Hockey League title this spring.

Central Energy bring home medals from Wheat City Classic

By Annaliese Meier

The Central Energy softball program enjoyed a successful weekend at the Wheat City Classic in Brandon, with the U15 squad finishing fourth and the U17 team capturing silver medals against some of the top competition in Western Canada.

The U17 Energy advanced all the way to the championship game before falling 14-5 to the Eastman Wildcats in the final. Despite the result, Central turned in an impressive tournament performance that included four consecutive victories on its road to the gold-medal game.

Central opened the tournament Friday with a 5-4 win over Smitty's Terminators. Taryn Toews drove in two runs while Addison Nikkel collected three hits. Kennedy Funk struck out eight batters over four innings and the Energy defence played error-free softball.

The Energy followed that up with an 8-1 victory over Moose Jaw ICE. Taylor Wall led the offence with three hits, including a triple and double, while Blaine Wiebe and Nikkel combined to limit Moose Jaw to just two hits.

On Saturday, Central defeated the Eastman Wildcats 12-5 behind a huge performance from Shyanne Goertzen, who blasted two home runs and drove in four runs. The Energy pounded out 15 hits, with Wall, Toews, Nikkel and Ella Conrad all collecting multiple hits.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the Central Energy U17 softball team pose with their silver medals after finishing runner-up at the Wheat City Classic tournament in Brandon. The Energy advanced to the championship game after posting four wins during the weekend. Pictured, top row (left to right): Todd Folkett (assistant coach), Blaine Wiebe, Mya Richard, Becca Anderson, Kennedy Funk, Ella Conrad, Shyanne Goertzen, Addison Nikkel and head coach Klynn Shindle. Bottom row: Taryn Toews, Payton Manness, Arabella (bat girl), Harper (bat girl), Sinead Convery, Ava Bonik, Taylor Wall and Kevin Convery (manager/assistant coach).

The club continued its strong play later that day with a dominant 16-1 victory over Westman Magic. Nikkel drove in four runs, including a first-inning home run, while Goertzen, Mya Richard and Conrad also had multi-hit games. Central finished with 16 hits and played another er-

ror-free contest.

In the championship game, Conrad gave Central an early lead with a leadoff home run before Eastman's powerful offence took control. Goertzen stayed hot at the plate, going 3-for-3 and launching her fourth home run of the weekend. Funk was

named defensive player of the game after making several strong plays at second base, including an outstanding catch in shallow right field.

The U15 Energy also enjoyed a strong showing, posting a 3-3 record and finishing fourth overall. Central opened with a 10-7 victory over the Winnipeg Lightning as Reese Fotheringham and Lindsay French each drove in two runs. Lexi Kemp was outstanding in relief, striking out seven over four innings.

After a dramatic 12-10 walk-off loss to White Butte Storm, the Energy bounced back Saturday with an 11-3 win over the Southeast Sundevils. Central collected 13 hits in the contest, with Renna Toews driving in three runs and Kemp, Kylie Wiebe, Beaudry English and Brady Wiebe all recording multi-hit performances.

The U15 squad also received strong individual performances throughout the weekend. English drove in five runs in a narrow loss to White Butte, while Central collected 14 hits in a hard-fought game against Westman Magic despite falling 9-4.

At the U13 level, Central finished with a 3-2-1 record and narrowly missed advancing to Sunday play. The team recorded wins over White Butte Storm, Twin City Angels and Saskatoon Raiders while earning a tie against Regina Royals. Hailyn P was among the standout performers, collecting three doubles against Regina and later hitting a game-winning home run against Saskatoon.

> PWHL, FROM PG. 22

Over three PWHL seasons, Schroeder has posted a .921 save percentage, a 2.46 goals-against average and five shutouts.

Her strongest professional season came during the PWHL's inaugural campaign in 2024, when she posted a .930 save percentage and a 2.40 goals-against average.

Schroeder's success extends well beyond the PWHL. In 2022-23, she was named both Goaltender of the Year and Rookie of the Year in the Premier Hockey Federation while playing for the Boston Pride. That season, she led all PHF goaltenders with a 1.67 goals-against average and a .955 save percentage.

Her collegiate career was equally impressive. Schroeder was a finalist for NCAA Women's Goaltender of the Year in 2021-22 at Quinnipiac University and earned multiple Hockey East all-star selections during her time at Boston University. Internationally, she also won a silver medal with Team Canada at the 2017 IIHF Under-18 Women's World Championship.

While the accolades are significant, Schroeder said representing her hometown region remains one of the most meaningful aspects of her career.

"It's incredibly exciting that I get to represent our community and show that there is a future in hockey for young girls regardless of where they are from," she said.

As women's hockey continues to grow, Schroeder's journey serves as an example for young athletes throughout Manitoba that success is possible regardless of where they begin.

From Elm Creek to the professional ranks, she has helped break barriers for female athletes while demonstrating that determination, hard work and perseverance can open doors to opportunities once thought impossible.

As she prepares for her first season in San Jose, Schroeder hopes to make an immediate impact both on and off the ice.

"I hope to manage the transition to a new team and market as seamlessly as possible and make an immediate impact on the ice for the team," she said.

She also expressed gratitude to the communities that have supported her throughout her career.

"I'm incredibly excited for this new opportunity in San Jose and am so grateful for all the love and support I continually receive from the people in Elm Creek, Carman, the Pembina Valley region and across Manitoba."

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55+ athletes in action

The Manitoba 55+ Games took place in venues throughout Morden-Winkler-Stanley June 9-11. Over 800 athletes from across the province competed in a host of sports, demonstrating you're never too old to stay active or try something new.



PHOTOS BY MERLIN HEPNER/VOICE



Spirit of the Games

By Lorne Stelmach

The spirit of community, connection, and especially active aging was celebrated here last week with the Manitoba 55+ Games being hosted by Morden, Winkler, and Stanley in partnership with Active Aging Manitoba.

An opening ceremony last Tuesday at the Access Event Centre welcomed participants from all regions of the province. The celebrations included dance performances by Ukrainian United School students along with greetings from local dignitaries.

Morden-Winkler MLA Carrie Hiebert commented on the sense of community and the connections that make events like this one so special.

"I know, as I was waiting in the lobby, they were just chatting about how much fun you guys were all having reconnecting ... that's really great to see and hear," she said. "Your dedication, your enthusiasm, and your commitment to active living are an inspi-

ration to all of us."

Hiebert gave kudos to the team of organizers and volunteers who have spent months working to make this event possible.

"It takes an army... over 830 participants registered so far, and 150 volunteers, so that says a lot about our community, about how much we are involved and how much we love and how much we give."

Morden Mayor Nancy Penner, who spoke also on behalf of the RM of Stanley and City of Winkler, issued a welcome to all of the participants, volunteers, and supporters.

"It's great to see how these Games bring Manitobans together from all corners of the province," she said. "We're glad to have you all here, and I hope you have a bit of time this week to explore some of the special attractions, local shops, and hospitality we have to offer."

"Our three communities often work



PHOTOS BY LORNE STELMACH/VOICE

Above: Ukrainian United School students at the opening ceremonies for the Manitoba 55+ Games last week. Right: Reading the Participant's Oath was Mordenite Lois Dudgeon, who has competed in the Games for 25 years.

together, collaborating on different projects and initiatives. Maybe not all of them are as fun as this one, but we're very proud of our shared achievements, including the most recent one that, like this event, encourages both connection and active living," she said of the recent ribbon cutting for the Stanley Community Pathway.

The three days of competition took place at venues across the region.



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NOTICE TO CREDITORS
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF **TERRANCE HOWARD SMITH**, late of MIAMI, in the Province of MANITOBA, deceased.

All claims against the above Estate, duly verified by Statutory Declaration, must be filed with the undersigned at their office, 309 Stephen Street, Morden, Manitoba, R6M 1V1, within thirty (30) days of the date of this publication.

DATED at the City of Morden, in Manitoba, this 9th day of June, 2026.

MCCULLOCH MOONEY
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ATTENTION: JULIE TOEWS
Solicitors for the Administrator

PUBLIC NOTICE



Annual General Meeting

June 23, 2026

7:00 p.m.

Gateway Resources Dining Hall

1582 Pembina Avenue West

CARD OF THANKS



The Altona Health Care Auxiliary wishes to extend gratitude to the many people who attended the May 5, 2026 Taco Fundraiser. Thanks to their generosity, we raised over \$18,000 which will purchase several items for the Altona Hospital and the Eastview Personal Care Home. We have ordered a pediatric emergency cart, medication cart, and other items to be ordered in the fall. We would like to express our thanks to D.W. Enns Farms, Grand West Farms, Border Beans, Ed Penner and Nicole Friesen contributed to the event. Much thanks to the many volunteers for helping prep, serve and clean up

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CITY OF MORDEN PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the Audited Financial Report of the City of Morden for the year ending December 31st, 2024, together with the related financial statements have been deposited in the office of the Director of Finance & Administration and are available for inspection by any person or his/her agent during regular business hours of Monday to Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and that any person or his/her agent at their own expense may make a copy thereof or extracts therefrom.

Nicole Reidle, CMMA
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take a break > GAMES

SUDOKU

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

Fun By The Numbers

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

Level: Intermediate

Here's How It Works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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

Sudoku Answer

		V	S	G	S	E	S	H	C	
		T	I	N	N	R	U	R	E	R
A	N	O	D	I		U	H	T		
P	I	N	R	U	R	T	A	V	S	R
S	O	V	C	O	V	A	I	L	G	R
L	E	S	S	S	S	C	R	H	V	A
						E	D	E	C	T
V	L	S				S	T	A	V	S
N	I	A	R	A		E	I	A	V	R
N	A	V	O	G	C	L	I	V	T	V
E	M	I	T	E	N	O	S	T	C	A
S	E	L	E	N	I	F	E	C	E	G
						F	E	R	N	A
						S	O	N	B	A
						S	I	R	E	P
						S	I	R	E	H

Crossword Answer

X CROSSWORD

CLUES ACROSS

- Similar
- Have an ambitious plan or a lofty goal
- No (Scottish)
- Aires, city
- Morning
- Senior's son (abbr.)
- A notable achievement
- European nation
- Endings
- Puts into place
- Former
- Grenadier
- Sea patrol
- Algerian port
- Norwegian river
- Precipitation
- Sunscreen rating
- New York is one
- Patti Hearst's captors
- Soft mineral with greasy feel
- Retired Brazilian footballer
- An Indian nursemaid
- Atomic #24
- Immobile
- Insignia of royalty
- Seeds from which chocolate is made
- Begin again
- Round root
- Beginning to end (alt. sp.)
- What newlyweds just said
- Empire State
- Give back
- College hoops tournament
- Unstable situations
- Young women's association

			1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8	9			
12	13		14						15						
16		17							18			19	20	21	
22									23						
24							25		26			27			
								28	29			30			
31	32	33				34				35		36			
37				38			39								
40						41			42		43	44	45	46	47
48						49				50					
51										52					
										54				55	
										56					
										57					
										58					
										59					
										60					

CLUES DOWN

- Administer a drug
- Holy places
- Contrary opinions
- Blood type
- Gags
- Micturating
- Silly
- A type of "cuff"
- Spanish be
- Austrian river
- Messenger ribonucleic acid
- Consume food
- California supermarket
- Electronic communication
- Cassia tree
- Written works
- Cool!
- Noteworthy 90s lawyer Kenneth
- One who was compensated
- National symbols
- Raising
- A type of talk
- Cloud
- Middle Eastern peoples
- Pouches
- 007's creator
- A cut of meat
- Sports entertainment award
- Christine __, actress
- Relief organization (abbr.)
- Canadian province (abbr.)

Finding beauty through faith and paint

By Holly Thorne-Wiebe

For artist Sylke van Niekerk, painting is more than a creative pursuit. It is a form of prayer, reflection, and connection.

That deeply personal approach is on full display in *For God's Glory*, her new exhibition at Altona's Gallery in the Park, where visitors are invited into a collection of abstract acrylic works inspired by faith, gratitude, and the creative journey itself.

Van Niekerk describes the exhibition as emerging from a season of transition. Beginning work on the collection in the fall, she spent months immersed in the paintings, creating many of the featured pieces specifically for the Altona exhibition.

"I felt grateful," she said. "There was lots of change. The year was coming to an end. Everything seemed to be in transition."

Working primarily with acrylic paint on wood panels, van Niekerk embraces a highly intuitive process. Rather than starting with a fixed image in mind, she allows layers of paint, texture, colour, and movement to guide the work.

"I try not to go into my head too much," she explained. "I choose colours, use different tools, and let things happen as they happen."

That sense of discovery is rooted in what she calls her "bloom practice," a daily creative exercise that involves sketching and experimenting with colour combinations, shapes, and textures. Elements that resonate with her during those sessions often find their way into larger paintings.

The resulting works are rich with layered surfaces, scraped textures, and bold colour palettes. Blue and gold appear repeatedly throughout the exhibition, a combination van Niekerk says she is continually drawn to.

While the paintings are abstract, faith remains at the heart of the collection.

One central series, arranged as a "prayer walk," consists of six movements that guide viewers through themes of awakening, reflection, and fulfilment. Each piece is paired with a prayer and inspired by scripture.

"When I created those things, I felt so connected to them," she said. "All the art is connected to God. I ask every day for guidance."

Of the six movements, the final piece, *Fulfilment*, holds special meaning.

"It feels like everything is falling into place," van Niekerk said. "I feel more connected and bold. I can encourage other people. It feels different."

Her artistic process often involves living with a painting for weeks before deciding whether it is complete. "When it doesn't speak to me anymore and doesn't call me back, then I feel it's done," she said.

That willingness to embrace uncertainty is reflected throughout the exhibition. Some works evolved dramatically from their original concepts, while others emerged from unexpected textures and happy accidents discovered through sanding, layering, and experimentation.

Though van Niekerk has exhibited previously in Winkler and Morden, *For God's Glory* marks her first exhibition at Gallery in the



PHOTO BY HOLLY THORNE-WIEBE/VOICE

Sylke van Niekerk with one of her pieces on display at Gallery in the Park.

Park.

Looking at the collection installed together for the first time was a memorable experience.

"I felt really grateful," van Niekerk said. "I looked at my art yesterday and thought, 'I haven't seen it together like that.' It's really cool."

More than anything, she hopes visitors leave with a sense of beauty, positivity, and connection.

"I wish they feel the beauty that is all around," she said. "I hope they can connect with the paintings and with the unspoken. This is my language."

Also on display now at the gallery are exhibitions from Kathy Levandoski and Clyde Finlay.

> GRANTS, FROM PG. 14

Here is a list of the other approved grants:

- Altona and Area Family Resource: \$700 for mini chefs in kitchen.
- Altona and District Heritage Research Centre, \$3,800 for shelving and chairs.
- Altona Maroons, \$7,500 for dressing room renovations.
- Altona Maroons, \$2,000 for new hockey uniforms.
- Altona Minor Baseball, \$2,500 for diamonds tarps and a scoreboard panel.
- Blue Sky Opportunities, \$5,000 for a transport vehicle.
- Genesis House, \$4,300 for a washer and dryer at Clearwater House.
- Gretna Prairie Centre, \$2,000 for exterior doors and locks.
- Kiddie Sunshine Centre, \$500 for display boards for student art.

- KidSport Manitoba south chapter, \$750 for registration support for applicants.

- Lions Foundation of Canada, \$2,500 for vision and hearing screening.

- Neuberghal Heritage Foundation, \$10,000 for sound quality improvements.

> YOUTH REP, FROM PG. 15

"I like being able to help give people a voice," Kauenhofen said. "Sometimes people have great ideas but don't necessarily want to speak up. Being able to bring those ideas forward is something I really enjoy."

Looking ahead, Kauenhofen is considering studies in psychology, social work, or family services after graduation next year. However, her time on council has also sparked an interest in leadership and community-building.

The experience, she shares, has changed how she views her home-

- Pembina Valley Humane Society, \$500 for a behavioural training program.

- Rhineland food bank, \$8,000 for renovations for food delivery access.

- Rosenfeld skating rink, \$2,900 for green space improvements.

- The Community Exchange, \$4,000 for barrier-free access to washrooms

town.

"For a long time, I thought I'd graduate and move somewhere else because the world is so big," Kauenhofen said. "But being involved with council showed me how much work, care, and love goes into this community."

"When you really get involved, you realize how much there is here," she said. "It's a great place, and being part of this made me realize I could see myself staying."

As council prepares to welcome a

and \$6,000 for food supplies for its Thursday lunch program.

- The Gardens on Tenth, \$7,445 for chaplain's office space.

"We're very happy to see the dollars get into the community's check, get to work and to push these projects over the finish line," said Friesen.

new youth representative in the upcoming school year, Kauenhofen has simple advice for anyone considering applying.

"Go for it," she said. "It's fun, it's a great learning experience, and you get to meet so many people. It makes you feel more connected to your community."

Before stepping away from the role, she also wanted to offer her gratitude.

"A huge thank you to council for letting me be part of it," she said. "It's been awesome."