

# Empire-Advance

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DECEMBER 6, 2024 | EMPIRE: VOL 120 NO 16 / ADVANCE: VOL 139 NO 18 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS

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## Santa Claus Parade braves cold Saturday eve



Santa Claus floats through Virden.



Larry Maguire, MP for Brandon-Souris waves to crowd at Virden Santa Claus Parade.

PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

This year's Santa Claus Parade through the streets of Virden brought out the brave to face the biting cold of Saturday evening on Nov. 30. Some 25 entries in the Santa Claus parade included vehicles in lights representing the many businesses. Organizations included open

floats with hardy people waving and tossing candy, such as: Virden Oil Capitals, Lenore 4H, Virden Variety 4H, at least one Nativity, Very Virden Christmas & Grinch, the Lions Club and Larry Maguire as well as the Virden Legion No.8. The parade passed seniors residences. Groups of adults got into the spirit of the Santa Claus Parade and showed up to watch the parade through downtown. Parents brought their bundled-up kids who scavenged for candy in the street.



**VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS**

**HOME GAME**  
**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5**  
**VS. NEEPAWA TITANS**  
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM

## Inside...



## A SPLASH OF CHRISTMAS

P2



## KEL SMITH MARCHES WITH VETERANS IN OTTAWA

P8

# The Virden Santa Clause Parade



Oxford Assembly Nativity with Mary, Joseph, the babe, angels and shepherds.



Very Virden Christmas complete with Santa Grinch.

PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON



Visit our Website  
[www.empireadvance.ca](http://www.empireadvance.ca)



**COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS SUPPER**  
 December 25, 2024  
 at St Mary's Anglican Parish Hall  
 633 9th Avenue S.  
 Doors open at 5p.m.  
 To book a reservation  
 call Caroline @ 204 748-2015.  
 Reservations accepted until December 19th

## CORRECTION

### RE: New water well coming on line

In the November 29 issue, Page 19, the Empire-Advance coverage of the Wallace-Woodworth council meeting incorrectly stated that "Payment of \$4,306.90 was approved to Elkhorn Resort Spa and Conference, Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP) for the meeting space, 80 rental accommodations, food and beverages for the facilitated strategic planning session on Nov. 1-2." It was not 80 rental accommodations, but audiovisual equipment rental. The report should have read, "Payment of \$4,306.90 was approved to Elkhorn Resort Spa and Conference, Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP) for the meeting space, audio visual equipment rental and food and beverages for the facilitated strategic planning session on Nov. 1-2."

## A Splash of Christmas has raised over \$19,000 for community

By Jessica Coulter  
 EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On November 30, A Splash of Christmas came to town at Tundra Oil and Gas Place in the Sunrise Credit Union Hall. Forty-three vendors came out to show their wares for the day. Approximately 500 people came out to support the variety of vendors at the craft and trade show.

There was a \$2 admission fee to get you in the door to see all the wonderful items the vendors had to offer. All proceeds from the door went to Virden Pet Network. They raised just over \$1000 towards the cause.

The kitchen, run by the Virden Legion Branch #8 Ladies Auxiliary, served up lunch for the attendees and the vendors. Chili and a bun to help warm everyone up on the cold winter day along with sandwiches and coffee.

"Next year on Saturday, November 15, will be our




PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER

Approximately 500 people came out to do some Christmas shopping on November 30 at A Splash of Christmas in Virden.

10th annual sale, bringing various talented and unique vendors to one location for easy Christmas shopping. It's great to be able to support a different local fundraising group each year as well," exclaimed Tracy Landels,

A Splash of Christmas organizer. "We have supported the Virden Dog Park, Pipestone 4-H Beef Club and the Virden Pet Network during the past three years putting \$3600 back into community projects and groups."

During the nine shows held by Splash of Christmas events, the organizers have raised just over \$19,000 for community projects and local groups. They raised \$15,695 for the Virden Spray Park over the year.




## ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2024  
 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Join us virtually to learn more about Manitoba's Crown corporation dedicated to energy efficiency.

REGISTER NOW AT  
[efficiencyMB.ca/publicmeeting](http://efficiencyMB.ca/publicmeeting)



# How can holistic wellness make a difference?

By Marie Evelyne Gingras  
HOLISTIC WELLNESS CERTIFIED HYPNOTHERAPIST

So, why bother with all this “holistic” stuff? Well, here’s the thing: When you take care of all parts of yourself, you’re more likely to feel balanced, energized, and just... better. Studies show that people who embrace holistic wellness tend to have lower stress, better mood, improved immune function, and an overall higher quality of life.

Plus, holistic wellness encourages you to take control of your own health. Rather than relying solely on doctors or prescriptions, it’s about creating a lifestyle that supports your well-being from all angles. It’s all about self-care, self-awareness, and feeling empowered to make choices that work for you.

## How to Add a Little Holistic Wellness Into Your Life?

If you’re thinking, “That sounds great, but where do I start?”, don’t worry—there’s no need for a major overhaul. Here are a few easy ways to get started:

Start with small steps. You don’t need to make drastic changes all at once. Try getting moving each day—even if it’s just a short walk around the block. Nourish your body with foods that make you feel good—think whole foods, fruits, veggies, and plenty of water. And remember, balance is key! You don’t have to be perfect; it’s about progress.

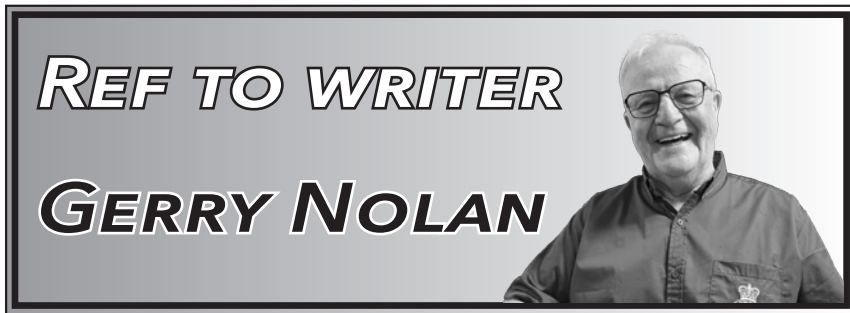
Make time to relax and clear your mind. Try a quick meditation or some deep breathing exercises to reset your brain. If you’re feeling stressed or overwhelmed, even just five minutes of quiet time can make a big difference.

Spend time with the people who lift you up. Positive social interactions are one of the best ways to boost your emotional health. It doesn’t have to be anything fancy—just a good conversation with a friend or family member can make you feel more connected and at ease.

Finally, pay attention to your surroundings. Take a look around you—does your space make you feel calm and energized? A little tidying up or adding some plants or cozy touches can do wonders for your mood.

Holistic wellness isn’t about perfection—it’s about balance. It’s about recognizing that every part of your life is connected, and by nurturing your whole self, you’ll feel better, look better, and live better. It’s not about making big, sweeping changes overnight—it’s about small, consistent steps that add up to a healthier, more fulfilling life. So go ahead, take a deep breath, and start taking care of all the parts of you that matter. Your mind, body, and spirit will thank you!

# GETTING A CHANCE



I had been doing minor hockey and with a move to live north of Oak Lake, there were many more opportunities to officiate. I started officiating hockey games in Oak Lake, Elkhorn, Kenton, Hamiota and Oak River. There were lots of games to officiate and there were not a lot of officials, so I could be kept as busy as I wanted to be.

Some of my first partners to ref with in Oak Lake were Kerry Smith and Wally Essie. Both were good officials and we got along real well.

Around that time Wallace Henderson had been watching me do minor hockey. I believe Wallace was Referee-in-chief of the North Central Intermediate Hockey League and he also was Referee-in-chief for the Tournament-of-Champions in Oak River.

In Oak River I got to meet other officials that I had not met before. One of the first volunteers to meet and greet me in Oak River was Mrs. Paddock. She had a friendly smile and welcome to Oak River. I worked in the old Oak River arena, summertime they held dances there which were a lot of fun!

Wallace Henderson called one day and asked me to work a game in Kenton as a linesmen for a N.C.H.L. game. I was so excited I said yes, as I was hungry to do more officiating. I was very nervous before that game. Usually throughout my career I would get a little nervous before games, it was my way of being ready to go to officiate.

My first NCHL game and my first linesman partner was Mr. Gary Crampain from Oak Lake. I could not have asked for a better man to start doing senior hockey with. Gary was great with me, encouraging and supportive. Thank you Gary! He knew I would have some jitters being a first for me, but he was so calm Gary made it like a walk in the park!

The head Referee that night was Mr. Bill Little of Decker. I had met Bill before and knew he was a good official. One of the things he taught me that night was to pick up the rule book and just go over some specific rules, which I did throughout my career!

The game went off without any problems, game one was in the books!

Gary Crampain and I were paid \$6 for the game and Bill was paid \$12 for the game. Big dollars back then. Bill Little after the game pulled out a mickey of rye for a toast after the game! I could not have asked for anything more from that first night!

Thank you to Gary and Bill, who are also in Hockey Heaven, rest well men!!!

Other linesmen I worked with that first year were Ivan Crampain and Donald Lindsey. Man that seems like such a long time ago, it is close to 50 years ago and my how times have changed!

Referees I met coming to Kenton to do games were Gordy Lyall, Lloyd Little, Red McConnell, Rick Seminuk, Brian Hogdson and Bob Thompson who lives at Oak Lake beach.

Bob Thompson was from Brandon, a school teacher I believe. He skated straight up and could really skate. Bob was one of my favourites to work with. He was always so positive and encouraging with me. Wish I could have worked more games with him, Bob was that good!

The guys I mentioned previously all deposited something to me. I respected all of them and looked to them for guidance. Thanks guys!

One of my favourites was Gordy Lyall from Hamiota. I liked the way he officiated and decided to try and call my game similar to his. So one day I said to Gordy I hoped to be able to referee like him. His response to me was this, “Find yourself, your game! Call it because it is you, you can incorporate little things from other officials but Be You Not Them!”

Great advice from a fellow official and advice I would pass on to other officials!

Going back just a bit, Bob Thompson, Bill Chapple and Doug Lund who were from Brandon ran the referee clinics at the start of the fall. They were great educators! They were all passionate about hockey and you could just feel it. They knew the rule book and encouraged us to get into it even before a game. Something Bill Little had told me at my first senior game!

These guys who lived in Brandon, but all were from Westman area were terrific officials. They did not forget their roots and is probably why we or they could relate to each other. Thank you so much to these men for sharing their experiences and foresight. They made hockey and refereeing fun!

They were really good officials, and I know other officials were proud to work with them!

Coming up for the next edition, I will call Spreading my Wings!

**VIRDEN LIONS HALL**

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# Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



## Bathroom reading...

It is with certainty that I can say I am not the only one to have reading material in the bathroom. I used to be the Reader's Digest- the articles are the perfect length of reading time- or a word puzzle book, or a proper book. My current reading is daily reflections on the life of a saint. Some days I learn about three or four and some days are dedicated to one. Knowing that I have a fascination with saints (perhaps because I would love to be one!) a close friend found a copy of 'Lives of the Saints' by Richard P. McBrien. Published in 2001, it contains the life stories of more recent saints, like Mother Teresa 1910-97 and Helder Camara 1909-99.

Poemen, a fifth century Egyptian abbot was known for his pithy sayings. One that is recorded- 'Silence is no virtue when charity demands speech': charity meaning love of and for God, and all mankind. That reminded me of a quote that Ed used when required- 'they say silence is golden; sometimes it's chicken'. Same message with different wording. In reality there is a time to be silence, there is also a time to speak and may we have the wisdom to know the difference! It's too easy to sit in silence when the casual conversation turns to gossip and possibly slander. To stand, to take a stand for kindness and honesty often comes at a cost...

Helder Camara was the archbishop of Olinda and Recife, Brazil. "He insisted that private charity toward the poor, while important in itself, fails to address the systemic causes of poverty. Camara advocated for such fundamental social changes as land redistribution and wider access to education." For these views he was denounced and received death threats. His response - 'When I fed the poor, they called me a saint. When I asked, "why are they poor?" They called me a communist.'

The courage to speak the truth, address injustice and work for mercy can be a dangerous journey.

The stories of the saints intrigue me. Some heard the call to join a nunnery or monastery early in their life. Some, as orphans, were cared for by monks or nuns and chose to stay for their lifetime. Some declared saints were married couples and after having several children chose to live a celibate life dedicating their time and energy and resources to doing good for God. Some were prayed into a holy life by a devout mother.

There are patron saints for groups and causes, from anaesthetists and arthritis, to the homeless and the homemakers, to yachtsmen and youth, and everything in between! The average person knows that Francis of Assisi is the patron saint of all creatures, Joseph is the patron saint of carpenters and Andrew and Peter protect the fishermen. Those stories have found a place in history.

Research shows that St. Rita was canonized in 1900 by Pope Leo XIII. She is the patron saint of impossible causes, sterility, abuse victims, loneliness, marriage difficulties, parenthood, widows, the sick, bodily ills and wounds. Huge responsibility!! But I can dream...

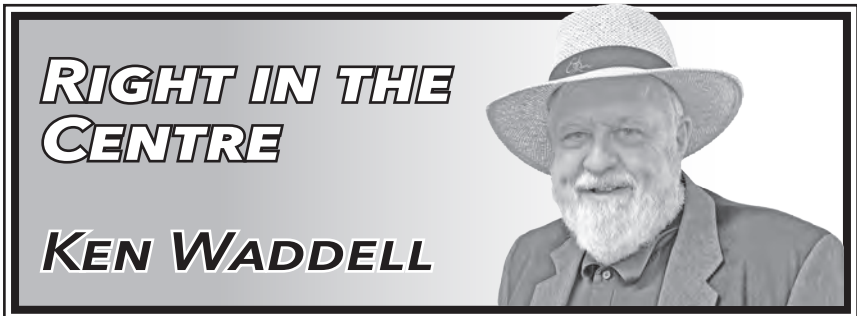
## I think I'm done with Canada Post

On Sunday in a press release, Canada Post said they presented the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) with a new proposal. CUPW covers very few postal workers in rural western Manitoba. Most local post offices are covered by Postmasters who are members of Canadian Association of Postmasters. They are not on strike but either CUPW or Canada Post have basically shut the post offices down. Even non-striking post offices are not allowed to receive local mail. Even if you want to send someone a cheque to pay a bill, Canada Post is forbidding it. Now even local newspapers are being shut out by Canada Post.

Ironically, Canada Post also said, "We understand the impact CUPW's national strike is having on your business, our employees and so many Canadians. Canada Post remains committed to negotiating new collective agreements that will provide the certainty everyone is looking for."

Canada Post added, "We know you need certainty at this critical time of year and the union's national strike continues to impact your business. We are committed to providing you with timely updates and the details you need to make informed decisions."

Well, I have news for Canada Post. This isn't our first rodeo. In fact, this is the seventh Canada Post strike we have been through in 35 years of publishing. Over the years, because of strikes and very poor service from the non-local people we have taken more and more of our business away from Canada Post. We have been served very, very well by local post offices but when we realized a few years back that papers take up to a week to get



"We have been served very, very well by local post offices"

from town to town due to delays and backlogs in Brandon, Dauphin or Winnipeg, we started pulling out of Canada Post.

Our family papers used to be one of Canada Post's largest south-western Manitoba's customer. When we pulled out, we didn't get so much as phone call. Not surprised though. I only phoned Canada Post three to four times a year but they didn't even return those calls.

I am so done with Canada Post's rules, delays and their ignoring customers' needs. This strike, like all the other strikes makes for a huge delay in the cash flow for small business cash flow. CUPW doesn't care much about their customers and neither does the Corporate level of Canada Post. The local postmasters are not pleased as they are being forced to refuse mail. Now, even local papers, even Christmas cards are being turned back at local post offices due to Canada Post's new found rules.

Fortunately for our papers we only use Canada Post for three locations

but that is ending. As of this week, none of our three papers, the Neepawa Banner&Press, Rivers Banner nor the Virden Empire Advance will be handled through Canada Post.

I especially want to thank the staff at Rivers Post Office, Alonsa and Silver Ridge for treating us so well but we are done with Canada Post.

I can't see how Canada Post can keep going and pretend to be serving the public. In last week's column I wrote about the annual losses and the general incompetence at the corporate level.

In their press release they talk about providing certainty to customers. Canada Post has certainly provided certainty to this newspaper company. We are pretty certain we won't ever again trust our fate to Canada Post. Yes, this is not our first rodeo but I am not going to risk being bucked off again.

*Disclaimer: The views expressed in this column are the writer's personal views and are not to be taken as being the view of the newspaper staff.*

**Empire Advance**  
Serving Virden and area since 1885

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# Manitoba RCMP Major Crime Services investigating homicide

Submitted

By WESTMAN RCMP

On November 22, 2024, at 2:25 pm, the Canupakwa Detachment of the Manitoba First Nations Police Service (MFNPS) received a request to check on the wellbeing of a 37-year-old male from the community.

MFNPS officers attended but could not immediately locate the male. They continued to follow up but were not able to find him.

On November 30, 2024, MFNPS officers located the body of the 37-year-old male deceased.

His death is being treated as a homicide.

Police are requesting anyone with information in relation to this homicide to call the MFNPS tip line at 1-833-978-0048, Manitoba Crime Stoppers anonymously at 1-800-222-8477 or submit a secure tip online at [www.manitobacrimestoppers.com](http://www.manitobacrimestoppers.com).

Manitoba First Nations Police Service, along with RCMP Major Crime Services and RCMP Forensic Identification Services, continue to investigate.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Impaired driving causes woes

### Westman RCMP Report, Nov. 24 – 30

Submitted

By MANITOBA RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 38 calls for service.

Of these, 13 were traffic related incidents including 3 impaired files. Also included in the calls for service: 1 suspicious person/vehicle/property files, 2 assault files, 1 wellbeing check, 3 false alarms, 2 mental health act files, 3 mischief files, 3 abandoned vehicle files, and 1 information files.

On Nov. 28, RCMP conducted a curfew check in the community of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. A warrant has been issued for a 33-year-old male for failing to comply with his release order as he does not reside at the residence he was released to by the courts.

On Nov. 29, RCMP were contacted by the Department of Transportation, they had stopped a vehicle that was driving erratically in the RM of Pipestone. A 26-year-old female was arrested and charged with impaired driving (alcohol) and for driving with 80mg% (alcohol); a breath test was conducted with results of 140mg% and 120mg%. She will appear in court in January for this charge, and faces a traffic offence notice for driving without a valid licence.

On Nov. 29, RCMP were contacted by a Manitoba First Nation's Police Officer who had stopped at a scene of a single vehicle roll over in the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation community. RCMP arrived on scene, the 31-year-old male was not injured, but was arrested and charged with driving while impaired (alcohol) and while over 80mg% (alcohol). A breath test showed results of 140mg% and 130mg%. He will appear in court in March for this charge.

To report a complaint or non-emergent incident to RCMP please call 204-748-2135. For general inquiries or administrative requests including criminal record checks please call the administration line at 204-748-2046 Ext. 3. If you are reporting an emergency please call 911.

If you witness a crime and wish to remain anonymous please contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477. The tip line is not traceable and they do not subscribe to caller ID or call display.

As the holiday season is upon us, Westman RCMP wants to remind everyone to not drink and drive, please arrange for a sober ride.

### PRAIRIE VIEW MUNICIPALITY UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE PLANNING ACT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING FOR CONDITIONAL USE AND VARIANCE

Prairie View Municipality, under the authority of The Planning Act, will hold a PUBLIC HEARING at the below listed location, date, and time during which the Council will receive written or verbal representation from the applicant and any persons who wish to make them in respect to the following application matters:

**Application for a Conditional Use Order and Variance Order under Part 3 Table 3.2 of the Prairie View Municipality Zoning By-Law #2018-15, as amended.**

**HEARING LOCATION:** Prairie View Municipality Council Chambers located at 678 Main Street, Birtle, MB  
**DATE & TIME:** December 10, 2024, 10:00 am (1000 h)

**PROPOSAL:** To bring the property and building into conformance with the zoning by-law  
**PROPERTY LOCATION:** 154123 Road 88N, SW-29-15-26W, Prairie View Municipality  
**OWNER:** Van Der Merwe Farms  
**APPLICANT:** David Van Der Merwe

#### CONDITIONAL USE ORDER APPLICATION

**ORDER NUMBER:** 10-PV-24-CU  
**TO PERMIT FOR:** The establishment a Farm Dwelling use in the AG zone on the land.

#### VARIANCE ORDER APPLICATION

**ORDER NUMBER:** 08-PV-24-VO  
**FROM:** the minimum front yard setback of 125 feet  
**TO:** 10 feet  
**FOR THE PURPOSE OF:** establishing a Farm Dwelling use in the AG zone



**AREA:** Approximately 4.25 km north of Beulah on the east side of highway 83.

A copy of the above proposal and supporting material may be inspected at the Mid-West Planning District office during normal business hours. Copies may be made, and extracts taken there from, upon request.

Representations may be made verbally or in writing at the public hearing.

If you have any questions, please call at 1-888-919-1740 or email [devofficer@midwestplanning.ca](mailto:devofficer@midwestplanning.ca)

Lisa Hamilton, DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, MID-WEST PLANNING DISTRICT

# HELEN DRYSDALE

## OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

Gather your little hands to help prepare this loaf recipe to share with someone special this holiday season. With the blend of spices your kitchen will smell like the holidays. Perfect with a cup of tea and company.

Try this differently delicious loaf recipe, taste tester approved.

Carrot date loaves

- 1 1/2 pitted dates, chopped
- 1 cup water
- 3 cups flour
- 3 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. nutmeg
- 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1/3 cup oil
- 4 eggs
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 3 cups grated carrots
- 2/3 cup raisins

In a pot over medium heat add the dates and water. Bring to a boil, stirring occasionally. Turn the heat down. Cover and cook until softened. With a fork mash until there are no lumps. Set aside to cool. Lightly oil 2 loaf pans. In a large bowl mix the flour, cinnamon, nutmeg, baking powder, baking soda and salt. In another bowl stir together dates, sugar and oil. Stir in the eggs and vanilla. Mix in the carrots. Pour over dry ingredients and stir just until moistened. Add the raisins. Divide the dough into lightly oiled loaf pans. Bake in a preheated oven at 350 F (180 C) for 40-50 minutes until tooth pick inserted in the middle of the loaf comes out clean. Let cool in pan for a few minutes then take out of pan and turn out on a wire rack to finish cooling.

With a name like glazed lemon blueberry loaf, you know you're in for a treat.

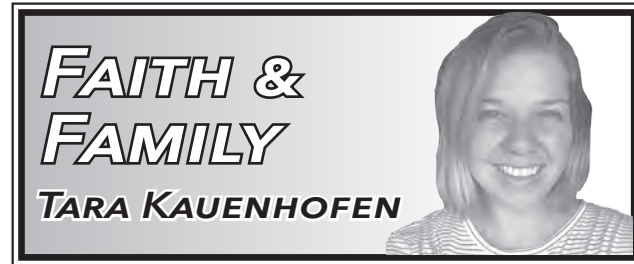
Glazed lemon blueberry lemon loaf

- 1/2 cup butter, room temperature
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup milk or butter milk
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. ginger
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 lemon juiced and zested
- 1 1/4 cup blueberries, fresh or frozen (if using frozen blueberries, do not defrost)
- 1 Tbsp. flour
- 1 cup icing sugar
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice or more as needed

Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease and flour a 9X5 inch loaf pan. Zest and juice the lemon. Set each aside. Mix the butter and sugar, add in eggs and milk. Stir in 1 tablespoon of lemon juice and the lemon zest. In another bowl, combine flour, baking powder, cinnamon, ginger and salt. Add to the first mixture and stir just until combined, do not over mix. In a bowl toss the blueberries with the tablespoon of flour. Gently fold 1 cup of blueberries into the batter. Pour into prepared pan. Top with remaining blueberries. Push them in a wee bit. Bake 50-60 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Remove from pan and place on a cooling rack.

Add icing sugar in a bowl. To it add 1 tablespoons of lemon juice, and mix well until it forms a smooth glaze. Add more juice if needed to make it spreadable. When loaf is almost cool spread glaze over the top and let drip down the sides. Let the glaze firm up before putting away.

## We were in a rush, as per usual



Running to and fro from one kids activities to another, grocery shopping, essentials, fuel, church, all the things!

Please don't get me wrong, we LOVE our kids activities and being present for them, but sometimes in the rush to pack a diaper bag, four kids in the car, snacks, equipment etc you sometimes miss opportunities for wonder and magic.

So this particular morning, I was rushing and loudly wrangling kids (parents.. you know what I'm talking about!) sounding off names and items we needed to be sure they didn't get forgotten and already 5 minutes behind schedule.

When I looked up beside my head I stopped in my tracks and stood completely still for a moment in awe.

I turned around and

called my older kids over to see what had caused me to pause on such a busy morning.

A spider web, perfectly uniquely intricately formed and covered in the most unbelievably perfect thick layer of hoarfrost.

Each strand that had been woven with care was intact and sparkling in the suns bright rays.

So, we stood, in awe and wonder, at the miracle gift that God gave us that morning.

A small but impactful reminder that there is wonder all around us if we only take the time to slow down and see it.

I was convicted in that moment to teach our boys to recognize the importance of slowing down. So, they have a shot at recognizing the wonder moments in

their own lives and don't rush by them despite the busy and the rush!

So now, even though we still are busy and often on the run, doing a head count in the car, rambling off lists to each other to make sure we have everything, hauling equipment, a bag of snow gear always, updating calendars daily; we now take time to STOP and observe the wonder and magic around us.

The ice crystals falling in the wind that make it seem like the air sparkles, the thick heavy hoarfrost after a foggy night that hangs and holds onto the tree's, the nights where the stars are so bright and clear it looks like you could reach out and touch them, looking at the Christmas tree from underneath and looking up into the lights and branches.

And for my husband and I, the most amazing magic is the wonder in my boys eyes when they see these things, and that brings the wonder back for us to.

I promise you, that if you take the time to stop and show them, your heart will spark again to.

So be intentional about slowing down this Christmas. Embrace the wonder.

Take time to find the magic.

### NOTICE

#### Under The Oil and Gas Act

**Melita Resources Ltd**  
**Application for a Battery Operating Permit**  
**Melita 15-15-02-29 WPM**

Melita Resources Ltd. has made an application under The Oil and Gas Act for approval to construct and operate a battery located at 15-15-002-29 (WPM) in the Rural Municipality of Two Borders. The proposed battery, to be located in the Pierson field.

If you have any questions or require any further information regarding the application, you may contact the Company or the Petroleum Branch at:

**Melita Resources Ltd.**  
 C/O Brad Caldwell  
 PO Box 457  
 Melita, Manitoba R0M 1L0  
 204.522.3284

**Business, Mining, Trade and Job Creation**  
**Minerals, Petroleum and Geoscience**  
 590 Wellington St. E  
 PO Box 1359  
 Virden Manitoba R0M 2C0  
 204.748.4260

A copy of the application can be obtained from the applicant, viewed at the Petroleum Branch's Virden office or viewed online at: [manitoba.ca/iem/petroleum/applications/index.html](http://manitoba.ca/iem/petroleum/applications/index.html).

If the Petroleum Branch receives no bona fide written submissions objecting to the application by December 27, 2024, the Director of the Petroleum Branch may issue a battery operating permit.




**BE ON TIME!**  
 Advertising deadline:  
**12 noon Tuesday**

# Pet pics help family



PHOTO BY VAH

Father, Teddy Perrin, with William on his knee and three of the family's young children Logan (in front), James and Marissa surrounding Virден Animal Hospital's Santa. The most recent addition to the family Amelia is held by mum, Esther Berg.

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Pet photos with Santa held on Dec. 1 at Virден Animal Hospital, raised approximately \$1500 to help the Berg-Perrin family with med-

ical related needs for two and a half-year-old William. Margaret James of Elkhorn donated the funds she raised with pet bandanas and bowtie sales amounting to \$146. William Berg, 2 yrs, 4 months old, can't walk or sit but

has to be carried and is fed through a tube at present. His mother Esther says, "But he is a very sweet boy. It doesn't take much to get him smiling or laughing, he enjoys watching his siblings play and interacts with kids he loves."

# 4-H Club starts new season



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Lenore 4H Club Santa Clause Parade float.

Submitted  
By REEGAN BELL

The Lenore 4-H Beef Club held our reorganizational meeting on Nov.12. This year we have 29 members (Crandall, Miniota, Kenton, Lenore and Virден). We held our elections for the year. Colby Howard is President, Owen Mytopher is Vice President, Lincoln Judd is Treasurer, Jake Muir is Secretary, and Reegan Bell is Club Reporter.

We will weigh our steers on Dec. 15 at Heartland Livestock Services. We will make a float and buy candy for the Santa Claus parade in Virден on Nov. 30. Our speeches will be on Jan. 21 at the Lenore Hall. We will have our Christmas party at Elliot's toboggan hill and do a gift exchange.

# Debbie Leslie a local artisan



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Debbie and Sharon Leslie at 'Real Pressed Flower Art' booth at Splash of Christmas in Virден.

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Debbie Leslie from Virден has a unique hobby. She has been framing pressed flowers and presenting them in small white frames which she sells as Real Pressed Flower Art.

Along with her mother-in-law Sharon Leslie, Debbie had a table at Virден's craft fair, "A Splash of Christmas" held last Saturday. She loves flowers and grows her own. "I also 'borrow' some from my mother-in-law," she says, glancing at Sharon.

But that's just the beginning of a long process. "I press them for four to six weeks. And every day for the first week, I change the papers." Some will remember finding their mother's precious flowers pressed between the pages of large books. Debbie began using books but soon outgrew that method. She found the design for a press and has made her own wood presses.

They work by pressing flowers down between layers of paper, which absorb the moisture. When the delicate petals, centres and leaves are dry she carefully stores them for future creations.

"These are Sharon's delphinium." Debbie points to a picture made a year

ago noting that the delphinium flower petals kept their deep purple colour. "They really are one of my favourite flowers."

She has framed golden rods, found behind her home. Personable pansy blooms are delicately framed, another example of Leslie's careful attention to detail, along with a theme printed on the picture.

"Actually, this week I'm working on daisies." Like most artisan crafts, this one takes time and patience. She has learned a lot in the two and a half years of flower pressing through following crafters on Instagram and other social media sites as well as taking some Zoom classes. Through trial and error she's found the best flowers that don't fade fast.

Material comes from far and wide. A picture themed 'Shine Brightly' is made from ranunculus out of a friend's garden. Debbie adds, "And my sister sent me four leaf clovers, from B.C. And forget-me-nots, I grew. But some are from a roadside," such as the brown-eyed-Susan.

"And I am from B.C., so we went out to B.C. and I took three presses with me." Needless to say, she found many items to press, some in the forest. She finds beauty everywhere.

## Reston Pipestone Pastoral Charge Christmas Cheer Program

"Give, and it shall be given unto you." Luke 6:38

No item donations can be accepted but monetary donations to this project are welcome.

By cheque payable to (Reston Pipestone Pastoral Charge  
Mail to: Box 148, Reston, MB R0M 1X0

Or

By e-transfer to: rucpuc@mymts.net

To apply for a voucher or submit a name of someone you think would qualify for one, please contact Reston United Church at 204-877-3702 or by email to rucpuc@mymts.net by Dec. 13.

(All information will be kept strictly confidential)

# Smith participates in Ottawa ceremony



PHOTO BY NATIONAL RCL NEWS

A member of Virden Royal Canadian Legion No. 8 and former Cadet CO, Kelvon Smith of Virden (coat on, wearing beret, near lamp post) marches with veterans in Ottawa Remembrance Service.

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A retired Virden school teacher marched with veterans at Ottawa's Remembrance Day. Kel Smith's bucket list included being part of Remembrance Day in Canada's capital and this past November, he accomplished that. "It was just something that I wanted to do before I got old, while I could still talk, walk and think, and ... I did it," states Smith.

"I took my favourite mode of transportation - the train - the Canadian, from Winnipeg to Toronto." The Canadian arrived in Toronto two hours ahead of schedule giving Smith a four-hour window to do some looking around before catching his next train to Ottawa, "a very new train, fast, comfortable, silent."

## CADET KEENER

Smith's interest in all things military began as a boy in Winnipeg. "Dad was a firefighter and Mum worked at Eaton's. We lived in the Congress Apartments on River Ave." A boarder lived with them, a sailor from World War II who'd been wounded; and the apartment block caretaker's son was a sea cadet. With these influences, Smith joined the sea cadets at 13, jumping in with both feet.

But Cadets became all engrossing. He failed grade 12 and his parents said, "You have to quit cadets," so I listened to my parents." But the teen was allowed to continue working at Eaton's store. He repeated grade 12 and admits the issue was "too much cadets. I was a keener."

While earning bachelor degrees in arts and education at the University of Manitoba, Smith returned to the cadet corps and became a 'snotty' (junior officer).

His teaching career began in Oak Lake School, hired by Superintendent Harry Chornoboy in 1971, but he soon moved to Goulter School in Virden. He'd joined the Royal Canadian Sea Cadets in Brandon and became a CO with Swiftsure. It was years later, 1993, when Smith transferred to Virden's RCA XII Manitoba Dragoons Cadet Corps. He used summers to participate in cadet camps across Canada and once in an exchange program at the Charleston Naval base, South Carolina.

## OTTAWA

In Ottawa this past November, Smith had Saturday and Sunday for sightseeing before the Monday ceremony. On his way to visit the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Que. he noticed the National Gallery of Canada (art) was on the way.

"I thought, 'this will be easy, I'll be in and out in no time' ... I spent the whole morning in there. Fantastic! The next day I went to the [Canadian Museum of Nature]. That was a hike."

Smith joined a walking tour of the war memorials. Even animals - dogs, pigeons and horses - are recognized for service. He was impressed by the aboriginal war memorial and said the Korean war memorial was "the most peaceful of them all. It shows a Canadian soldier holding a Korean child with his sister looking up at the soldier. I'm glad I was on the walking tour or else I would have missed out on a lot of things."

But he felt their tour guide was out of touch as he con-

tinually referred to the Red River Resistance as the Riel Rebellion. "I don't know if Ontario has forgiven us yet," he grins wryly. "It's the winners who always tell history."

He came across the GOOGLE building, and entered, hoping he'd get some answers to a problem he was having with Google service. "Trying to get a live person to talk to is impossible," he said. He was told there, no one could help him. It was a training facility.

Sunday was Smith's biggest day - recording 15,000 steps.

On Monday, he laid the wreath he'd brought from Virden's Royal Canadian Legion No. 8 at the Canadian Peace Keepers Memorial before walking to the Chateau Laurier hotel where the company of veterans were told to 'form up' under direction of the Navy Petty Officer.

The veterans' parade followed the pipes and drums to The Response (war memorial). "We had the best seat ever. The prime minister came and then we had to wait for the governor general." The story by a silver cross mother touched Smith, as she told of losing two sons who'd served in Afghanistan, to suicide.

After the service the veteran party marched off, giving 'eyes right' to the governor general at the reviewing stand on their way to the Chateau Laurier. It was a long stand at attention as the rest of the parade passed, and Smith admitted it was gruelling, he wasn't used to that anymore. Passing by the veterans contingent were the Royal Military College in red coats and pith helmets, the Governor General's Foot Guards (bearskin hats), the naval, army and air force reserves, followed by the RCMP and cadets. Smith noted, "Every group that went by gave us, the veterans, an 'eyes right' (respectful acknowledgement)."

Smith skipped lunch at the Chateau Laurier in order to lay his poppy at the war memorial. There, he met a young man, an education student in his final year at University of Ottawa. The student commented on Smith's Metis sash. The retired teacher and the soon to be teacher talked at the monument.

Kelvon Smith thoroughly enjoyed his experience. He said the most important thing was "the people I met. Everyone treated me well."



**21 DEC**  
2:00pm

Derrick Theatre | Free Admission

Free Popcorn & Drink provided by:





# SPORTS

## BAMBRIDGE PROVIDES OFFENCE FOR OIL KINGS



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

#12 Elisha Bambridge confers with team mates during the Nov. 23 home game against the Minnedosa Bombers.

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

**E**lisha Bambridge has been a key offensive contributor this hockey season for the Virden Oil Kings.

As of Dec. 1, the forward was fourth on the senior team in points with nine through six games. He had scored four goals. Last season Bambridge posted 15 points, with three goals, in 16 contests.

"I've had a lucky start to the season," Bambridge said.

"We have a really strong group and a lot of skilled guys to play with."

The 4-2-0-1 Oil Kings lead the Tigers Hills Hockey League's Western Division, as of Dec. 1. Their next game is Dec. 14 in Melita. Last week the squad fell in a shootout 5-4, to the Killarney Shamrocks.

Bambridge is originally from Melita. While studying at the University of Manitoba, he played four seasons for the Seven Oaks Raiders of the Manitoba Major Junior Hockey League. He suited up for three regular season contests and two playoff games with the

Manitoba Junior Hockey League's Virden Oil Capitals.

Bambridge played a couple of seasons for the Melita Bisons in the THHL. He moved to Virden in 2021 and started his Oil Kings career in 2022.

"Elisha has been a tremendous addition to our team since joining us from his hometown Melita Bisons," Oil Kings coach and general manager Ryan Mathieson said. "Bambi has all the tools you could want with size, speed and hockey IQ to go along with being a gem in the room.

Elisha has stepped up with a big play for us numerous times between big goals and his physical play. We are certainly happy to have him on our side after having to play against him on Melita. Since moving to Virden, Bambi has been a great fit in our dressing room along with the Oilers dugout in the summer, showcasing how well respected a teammate he is."

Bambridge has liked suiting up for the Oil Kings.

"I've really enjoyed getting to know the guys. Before I started playing in Virden, I knew of the guys but didn't actually know them," said Bambridge, who works for Baker Hughes in Virden and Waskada.

### Shamrocks 5, Oil Kings 4 SO

Killarney's Ty Enns was the only shooter out of six to score in the shootout on Nov. 29. He lifted the Shamrocks to a 5-4 road win.

In the first period, Virden jumped out to a 2-0 lead. Derek LeBlanc and Bradley Bowles each scored on the powerplay. Killarney responded with three goals to take a 3-2 lead. Two of those markers came on the powerplay.

In the second session, Tanner Lewis knotted the score with a powerplay goal. Enns gave the Shamrocks a 4-3 lead less than five minutes into the third. LeBlanc lit the lamp shorthanded to tie the game at 4-4.

Virden's Eric Reid made 15 saves. Bradley Bowles and LeBlanc each had three points. Lewis and Jason Bowles recorded two points each.

Brian Archibald stopped 25 shots for Killarney. Scoring for the Shamrocks, in addition to Enns, were Brock Sutherland, Brett Opperman, and Kyle Peters.

## SPORTS NOTES: GREENBANK COMPETES AT CHALLENGE

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

**L**ast weekend Skate Virden's Rory Greenbank competed against many of the nation's top athletes in her sport in her age group.

Greenbank participated in the Skate Canada Challenge, Nov. 28-Dec. 1, in Winnipeg. It serves as a qualifying event for the Canadian National Skating Championships. In the junior women singles competition, the Moosomin area product posted a short program score of 28.96 and a freeskate mark of 93.03.

"The most enjoyable thing about Challenge, for me, is the atmosphere," Greenbank said. "I had an amazing support team there for me, which is one of the most important things you need to succeed, and even though it is a competitive place, everyone is very friendly."

Greenbank has trained in Virden for seven years. On Nov. 28, Skate Virden posted Facebook photos of its skaters taking a break from practice to watch a livestream of Greenbank competing at the Skate Canada Challenge.

"I love the support that comes from all the members of the club, coaches, parents, other athletes," Greenbank said. "Everybody wants to see everyone succeed in the sport, which creates a positive atmosphere. All of the coaches in Virden are amazing and we are very lucky to have them. They make sure that everyone is accomplishing the goals they set for themselves, and they make sure that we have fun while trying to reach those goals."

Two former Skate Virden students also participated in the Challenge. Breken Brezden finished seventh in senior women singles and qualified for nationals. Marty Haubrich, who trained in Virden, and his senior pairs partner Cristina Lyons also booked their ticket to nationals.

On Dec. 14-15, a dozen Skate Virden students will take part in the Manitoba Pre-Novice and Novice Sectionals and Gordon Linney Open.

### VCI Volleyball at Provincials

The Virden Collegiate Institute volleyball team wrapped up a successful season with an appearance at the provincial tournament.

At the Nov. 28-30 event hosted by Winnipeg's Westgate Mennonite Collegiate, VCI went 1-2 in the round robin. It defeated Calvin Christian School of Winnipeg in the first round of the playoffs. The Golden Bears fell in the second round to the Stonewall Rams, who would finish second to the host Wings.

### Freeman Rink Members Compete in Mixed

Members of Virden's Jace Freeman rink split up last week to compete in the U21 Mixed Doubles Qualifier, Nov. 27-Dec. 1, in Brandon. Each member of the successful junior rink competed in the event with a female partner.

The qualifying teams from the event advance to the 2025 Canadian Under-21 World Mixed Doubles Qualifier in Summerside, P.E.I., in March. None of the rinks with a Team Freeman member were able to secure a berth.

"It was a weekend to try out a different format," said Graham Freeman, the coach of the Freeman rink. "They played various teams from other provinces as well which is always a good experience. I think they all really enjoyed it, but it's not a discipline that any of them really practice or dedicate themselves to during the season. They all did quite well and, although they never made the playoffs, they played very competitively."

Freeman teamed with Shaela Hayward of Carman. Her father, Darcy, is originally from Virden. Lead



PHOTO BY DANIELLE EARL PHOTOGRAPHY

Rory Greenbank competes at the Skate Canada Challenge.

Luke Robins of Winnipeg curled with his sister Ella. Second Nick Senff of Winnipeg is the son of former Virden resident Danny Senff. He competed with Keira Krahn of the Hayward rink. Third Tim Marin, who is originally from the Maritimes, teamed up with Jensen Letham from Winnipeg.

This weekend the Freeman rink will be back together and competing in the Manitoba Men's Viterra Regionals Playdowns. They are hoping to earn a spot for the men's provincial championship. In Virden on Dec. 13-15, the rink will be competing in a Manitoba Curling Tour men's event that also has a Viterra berth on the line for eligible teams. It will feature Manitoba rinks and three U.S. team.

# SPORTS

## THE VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS ONE WIN LAST WEEK AND TWO LOSSES



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

The Oil Capitals are wearing their special jerseys for Hockey Fights Cancer game from Saturday, November 30.

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Capitals earned a win last week and suffered two losses.

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League squad outshot the Winnipeg Freeze 44-16. That offensive pressure led to a 6-4 victory.

"We did a good job getting pucks in behind their defence and then using our forecheck to turn pucks over," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "We had some good offensive zone time with puck possession and were able to get chances from inside the dots with traffic at the net."

Later in the week, against the MJHL West Division-leading Dauphin Kings, the Oil Caps fell 6-3 and 4-1. Ramsey felt the Oil Caps were "pretty inconsistent" for a lot of the weekend.

"When we played fast, we couldn't execute and when we were able to make plays, we were too slow," he said. "Our mistakes were too big and created some grade A chances for them. Tough to beat the better teams when we are inconsistent in so many parts of our game."

The Oil Capitals entered this week with an 11-14-0-0

record. After the Empire-Advance deadline, the team was slated to play in Waywayseecappo on Dec. 3 and to host the Neepawa Titans on Dec. 5. On Dec. 8, the Oil Capitals are on the road against the Winnipeg Blues.

### Personnel Moves

Last week the Oil Caps recalled netminder Gavin Renwick. The Wellwood product started the season in Virden and played two games before a roster change occurred. With Peyton Shore being recalled by the Western Hockey League's Red Deer Rebels, Renwick rejoined the squad. On Nov. 28, Shore made 38 saves to backstop the Rebels to a 3-2 victory over Prince George in his WHL regular season debut.

The Oil Capitals traded rookie forward Campbell Epp to the Winnipeg Blues for a player development fee. The Winnipegger had four goals and five points in 16 games for Virden this season.

### Oil Caps 6, Freeze 4

Maxx Hamelin led the Oil Capitals with two goals on Nov. 27. Virden's own Bryce Bryant recorded a goal and two assists for three points. An injury kept Bryant out of action between Oct. 21 and Nov. 15. In six games, as of Dec. 1, since his return, Bryant had seven points.

"I've been able to have some confidence since coming back and that has helped me with making plays and getting offensive zone time," Bryant said. "When I returned, we were winning games and battling in practice, which builds confidence for me and the team and that's what drives offensive ability."

Carson Wright and Daniel Tokariwski each contributed two assists against the Freeze. Scoring for Virden in addition to Bryant and Hamelin were Tyler Dodgson on a powerplay, Luke Robson, and Oak Lake Beach's Tyson Draper. Virden goalie Nik Trakakis made 12 saves for the win.

Playing at home, Braxton Burdeny started in net for the Freeze. He made seven saves on 10 shots. He was relieved partway through the first period by Ben Chornomydz. He stopped 31 of the 34 shots that were sent his way. Nicholas Carlson, Dominic Thomas, Julian Fedora, and Nicholas Cullen (on a powerplay) had the Freeze's goals.

### Kings 6, Oil Caps 3

Special teams were on display in the first period on Nov. 29. Both teams scored two powerplay goals as the host Kings took a 3-2 lead. Dauphin outscored Virden 2-1 in the second session and 1-0 in the third.

Virden product Ty Plaisier and Moosomin's Marshall Light had the Oil Caps' powerplay goals. Hamelin had an even strength goal in the second. Noel Englot recorded two assists. Trakakis started and made seven saves on 11 shots. Renwick turned away 15 of the 17 shots that came his way.

Scoring for the Kings were Cayden Glover (two), Declan Hoad, Havryil Simchuk, Rylan Gage, and Ethan Williment. Dauphin goalie Cole Sheffield made 31 saves.

### Kings 4, Oil Caps 1

In Virden on Nov. 30, the Dauphin team led 1-0 and 2-1 at the intermissions. Brett Sabel scored Virden's lone goal. Renwick had 29 saves.

Bryson Yaschyshyn made 21 saves for the Kings. Dauphin's scorers were Joshua Schmidt, Simchuk, Glover, and Williment.

## OIL CAPS' PLATT PUTS UP POINTS IN BUNCHES

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

In his second junior season, Virden Oil Capitals forward Rhett Platt has proven he can be explosive offensively.

Platt posted four points, including a goal, in a 9-3 win over the Swan Valley Stampeders on Nov. 15. Versus the Waywayseecappo Wolverines, on Nov. 3, the 6-foot-2, 190-pounder had a goal and two assists in a 4-2 Oil Caps victory. Through 17 games, Platt had three goals and eight points.

"Rhett is a physical guy that can be heavy to play against but also has skill to make good plays with the puck offensively," Oil Capitals head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He is willing to hang on the

puck to extend time in the offensive zone and not afraid of the hard areas of the rink. When he is focused on his own game he can have a big impact for us."

An injury in Virden's season opener kept Platt out of the lineup for a few contests. Shortly after he returned, the physical player was suspended for a "second fight in the last 10 minutes of game." The Regina product said that early on he "couldn't really get anything going."

"I am starting to find my stride and have the confidence to make plays," he said. "I've been playing with Marshall Light (of Moosomin) and



(Cardiac's) Noel Englot. We've had some good chemistry so far and just play some good ole Sask hockey."

Platt started last season in Virden. He played five games for the Oil



Caps, recording an assist before joining the Junior B Pilot Butte Storm of the Prairie Junior Hockey League. He had six goals and 14 points in 17 games for the Storm. "The biggest thing it helped was getting my confidence back with the puck," said Platt, who lived at home and attended the University of Regina for the second semester.

Ramsey has noticed differences in Platt's game from a season ago.

"Since last year, he has gotten physically stronger and his skating has improved allowing him to get to places quicker to use his big frame to be hard on opponents," the Oil Caps bench boss said.

Platt is pleased to be back with the Oil Caps. He billets in the Hargrave area with Greg and Cathy Tough. His former U18 AAA teammate Englot billets there as well. Platt noted "lots of cards get played around here." Of rejoining the team, he said:

"I'd say the thing I've enjoyed most about being back is how close we are this year. We got a really tight group, and I think it's helping us string on some wins as of late."

# SPORTS

## GENERALS' COACH BROWN HONOURED WITH TWO AWARDS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the Moosomin Generals organization flank award winner Ace Brown of Pipestone. Pictured from left to right are Layne Kyle, Chris Anderson, Ace Brown, Jason Schenn, Dexter Mondor (head coach), and Luc Mullinder (guest speaker).

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The opportunity to win awards is definitely not why Pipestone's Ace Brown coaches football.

However, due to his hard work, coaching ability, dedication, and gridiron passion, recognition has come. Coaching in the Moosomin Generals program, the former Lenore resident was named the Rural Manitoba Football League's Coach of the Year. At the Generals annual banquet, he was also presented with the Club Volunteer award.

"Both of these awards are so meaningful due the standards our (Generals) family has set to achieve these," Brown said. "After receiving these, I needed to take a couple minutes to regain some composure before I could say a few words of thanks. Emotions of pride and joy were so strong and sharing that with my people was amazing."

This fall Brown helped the Generals win their second Rural Manitoba Football League championship. They beat the Swan Valley Tigers, 31-28, in the finals. Brown serves as the Moosomin-based Generals program's defensive coordinator and assistant head coach. He joined the

Moosomin program in 2017.

"What keeps me going back is the family and friends created and gained. Most importantly seeing and developing these kids," he said. "Trying to be a positive role model and influence that can contribute to them being successful in their future in life and in the sport."

Generals president and general manager Jason Schenn said that Brown is very deserving of the recognition he received.

"Coaching is a volunteer pursuit. Most people get into coaching because their kids take up a sport and often, leave coaching after their kids graduate," Schenn said. "Ace got into it because he truly loves the sport and wanted to still be involved after his playing days were done. He has given freely of his time in both spring and fall to travel here for practices and everywhere we go in Manitoba for games, often using holidays from work to coach. That requires a huge amount of commitment, especially for someone who lives 45 minutes away and does not have kids. Beyond that, he has also been a volunteer coach for multiple annual RMFL All-Star events and the Rural Challenge Cup event between Team RMFL and Team

(Saskatchewan)."

Brown was a standout player at Virden Collegiate Institute. He was named the 2009 RMFL League Offensive MVP. Brown played for the Westman Wolverines in their first Manitoba Major Junior Football League season. He starred on both sides of the ball for that team for a number of seasons.

When Brown first joined the Generals, he was a defensive back coach. He moved up to be a defensive coordinator assistant coach and then defensive coordinator. This season he added the assistant head coach role. Schenn said Brown has grown as both a coach and leader during his time with organization.

"Over the years Ace has embraced self-development," the Moosomin general manager said. "As he has advanced in his career with Nutrien, he has taken the principles of leadership he has learned and applied them consistently in his work life and football life. He is a tough coach that expects accountability, personal responsibility, and cares about the young adults our players are becoming. He may be teaching them how to be successful in this sport, but every one of those skills are transferrable into life after sport for these kids whether they realize it or not. He helps us build strong, resilient young adults that are better prepared to face the highs and lows life will throw at them. We are very grateful to have him as part of the leadership of our program."

Brown was taken aback when he first saw his name listed as the Generals' nomination for RMFL Coach of the Year. He said, "Just the vote of confidence from our team and the coaches around me was an honour. Receiving the recognition from the league was very meaningful as there is a lot of work that goes into all the teams around the league and to be recognized for going above and beyond means so much as this has been such a passion."

Over the years, Brown has witnessed all the effort and time that goes into making the Generals program successful. He was surprised to be named the Club Volunteer award winner.

"The Generals have had many great volunteers that have put in years of dedication and to be put into the small circle of those is an honour and an accomplishment," Brown said.

## BREZDEN HANDLES HERSELF WELL IN INTERNATIONAL DEBUT

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

An athlete with ties to Skate Virden competed well in her first international assignment.

Breken Brezden finished 10th overall at the International Skating Union Challenger Series' Trophy Metropole in Nice, France, which was held Oct. 16-20. It was the first time the Dauphin product, who now trains in Ontario, was assigned to compete internationally for Canada.

"It really meant the world," Brezden said. "I was so happy to have received that first email saying that they'd be sending me to France. Being able to represent Canada is such an honour, especially as a girl from a small town in Manitoba. Earning this opportunity just proved that all the hard work and training I dedicated my summer to paid off - which is a great feeling."

Brezden recently secured a berth for the Canadian National Skating Championships, Jan. 14-19, in Laval, Que. She did so by placing seventh at the Skate Canada Challenge, Nov. 28-Dec. 1, in Winnipeg. Brezden was 11th after the short program and moved up with a fifth-place freeskate.

Brezden spent several years developing with Skate Virden and working with coach Patty Hole. She appreciates how the organization continues to encourage her.

"The support from Skate Virden makes me so happy," Brezden said. "It gives me so much motivation and confidence when I see that people from all over Manitoba and Saskatchewan are still keeping up with my skating

and cheering me on.

"So many of the girls I grew up with and used to train with still send me messages of encouragement, which makes me very happy. It is a great feeling knowing that even if we all don't keep in close contact, we are still supporting each other from afar."

At the competition in France, Brezden was 20th after the short program. She had a strong free skate - placing fifth - to move up to 10th.

"What impressed me in France is how Breken handled herself ... After an uncharacteristic short program, she kept a level head and came back the next day very strong," said Jennifer Jackson, her current coach. "She analyzed the whole competition and came back to Hamilton ready to keep pushing forward."

While overseas, Brezden got to spend some time exploring with her family. Her mother is Jennifer Andrews and dad is Brian Brezden.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Breken Brezden poses for a tourist style picture at Nice, France.

"When I was in France, I didn't actually get to skate until about a day and a half after we got there, so my parents and I got the chance to do a bit of walking and touring of the city," she said. "We saw the port and visited the beach, which was very beautiful."

# CLASSIFIEDS

## Auction

**Online McSherry Auctions**  
**Estate & Moving**  
 Featuring Coins  
 December 11th @ 7:00PM  
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## Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY  
 AGNES HELEN JANE SMITH  
 OCTOBER 18, 1935 - OCTOBER 17, 2024



Agnes was born Oct 18, 1935, in Kandahar SK on the family homestead. Mom spent her childhood days in Kandahar and Siemens Sk. As a young girl, mom moved with her parents and 3 brothers to Virden. Mom found employment with Doctor and Mrs. R.J. Monteith.

In 1956, mom married David Wallace Smith of Virden. To this union 3 children

were born, Brenda Agnes, Sharon Heather and Robert Dean.

In the late 50's mom began working as a cook at the Gulf restaurant. She left there in 1973 to spend the next 7 years working for Vanny and Sylvia Hellman at Stedman's and the Virden Footwear.

In 1980 mom made a change and went to work at the Westman Nursing Home as a housecleaner but decided this wasn't for her. So, she switched to being a Dietary Cook. This lasted 20 years until she retired in 2000.

Mom loved to travel. She enjoyed visiting her children and grandchildren. The travel bug hit her hard as she travelled to Scotland a few times with dad. Mom travelled to the Maritimes, Florida, and Alaska. Some of these trips were with her mom and friend Pat Robinson. The last few years before she moved to Elkwood Manor, she went on some cruises with her friend Lenore Peacock and some of Lenore's family. She really enjoyed these trips.

Mom had many hobbies that she enjoyed until her eyesight failed her. She loved to knit, crochet, sew and quilt. One of the highlights was to be able to make each of her grandchildren a special quilt.

Mom will also be remembered for her love of flowers. When not working, she could be found out in her flower garden.

Mom was also a lifetime member of the Royal Canadian Legion. She spent many years working with the Legion Ladies Auxiliary.

Mom was predeceased by her husband in 2005. She was also predeceased by her parents George and Gladys Crawford, in-laws Charlie and Nellie Smith. Brothers James and Edward Crawford, sister-in-law Marie Crawford, nephews Dale, Jimmy, and Chad Crawford.

Left to mourn her passing are Brenda Gary Frazer, Sharon Derald Henry, and Rob Smith, 9 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren, as well as 1 brother Elymer Crawford.

We will miss you mom.

## Coming Events

**SCARTH COMMUNITY CLUB BREAKFAST**  
 Sunday, Dec. 8  
 9:00-11:00 a.m.  
*Everyone Welcome*

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## Help Wanted



### EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ASSISTANT CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

#### Job Description

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated individual with excellent administration and finance skills for the term position of **Assistant Chief Administrative Officer**. This term job posting has a possibility to become a permanent position.

Under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the Assistant Chief Administrative Officer will assist the CAO in performing all duties as directed by the CAO and to act on behalf of the CAO in their absence; providing services to all residents and ratepayers in an efficient and effective manner.

The successful candidate should possess excellent financial and managerial attributes.

#### Duties and Responsibilities

- Assist the CAO in the daily operations of the Municipality
- Develop reports, by-laws, and municipal policies
- Develop, manage, and administer annual and multi-year capital and operating budgets
- Create strategic and long-range people resource planning for the Municipality - ensuring an engaged workforce resulting in optimal people performance
- Coordinate approval process of subdivisions, conditional use orders and variation orders with conditions from Council
- Act as the Municipality's FIPPA Officer and Senior Election Official
- All other duties as assigned

#### Skills and Qualifications

- Holds a Certificate in Manitoba Municipal Administration, or
- Professional designation in any related field of the assigned portfolio
- Work experience with Muniware or similar municipal accounting software will be an asset
- Knowledge of Manitoba municipal provincial and federal legislation relating to municipalities
- Knowledge and experience of the Manitoba Planning Act and processes
- Strong communication, people management, and organizational skills

### MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTANT

#### Job Description

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated individual for the maternity leave term position of **Municipal Accountant** at the Virden Municipal Office. The position starts immediately with a projected end date of March 31, 2026. The successful candidate will be responsible and accountable for the overall financial management of the Municipality. This position will report directly to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

#### Duties and Responsibilities

- Assist the Municipality with long term financial and strategic planning, and risk management strategies
- Assist Council with the preparation and implementation of the Annual Financial Plan, as approved by Council
- Ensure that all programs and services are delivered to all residents and ratepayers in a manner making best efficient and effective use of the financial resources of the Municipality and as outlined in the Municipality's Financial Plan
- Manage the ongoing control of the accounting, budgeting, credit, insurance, tax, and borrowing issues of the Municipality
- Manage payroll administration and submission of all documentations required for the municipal benefits plan; Workers Compensation Board and other relevant legislative requirements
- Supervise the day-to-day financial operations of the Municipality and continually strive to improve financial operating procedures and improving upon the control systems in place where possible
- Maintain the Municipality's ledger accounts and be solely responsible for their ongoing review and any/all changes
- Ensure that all external reporting is completed in a timely manner as required within Provincial and Federal legislation
- Uphold a strict level of confidentiality
- All other duties as assigned

#### Skills and Qualifications

- Previous work experience in a financial management capacity, preferably working in a municipal environment is required
- A Chartered Professional Accountant designation will be an asset
- A Certificate in Manitoba Municipal Administration will be an asset
- Experience with the Muniware Accounting Program will be an asset

### WEED SUPERVISOR

#### Job Description

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated individual for the full-time seasonal position of **Weed Supervisor**.

Under the direction of the Chief Administrative Officer and Council, the Weed Supervisor is responsible for the Enforcement of the Noxious Weed Act and other weed control activities in areas under the Municipality's jurisdiction.

#### Duties and Responsibilities

- Monitor, mow, and perform herbicide application on properties and roadsides in the Municipality.
- Operate weed control equipment and vehicle with sprayer.
- Keep daily records of all activities performed and prepare weekly and annual reports to the municipality and Province.
- Develop and maintain positive internal and external communication. Takes appropriate action to address issues pertaining to weed and pest control issues. Must have the ability to deal with public concerns and inquiries.

#### Skills and Qualifications

- Must be eligible for and capable of obtaining Provincial applicators license (Rural Municipal) and permits pertaining to the use of pesticides and herbicides under the Manitoba Pesticide and Fertilizers Control Act (license), the Manitoba Environment Act (pesticide use permit) and Canada Pest Control Products Act (product label uses)
- Valid Class 5 licence (Class 3 or higher would be considered an asset)
- Familiarity with noxious weeds, their identification, biology, and control as well as the implications of soil and other conditions in the area is considered an asset
- Knowledge and application of various pest control methodologies
- A familiarity and good working knowledge of related statutes and regulation
- Computer proficiency (MS Office)
- Ability to learn department specific software including ESRI, Field Maps, Mobile App
- A degree or diploma in Agriculture is considered an asset
- Proven analytical problem solving and conflict management skills
- Will work mostly unsupervised, must have excellent time management, and organizational skills
- Ability to work successfully with the Transportation Superintendent and co-workers

A complete job description is available upon request. The successful candidate can expect a salary reflective of their experience and qualifications. Interested candidates should submit a resume with three references by:

E-mail: [info@wallace-woodworth.com](mailto:info@wallace-woodworth.com)  
 Mail/Drop-off: R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth Municipal Office  
 154023 PR 257 Box 2200 (Corner of 83 Hwy & PR 257) Virden, Manitoba R0M 2C0  
 Resumes will be reviewed as they are received.

This posting will remain open until a suitable candidate is located.  
 Only those selected for an interview will be contacted

# CLASSIFIEDS

## Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY  
 REGINALD ARTHUR GEORGE AVERILL  
 SEPTEMBER 27, 1967 - NOVEMBER 21, 2024



Reg was born in Brandon where he attended Riverview, Earl Oxford School, and Crocus Plains High School

He leaves to mourn his wife Christina Hume, his son's Alexander and Nicholas, his sister Reicie Averill, brother's Tim, Ron and Dan (Tracey) Averill, numerous aunts, uncles, niece's and nephews, as well many friends and coworker's.

He is predeceased by his mom Cheryl and father Reg as well as both sets of grandparents.

Early in life Reg decided that he had no interest in usual high school learning. He preferred hands on and in high school he took courses in carpentry. The projects he brought home were amazing. He made a matching set of bedside tables for mom and dad.

He was always willing to try something for the first time. In high school his uncle took Reg deer hunting for the first time. He didn't understand how powerful the kick back was for a 22 rifle. Consequently, he was sporting a pretty nice black eye when he came home. This didn't stop him though he continued going hunting with his uncle.

He wasn't much of a cook either but like hunting he continued to try. Once Reg tried to make stove top stuffing for the first time. Let's just say it was stuffing soup because he read the instructions wrong and added too much water. I can't remember if he ever tried making it again.

Reg had a wide variety of jobs after he graduated from high school. He worked construction for many years. His job was to insulate the walls and apply poly and tape to help keep homes warm in our brutal winters.

At one point he worked at Maple Leaf but soon figured out this wasn't what he wanted to do for the rest of his life.

He spent some time at Blue Water Wash pressure washing semi trailers. This was a very physically and mentally demanding job and he didn't stay long and soon moved on. His last job was at Four Seasons in Virden. He stayed there the longest and this would be his last place of employment.

In the last few years of his life Reg met Christina who seemed to bring to him what he had been searching for his whole life. Christina was Reg's whole world. When he wasn't working, he was taking care of Christina. His world revolved around helping her and making sure she was taken care of.

Reg's passing has left a hole in this world that no one can fill. We will never see his silly smile and won't hear him laugh at a joke only he understands. Reg we love you so much and hope that you are at peace and reunited with our parents. Till we see you again Fudge keep on smiling to only jokes you understand.

Funeral service will be held at Oak Lake Legion Hall Friday, January 3, 2025 at 11:00 a.m. with Tanis Podobni officiating. Fellowship and refreshments to follow.

For those who so desire, memorial tributes in memory of Reg may be made to CancerCare Manitoba 675 McDermot Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3E 0V9 or to Fusion Credit Union in Oak Lake, MB to go towards funeral costs.

Messages of condolence may be placed at [www.carscaddenfuneralchapel.com](http://www.carscaddenfuneralchapel.com).



## Help Wanted



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**VERY LITTLE.**

# New buses on the way for Fort La Bosse

By Dale Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The regular meeting of the board of trustees for Fort La Bosse School Division was held in the division office boardroom on Nov. 25.

Present were chairperson Craig Russell, vice-chairperson Becky Flannery, Teresa Vandenberghe, Kayla Moore, Bonnie James, superintendent of schools Barry Pitz, secretary-treasurer Kent Reid and supervisor of operations Mark Johnston. Nicole Chaske sent regrets.

Superintendent Barry Pitz presented resolutions approving staffing adjustments and leave of absence requests. These included teacher general agreements for Alexa Park from March 3 to June 27, 2025, Caroline Friesen from Nov. 18 to Dec. 31st, 2024, Dustin Asham from April 17 to June 27, 2025 and for Howard Hole from Dec. 9, 2024 to Jan. 24, 2025.

Motions were also presented to approve Boundary Lane Colony School swimming and field trips where 29 students will swim at the Canalta Hotel in Moosomin on Dec. 4.

On Dec. 17, 31 students will volunteer at the long-term care centre in Moosomin and on Dec. 19 they will go bowling at the Moosomin Sportsplex.

Three Reston School Grade 11 & 12 students will attend hockey games in Swan River on Nov. 23 and 24, and 10 students will travel to Baldur for the provincial volleyball tournament on Nov. 28-30.

Secretary-treasurer Kent Reid discussed the recent Consumer Price Index (CPI) and unemployment report and its potential impact on the division's financial position.

A resolution was presented to approve the division office hours of operations for the Christmas period. The office will be closed on Dec. 27, Dec. 30, and Dec. 31, 2024, in addition to the recognized statutory holidays of Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.

Supervisor of operations Mark Johnston provided updates on the status of the two new school buses that are purchased and awaiting delivery. A

resolution to purchase a 2025 International CE 65 passenger school bus from Maxim Truck and Trailer in the amount of \$169,590 plus taxes was approved. This bus is in stock and available immediately.

The board approved the payment to United Muffler Corp. of \$5,263.23 for school

bus exhaust parts.

## OTHER BUSINESS

Trustees reviewed a response from the Assistant Deputy Minister of Municipal and Northern Affairs on clarification of property tax exemption for school divisions as they relate to special service and local improvement levies on ancillary

buildings.

Correspondence was reviewed from Gakino'Amaage Teach for Canada, a group that is working with First Nations to recruit, prepare, and support committed teachers.

Other correspondence was received from the Manitoba Collaborative Indigen-

ous Education Blueprint, a partnership involving Manitoba's six universities, three colleges, Indigenous organizations, government partners, and the Manitoba School Boards Association whose goal is to prioritize excellence in Indigenous education in Manitoba.

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**CENTRE OF IT ALL**

## Viriden & Area Food Cupboard

Non-perishable food donations can be dropped off at the Town Office.

## Noon Hour Shiny

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12:00-1:00 PM at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.

Seasonal passes at the Town Office: \$125 + GST or \$5 for drop-in (paid at the rink).

## Upcoming Council Meetings: December 17

Please Note:  
Town of Virden Council meetings begin at 7:00 PM

## LiveBarn

Now available at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.

Use code **togp-live** for 10% off.

Visit [livebarn.com](http://livebarn.com) for more information.

## Viriden Christmas Cheer

Donations of unwrapped toys will be accepted at the Town Office until December 6.

## Water Meter Reminder

If you received a notice and have not yet had your water meter changed, please call

**Skulmoski Plumbing at 204-851-8157** to schedule your appointment.

# HOOKED ON CRAFTING AND CRAFT SALES THIS SEASON



PHOTOS BY OLIVER NOLAN

Nineteen vendors came out for the day at the Oak Lake Community Hall and Ox Cart Station. It's all fun and games until someone loses their needle.

By Jessica Coulter  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On November 30, the Oak Lake Griswold United Pastoral Charge Church hosted the Oak Lake Craft Show at the Oak Lake Community Hall and the Ox Cart Station. Nineteen vendors came out to show their wares for the day.

The \$5 admission fee got you in the door to explore and shop. It also got you entered in a draw for the door prize. The door prize was a bunch of terrific items donated by the vendors at the show. Ernie Thiessen won the door prize. All proceeds from the door will go towards

the Oak Lake Griswold United Pastoral Charge Church.

The kitchen, run by Margaret White, served up lunch for the attendees and the vendors. Fantastic Potato Soup and Hamburger Soup with a side biscuit and dessert for anyone that was hungry and not full of all the delicious treats being sold. About 100 people made it out for the day.

"Thank-you to all the vendors who came out for the day and for all the people who came to shop," says Alleesha MacDonald, Secretary for the Oak Lake Griswold United Pastoral Charge Church.

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## Alice Kingdon

Saturday December 7th

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Virden Legion Club Room

Best Wishes Only

# A FROSTY SUNRISE



PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER

This winter season is coming on strong and creating some beautiful pink sunrise skies and gorgeous hoar frost covered trees and bushes. A great way to enjoy the season.

## A Very Virden Christmas

**Holiday Events**  
★ Dec 6 - Dec 14

- DECEMBER 6 DAINTY TRAY & BAKE SALE @ Arts Mosaic  
\*Hosted by Virden & District Health Auxiliary
- DECEMBER 7 FILL A SLEIGH DAY @ Red Apple
- DECEMBER 7 WING DING TURKEY BINGO @ Virden Legion  
\*Hosted by the Wallace District Fire Department
- DECEMBER 11 GOULTER SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CONCERT @ The AUD
- DECEMBER 12 OIL CAPITALS GAME vs Neepawa Titans @ Tundra Oil & Gas Place
- DECEMBER 14 CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT PAINTING @ Custom Creations
- DECEMBER 14 YOUTH MAKERS MARKET @ Arts Mosaic
- DECEMBER 14 OIL CAPITALS GAME vs Selkirk Steelers @ Tundra Oil & Gas Place

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