

Empire-Advance

serving virden & area since 1885

DECEMBER 13, 2024 | EMPIRE: VOL 120 NO 17 / ADVANCE: VOL 139 NO 19 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS

READY IN 20 MINUTES OR LESS

LUNCH

MAIN + SIDE + DRINK

FOR ONLY \$15



Boston Pizza
VIRDEN, MB

*CONDITIONS APPLY. ASK YOUR SERVER FOR DETAILS.

HUNG UP

on saving for your first down payment?

Open a **First Home Savings Account** with Sunrise Credit Union!
Visit sunrise.mb.ca to learn about the benefits today!



f x i y t u

Elkhorn's Lightup celebrates Foundation's 25th anniversary



A crowd surrounds Elkhorn's Lightup tree in the town square, some carolers are visible.



The Plett family's Northern Grit Percherons, tour the town with a load of people on board the hay rack.



Mrs. Santa and the Grinch parade down Richhill Avenue.

PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE ADVANCE

With unseasonably warm weather, Saturday was ideal for Elkhorn's Memory Tree Lightup at the town square on Richhill Avenue where numerous families with children, from tiny to teens, enjoyed a bonfire, hot chocolate and hot dogs. (It looks like the new daycare will be busy.) A small choir of voices from Kola, Elkhorn and Virden sang carols - all this, leading to the dramatic moment when the tall tree is featured in lights.

The names of loved ones are displayed on a digital sign at the town square. Memory bulb donations (some well beyond the \$5 bulb) go to the Elkhorn and Area Founda-

tion. Prior to the lightup, Marci Rowan, the charity's new president, spoke about the Foundation's 25th anniversary.

"I want to say a special thank you to Brenda Orr, our outgoing president, for her dedication to the foundation serving on the board for 14 years, many of those as president," said Rowan. She introduced current board members: Vice-Chairperson Jill Canart, Treasurer Alana Martin, Secretary Lana Bajus, and Directors Steven Malcolm, Bill Bickerton, Tyler Mitchell, Brent Brennand and new board member Rhonda Hanson.

Rowan was pleased with recent fundraising: "Thanks to the incredible generosity of donors like you, we have raised an amazing \$6,944.37 in donations during this Endow Manitoba campaign. On top of that, we re-

ceived \$2,777.75 in stretch dollars, bringing our total to an outstanding \$9,722.12. As we reflect on 25 years of generosity and community spirit, let's look ahead with optimism and pride. Together, we are leaving a legacy for generations to come."

Elkhorn's day of events began with a pancake breakfast, crafts and story time at the library, lunch at the Legion Hall before the crafts/tradeshaw sale. There was skating with Santa, and Bingo at the Elk's Hall. Horsedrawn rides were provided by the Plett family (Northern Grit Percherons) of Kola. They were extremely popular all afternoon and the team finished up by giving Santa a ride down Richhill Ave in the Santa Clause parade. Following the parade there were meat draws and Chase the Ace at Elkhorn Motor Hotel.



HOME GAME
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12
VS. NEEPAWA TITANS
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM

Inside...



MARY MONTGOMERY CHRISTMAS CONCERT

P9



SIoux VALLEY TO BIRDTAIL

P15



Ho-Ho-Hope You Know How Much We Appreciate Your Business

We will be closed from Dec 21 - Jan 5 for the holidays. No newspapers on Dec 27 or Jan 3.

Empire-Advance
serving virden & area since 1885

virdenempireadvance@outlook.com

www.empireadvance.ca

204-748-3931

The Holiday Train visits Virден



Tyler Shaw and Shawnee Kish performed for the crowd at the Holiday Train Virден stop. There was free hot chocolate and coffee, music, and holiday cheer.



PHOTOS BY OLIVER NOLAN

Even during the day, you can see the beautiful decorations on the CPKC Holiday Train that stopped in Virден on December 6.

Virден awards More as Citizen of the Year



By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Everett More was awarded as Virден Citizen of the Year on Dec. 7 at the Town of Virден Christmas Banquet. He was chosen from among five worthy candidates including Adeline Savy, Gary Remple, Steve Densmore and Susan Ivey.

Dr. More, retired several years ago from his veterinary work at Virден Animal Hospital where he served the agricultural community, the equine industry and household pet owners for over 45 years.

Deputy Mayor of Virден Mark Savy read from the nomination letter, "More holds many volunteer positions within the community, including the facilities manager for Virден Agricultural Society. He spends countless hours on the ag grounds preparing for a variety of community events, including the Virден Indoor Rodeo and Wild West Days, the Black Gold Classic, and the Welsh Pony Show. Throughout his life, Everett has answered the call when help is needed."

In 2017, he was inducted into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame and in 2019 he was recognized as Manitoba Veterinary Medical Association's Veterinarian of the Year.

More was described as a visionary and highly regarded member of his community. The nominator said, "We are undoubtedly fortunate that retired Dr. Moore has decided to keep Virден his home."

The Citizen of the Year award is presented to

As Citizen of the Year, Everett More accepts a glass award and a framed certificate from Mayor of Virден Tina Williams and his name has been inscribed upon the Citizenship plaque

PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES


ASSISTANT CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER (TERM)
MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTANT (TERM)
WEED SUPERVISOR (SEASONAL)

Interested candidates should submit a resume with three professional references by:

E-mail: 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)
 Virден, MB ROM 2C0

These postings will remain open until a suitable candidate is located.

www.wallace-woodworth.com • 204-748-1239



Seed Growers and Processors
 Est. 1983

Wheat: SY Manness, AAC Starbuck, AAC Hodge VB, AAC Hockley, AAC Brandon, AAC Schrader (Durum)

Barley: CDC Durango, AB Advantage (Forage)

Oats: CDC Anson, AAC Douglas, ORE Boost (Forage)

Peas: AAC Julius, CDC Tollefson

DLF Corn and Forage Seed Dealer,
 Custom Cleaning and Treating

Blair 851-1390
 Bob 851-1755
 Cromer, MB

someone who has had a positive influence on the community in a social, cultural, recreational or economic manner. Every year Virден seeks to honour individuals who are respected in the community for their dedication, generosity, and genuine community spirit. More's name joins a list of names going back to 2004. Since 2014 Citizen of the Year awards have been presented to Kel Smith, Evelyn Jorgensen, Gary Remple, Maxine Chacun, Karen McKinnon, Charlie Main, Chris Leach, Herb Warkentin, and in 2023, Curtis Smith.

Town of Virden celebrates with staff, volunteers



John Stowe of Miniota has been serving the Virden Airport Commission and as of the end of December, he is retiring; (l-r) Mayor Williams, CAO Stewart, John Stowe, Robbie McDougall and Neil Graham.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Town of Virden celebrated Christmas on Dec. 7 with their staff and with volunteers from the community. Members of council from neighbouring municipalities were also invited. Reeve of Wallace-Woodworth attended and commended Virden on their airport renovation. Reeves Cyril Drewe of the RM of Sifton and Archie McPherson of the RM of Pipestone also attended. McPherson shared that a new industry would be coming to the region, meaning employment opportunities.

As well, elected provincial and federal politicians were invited. MLA Greg Nesbitt was at the Legislature, but sent his greetings as did MP Larry Maguire.

Mayor Tina Williams graciously welcomed the evening's guests to Sunrise Hall which was beautifully adorned. A delicious roast beef dinner was served.

The mayor thanked the town's staff for their work

to prepare for the evening, adding, "How glad we are that you came to spend the night with us here tonight for a little food, a little drink, and a little friendship. I want to thank my staff, who work so hard throughout the year. And you can see them at every table scattered through the building... they do such a wonderful job for us."

Williams also introduced some new staff for 2024. "Tara Davies is our new Programming and Events Coordinator." She pointed out Jaspreet Kaur and welcomed back Carmen Ross, "who's helped us out in the office the last couple months." She also introduced operations and facilities manager, Tom Zelensky; in public works and parks & recreation, Maxine Linton an equipment operator; Rodney Cheaters in sanitation; Wyatt Cunday the recreation tech and lastly the mayor introduced Chad Orr, one of the new managers for Westman Emergency Plan Group.

Staff reaching milestones of service with the Town

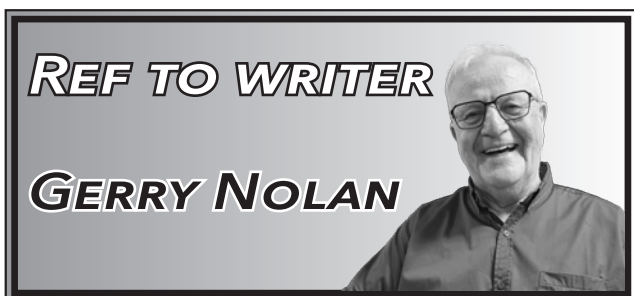


PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

The balloons are a give-away: Floyd Houston in public works is a 15-year member and is celebrating his retirement, his wife Jean is at his side.

were presented with a certificate, and retiring employee Floyd Houston, was recognized. The Citizen of the Year was the crowning presentation of the evening, before a table game and door prize draws concluded the organized portion of the evening.

REF MEMORIES



The first time I worked the 3-man system as the head referee was in Shoal Lake. The Shoal Lake rink had boards that stood as tall as I was at 6 foot plus. Even on the players benches side they were tall, you had to take a big step down out of the players box to get to the ice surface.

Positioning with the 3-man system was different than what I was accustomed to. I found, I skated on the faceoff dots and tried to stay away from the boards as much as I could. I also tried to stay away from the players benches because at times there was a lot of traffic with line changes. The more that I worked the 3-man system the better I liked it. I also still did the 2-referee system in senior hockey as there were not enough officials to go around, as many of us worked a lot of minor hockey as well.

I worked games locally with Blair Fordyce, Craig Whyte and Kerry Smith who was from Oak Lake. Blair and Craig were still playing Senior Hockey with the Cougars, so we worked minor hockey together.

Hamiota had formed a AAA midget team and were playing out of Hamiota. They had the better players from around the region and played against Brandon and Winnipeg teams. Elgin McConnell, nicknamed Red, called me one day and asked if Blair, Craig and myself would do some lines at their games. They wanted to spread around the games and get more people involved in this type of hockey.

What a huge thrill for the Kenton guys to go and participate at this level of hockey. We eventually would all be the head referee of some of these games.

One thing that stuck out for me the first time all 3 of us worked together, was a phrase I can remember as clear as day. Craig said, there are 3 of us getting paid for this, we had better be hustling our butts at all times. Our goal as a group was this, if there was an icing call, go pick up the puck and beat the other teams centre man to the face-off dot. Be back, ready to go at your blue line.

This was such a huge boost for our confidence. Thank you to the Hamiota guys who made this possible, Red McConnell, Gordy Lyall who sharpened our skates and Wallace Henderson who watched from the gondola in the old Hamiota rink. They helped us spread our wings.

Barry Delmage of Minnedosa called me one day and wondered if I would do some refereeing in the south-west hockey league in the north division. I think you know what my answer was.

Brian Franklin from Deloraine called as well and asked me to officiate in the south division which I agreed to.

The doors were really opening up to go to different towns to referee. I made a habit of reading my rule book. A referee relies on positioning themselves on the ice and rule application. There were a couple of things that happened over the course of a season or two that changed the way I refereed games, especially in the Southwest hockey league. I carried that for the rest of my career.

The Southwest league had a number of ex Junior players and University players as Brandon had a team at that time. This hockey was definitely a higher caliber of hockey than I had worked before.

My game assignments were going down and I was not sure why, so I gave Brian Franklin a call to see what I was doing wrong. He said I was calling too many penalties. A real gentleman. Brian told me, call the stick work. Slashing, High sticking and cross checking but only if it was excessive. Call the blows to the head but ease up on holding, hooking and interference unless a scoring chance was available.

I began to call the games as he had instructed me, and my assignments went up in a hurry. In the end I worked games

in the league final as well as intermediate playoff games, so I guess I got it right!

Teams would comment and I heard this many times, Nolan is refereeing tonight, and this is what he calls so we will adjust our game to his style.

Ken Tibbatts from Foxwarren, Mr. Hockey to the north called me for a few seasons asking me to do their Intermediate playoff games. Teams could call for their own officials back then. One night I asked Ken what it was that had him ask me to officiate their games. It was a one-word answer. Ken said that I was the most consistent official, a penalty in the first period was still a penalty in the third period and my calls were the same each night!

That for me was the biggest compliment I ever got because it came from a man that I deeply respected! Another warrior in Hockey Heaven.

Somewhere around this time we were working Elkhorn Canadian games in the southwest hockey league. Blair, Smitty and I heard that Souris did not have any linesmen, so I gave Gerry Williams a call asking if they would be interested in the 3 of us coming to Souris to work their games. I would assign and rotate the 3 of us. Gerry said yes right away so we started working Souris Elks games as well. We were spreading our wings further and further, and there was still more to come. Next week I will share about some of the good guys we met. Hockey Guys are always all good, there are just some who were special to our development as officials and as people!

Greg NESBITT
MLA for Riding Mountain



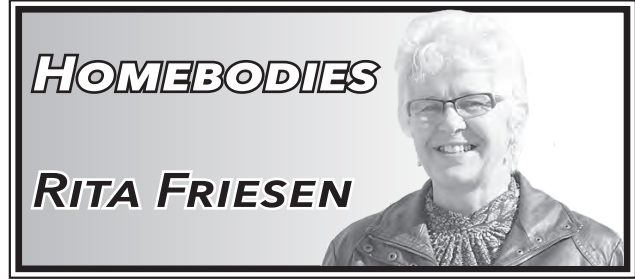
204.759.3313
Toll Free 844.877.7767
gregnesbitmla@mymts.net
#7 - 515 4th Avenue
Burlington Place, Shoal Lake, MB

Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



©Tundra 2024



Simpler times?

What were the 'good old days'? And were the times truly simpler? This week I was encouraged to think a bit more deeply into my concept of the good old days. I had a relatively average childhood; two parents, three sisters, scads of aunties and uncles and cousins, two sets of grandparents and one complete set of great grandparents. We were an average farming family in an average community. There were relatively few decisions that I was required to make; obey parents at home and teachers at school. I had enough to eat and clothing, often hand-me-downs, to wear. In my eyes those were simpler times and the good old days. I realize that for my parents who worked hard and long to provide those comforts and necessities, well, they might not have used those words!

Many of these reflections came in regards to Christmas decorations and celebrations. I never attended a one room school house, but friends did. Even in our rural four room brick schoolhouse we had our classroom decorated for the holiday seasons. The students with artistic ability were allowed creative expression on the blackboards, using coloured chalk and stencils, or freehand if they were really good. I recall the stencil, perforated paper that one dusted with a chalk filled eraser. Remove the paper and there was the image of Santa, or candy canes or snowmen. I don't know where the stencil came from, it just magically appeared. Simple. There were often streamers of crepe paper, or chains made out of coloured paper. Truly simplistic but details that added to the festive season. But there was a teacher who prepared the ideas and supplied the material.

And which country school child could ever forget the Christmas concerts? The details involved, the excitement with having family and friends attend and witness our abilities! Crepe paper costumes for pattern dance, wigs and gowns and crowns for the nativity story, singing and the wonderful monologue. There was a great deal of pressure on the performers! There would be a gift exchange, having drawn names in the classroom, praying for the right name to be drawn, by you and by whoever got your name! High stakes. The concert always ended with Santa Clause, ho-hoing his way through the crowd, distributing the goodie bags; a brown paper bag with peanuts, a Christmas orange, some hard candies- raspberries, curly ones, some with printing on them! and in a great year- chocolates. Those treats were savoured and treasured, a gift from the school trustees if I remember correctly.

I hold close these memories. They instilled in me a sense of community, of taking a part in an event bigger than my everyday, of striving and attaining. These events in a crowded school gymnasium, with the excitement level off the charts, surrounded by supporters, gave me courage to speak in public (there was the trusted prompter behind the curtain!) and to be grateful, aware of the wonder of working together.

Thanks to family, friends and community, those were, for me, a portion of my good old days, and again, for me, those were a simpler time.

Triumph over trials

I don't think I can remember a busier December. The Christmas month is always busy for peoples' personal lives and for us that is no exception. Christmas parties, family gatherings and staff parties are all part of the expected activities for any given family in any given December.

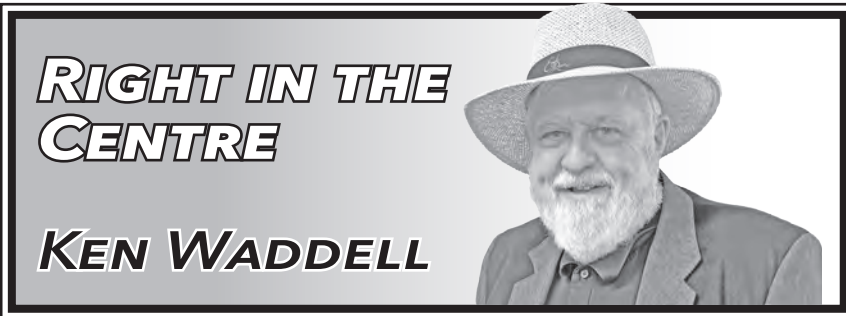
This year has all of that but it seems that from a business point of view, times are busier this year. In part it's due to the absolutely stupid Canada Postal strike.

As of the date of this writing (Dec. 8, 2024), Canada is under siege of a postal strike. Letters, parcels and most importantly cheques, are not moving. The strike is costing Canadians millions of dollars a day, CUPW people aren't being paid. Thousands of postmasters at rural post offices are being paid to do nothing and are mandated by Canada Post to do nothing. Even the local mail is forbidden to move.

There's also a dirty little secret in Canada Post, that some post offices have been ignoring, but even local letters are supposed to be shipped to a regional centre to be sorted and then sent back. If you drop off a letter at a local post office for a box holder in the same post office, that letter is supposed to be handled and sorted by the regional centres.

It's hard to not to curse when one contemplates that much stupidity.

Lots of blame to go around the affairs of Canada Post. The federal government has never modified the Canada Post model, it's still stuck in the 1930s or somewhere even earlier than that. It's mandated to send First Class mail (letters basically) to any place in Canada for a dollar or so. I am really old, I can remember when it was five cents but most people



“ We need to harken to the ‘Faith of our Fathers’. ”

today won't believe that. Both the federal government and Canada Post have ignored the changes that have taken place in the past 60 or so years. In fairness to the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) they have made some suggestions but to no avail.

So, safe to say, amid all the other December busy season stuff, the woes Canada Post has inflicted on us all is very stressful.

As a newspaper, we are so thankful, that except for subscriptions, we simply don't use Canada Post any more. We made our final stop on that trail last week, albeit with a bit of sadness.

I also don't remember a December when there was so much war and rumours of war. The US political scene is in turmoil, world affairs seem to produce a new crisis every day. Syria, Ukraine, Russia, local regional wars, famine, travel and shipping problems, you name it, there's enough stress out here to keep everyone uptight.

However, we have been going

through stresses like this for decades. Mankind has been going through these stresses for centuries. Of all the months that we need to harken to the "Faith of our Fathers", December is the month and the stresses should point us in that direction big time.

My parents and grandparents, just like yours, went through many trials and tribulations. But through the decades, throughout the centuries, we can reflect on God and what He has done for us and continues to do for us. Let's not forget that Christmas is the time when we express a little more gratitude for the baby in the manger, God's gift to us. No matter how tough things get, we can rest in the blessings of God on us and our country. In spite of all the problems there is no other country I would rather live in and with faith in God and Jesus as our Saviour, we will triumph in life and in death.

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

204- 748-3931 | virdenempireadvance@outlook.com
www.empireadvance.ca | Drop box @ 305 Nelson St W Virden, MB
Yearly Subscription Rates (excluding taxes): \$52.03 in Manitoba, \$59.08 elsewhere in Canada
Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement #40069240

Funded by the Government of Canada
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada



PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY
AD DEADLINE: TUESDAY 12 PM PRIOR TO ISSUE DATE

Members of:

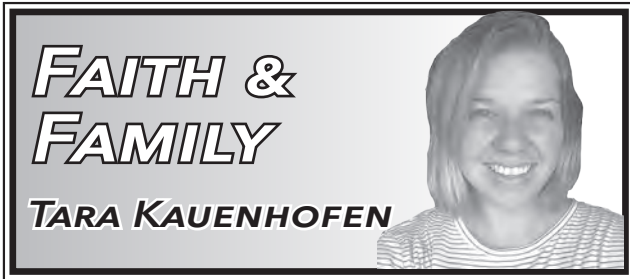
Empire Advance does not guarantee publication of any submitted articles or pictures. Such submissions, if printed, will appear at the discretion of the managing editor or publisher and only when time and space permit. We are not responsible for fax and e-mail transmissions which are not confirmed either in person or by phone.

STAFF

- Sales/Media/Design: Jessica Coulter
- Reporter: Anne Davison
- Office Manager: Oliver Nolan
- Reporter: Dale Davison
- Sports Reporter: Robin Wark
- Owner/Publisher/Editor: Ken & Christine Waddell

News Media Canada
Médias d'Info Canada

Abiding love!



**FAITH &
FAMILY**

TARA KAUEHOFEN

We got our Christmas tree a couple of weeks ago.. early for some I am sure, late for others.

This would be an early year for us but it is my favourite part of setting up for Christmas!

The smell of the pine growing stronger as each branch unfurls from being wrapped and the wet sap starts to drip and waft through the house.

The warm lights being wrapped around and around until they span the treetop to bottom.

The ornaments of choice, beaded strands entwined with the lights, pinecones and stars and, of course, my kids squealing with delight as the

coveted position of putting the star on the top of the tree gets chosen once again.

This year our three-year-old was flown up to the top by my husband and we all clapped and cheered and ooo's and aww's rang out from my older boys as he placed it on top.

His face lit by the warm glow of the lights and a joyous grin spread across his face.

The next morning, I sat by the Christmas tree lights on one side and the fire on the other and I opened my Bible and put on the song Emmanuel by Hannah Kerr.

As I opened my bible and looked at the tree lights, the words 'He was not the one we thought would come, we were looking for a king but he didn't come in glory. The author of the oceans and the sun still he chose to be written in our story' floated across the room and that morning, by the tree lights and fireside, the lyrics hit me deeper than they had before.

As I sat here enjoying my tree and my coffee, I was reminded and convicted of the true reason we celebrate.

Emmanuel, God with us.

The High King of heaven, the Lord of lords, the

creator of the world we live in, chose to come as a helpless baby in human form, vulnerable and needy to fulfill a promise long ago made to save us all.

This gift, this reminder, brought me to tears.

As I was reminded of what a sacrifice was made on my behalf, on your behalf so we would have the opportunity to know his deep

Abiding love for us.

Miniota News

Submitted

BY LINDA CLARK

Congratulations to

Cory and Trisha Gardham on the birth of their

son Archer Stewart on Nov. 26 in Brandon. Archer is also welcomed by his siblings Layker and Eloise.

Nick Young, along with the Manitoba Association of Fire Chiefs (MAFC) president Kelvin Toews, represented Manitoba in Ottawa at the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs conference. They attended with two asks this year: to form a national fire administration to be able to coordinate and collaborate with the federal government and the 14 ministries that affect the fire service; secondly, to establish a federal grant for capital purchases of fire equipment, for a cost sharing grant with the three levels of government. They met with MP's Larry Maguire for Brandon Souris, Ted Falk (Provencher) and Fraser Tolmie for Moose Jaw Lake/Centre-Lanigan. Their fourth meeting was with the Deputy Minister of the Canadian Forest Service, Glenn Hargrove. Nick is MAFC 1st VP. He said it was an honour and privilege to contribute and represent our province and to be a part of such important issues that affect every fire department in our country. Thank you, Nick. This trip also gave Nick the opportunity to visit with their daughter Mikaela Young who is attending university in Ottawa.

Miniota Municipal Services to Seniors held their annual Christmas party on Dec. 7 at the Miniota Community Centre. The Backyard Band from Hamiota entertained followed by refreshments for everyone.

Unfortunately, a storm this past Sunday played havoc with Miniota's Santa plans and the annual parade. Watch for a new date.

Christmas is approaching! "Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart." -Washington Irving

Westman RCMP apprehend speeders

Service report for Dec. 1 – Dec. 7

Submitted

BY WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 37 calls for service.

Of these, 17 were traffic related including 1 operation while impaired file and 6 moving traffic – speeding violations. Also included in the calls for service were 1 suspicious person/vehicle/property file, 2 assault files, 2 wellbeing checks, 2 false alarms, 1 missing person report, 1 mischief file, 1 abandoned vehicle file, and 1 harassing communications file.

On Dec. 3 during a routine traffic patrol in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth RCMP observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 131 km/hr in a 110 km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted and the driver was issued a speeding ticket which carries a fine of \$325. Also on Dec. 3 in the RM of Pipestone RCMP stopped another speeding vehicle

confirmed at a speed of 132 km/hr in a 100 km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted and the driver was issued a speeding ticket which carries a fine of \$469.

On Dec. 7 during a routine traffic patrol in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth RCMP observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 121 km/hr in a 100 km/hr zone and the driver was issued a ticket for speeding which carries a fine of \$325.

As the holiday season arrives, RCMP are committed to keeping our roads safe. The 2024 Festive Season Checkstop Program will run throughout the month of December, targeting impaired drivers and promoting road safety for all. Impaired driving remains the leading criminal cause of death in Canada – and it's entirely preventable. The message is clear: If you are under the influence of drugs and alcohol, don't drive.

Tiny shifts, big wins: How to sneak wellness into your busy life

HOLISTIC WELLNESS

CERTIFIED HYPNOTHERAPIST

MARIE EVELYNE GINGRAS

Wellness can sometimes feel like a giant to-do list written in glitter, unattainable perfection. But guess what? It doesn't have to be. Wellness is not about flipping your life upside down; it's about making small, simple tweaks that feel good and stick. Think of it as planting tiny seeds. A little water here, a little sunlight there, and suddenly you've got a thriving garden of good vibes. Ready? Let's dig in!

You don't need to move to a mountaintop or master the art of "om" to calm your mind. Try this proven breathing technique: breathe in for four counts, hold it for four, and then exhale for four. Do it a few times, and BOOM! You've hit the mental reset button. Feeling fancy? Do it somewhere peaceful. But honestly, even a stolen moment in the bathroom stall works wonders. No judgment here!

Hydration is your body's love language, and water is basically the Beyoncé of beverages. Start your day with a glass (yes, before the coffee!), and keep it going. Bored of plain water? Toss in some lemon slices, a cucumber twist, or a handful of mint. Congratulations, you just made spa water. Look at you, living the luxury life.

When life feels like a tangled mess, step outside. Seriously, go now! Walk barefoot in the grass, sit under a tree, or just stand there and channel your inner sunflower by soaking up the sun. In our case right now, I would sit on a chair outside with boots and jacket to soak up the sun!

Nature has this sneaky way of making everything feel... less extra. Plus, fresh air is free, so grab it while it lasts.

Forget hardcore diets and kale smoothies that taste like regret. Just add a little color to your plate—add juicy berries, crisp veggies, or grilled chicken that are seasoned. It's like turning your meal into an edible rainbow. A hearty soup, a bright salad, or even a handful of nuts (NOT chocolate covered!) can work wonders without sacrificing flavor (or your will to live).

Spoiler alert: exercise doesn't have to stink. Put on your favorite throwback jam and dance like it's 1999. Or take a walk, stretch

those stiff shoulders, or try a random workout video that's less "beast mode" and more "let's not pull a muscle." I use an awesome app, it works great! The point is, move in ways that feel good. If it makes you smile (or laugh at yourself), you're doing it right.

Sleep isn't just for when you're exhausted; it's your secret weapon for conquering life. Create a cozy vibe—dim the lights, grab a soft blanket, or sip on some chamomile tea. Can't sleep? No problem. Start with 10 minutes of quiet time before bed. Call it a "pre-nap warm-up". Whatever works, because beauty sleep isn't just a myth, it's your glow-up partner in crime.

Before you crash, think of three things that made you smile today. Was it a meme that had you wheezing? Crushing that presentation? Or maybe your dog finally learned not to knock over your drink. Write them down, say them out loud, or just hold onto them. Instant mood booster, guaranteed.

Why do it alone when you can make wellness a team sport? Share your goals with your crew. Go on walks together, swap recipes, or just hype each other up. Trust me, everything's more fun when you've got your squad cheering you on and you'll stick to it longer, too.

Holistic wellness isn't about chasing perfection. It's about embracing little habits that make you feel good and treating yourself with kindness along the way. So, start small, laugh often, and watch those tiny changes grow into a life you love. You've got this!

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

Appetizers

When entertaining friends over the Christmas holidays, appetizers are a perfect way to warm and welcome them.

Crockpot Meatballs

Crockpot Meatballs can be served as an appetizer or part of a larger buffet. These meatballs may be tiny, but they're big on taste.

Mini crock pot meatballs appetizers

1 lb. lean ground beef
2 slices bacon, finely diced
2 Tbsp. dried bread crumbs
1 egg
1 tsp. onion powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp. pepper

Sauce:

1/2 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup vinegar
1/2 cup ketchup
2 Tbsp. soy sauce
2 cloves minced garlic
1/4 cup water
1 tsp. cornstarch

In a large bowl, mix together the ground beef, bacon, bread crumbs, egg, onion powder, salt and pepper. Using wet hands roll the meatballs to shape them into 1-inch balls. The goal is to make them bite-sized. This should make about 35-40 meatballs. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil or parchment. Bake the meatballs at 350 F until they're browned about 12-15 minutes or until no longer pink in the middle. Use right away or cool and freeze for later use. For the sauce: Combine the cornstarch into the water. Add the rest of the sauce ingredients together. Place meatballs in a 3-4 quart crockpot and pour sauce over meatballs. Stir so all meatballs are coated evenly. Cook on low for 4 hours.

Potato Bites

Serve these savory potato bites as an appetizer or fun side dish, perfect for any occasion!

Stuffed baby potatoes appetizers

20-24 small potatoes (about 2-1/2 pounds)
1/4 cup melted butter
2/3 cup sour cream
1 tsp. onion powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 tsp. pepper
1/2 cup cooked and crumbled bacon
1 cup shredded cheese divided (I like TexMex or Italiano shredded)

Wash the potatoes. Place in a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and cook for 15-20 minutes or until just tender. Do not overcook. Drain and cool.

Slice the tops off the potatoes and use the tip of a sharp knife to outline the area you will scoop out. Use a melon baller or small spoon to scoop out some of the insides of the cooked potatoes, leaving 1/4-inch borders around the edges. Put the cooked potato in a bowl and mash. Add the butter, sour cream, onion powder, salt and pepper and mix well. Gently stir in the bacon and cheese.

Spoon the mixture back into the potato skins, mounding slightly. Place back on baking sheet and sprinkle with remaining shredded cheddar cheese. Bake for an additional 8-12 minutes or until potatoes are warmed through and cheese has melted.

NDP's speech lacks vision or strategy for future

Submitted

BY GREG NESBITT MLA

As we head into the Christmas season, Manitobans are fortunate to have organizations and businesses in their communities collecting donations of money, food, clothing and toys for families in need during the holidays. Whether it be to a hamper, a food bank or Christmas dinner, I hope Manitobans consider making a donation so everyone can share in the joy of the season.

The Manitoba Legislature has recessed until March after the fall legislature sitting, which included the government's annual Speech from the Throne. The speech was the NDP's preview of their plans for the year ahead, and it showed very little spirit of giving without a vision or strategy for Manitoba's rising crime, increasing health-care wait times, and overcrowded schools. And the speech was a short-sighted failure in matters of affordability and our province's economic health. Despite his talk, Wab Kinew is offering nothing to lower grocery prices, reduce taxes or grow the economy, other than leaning on projects and investments launched by our previous Progressive Conservative government.

The NDP's Throne Speech pledge to reduce grocery prices by ending supermarket companies' anti-competitive contracts is especially hollow for consumers. The premier promised last year to decrease prices at grocery stores, and Manitobans know that has not happened. Manitoba now leads all provinces in food inflation and more families are putting food back onto store shelves because they can no longer afford it.

An upcoming hydro rate freeze mentioned in the Throne Speech is a promise the NDP have recycled for years, and it's coming from the government that has no plan to pay for it. The NDP have also given themselves the power to raise hydro rates at the cabinet table after increasing them by one per cent this past spring. Manitoba Hydro is \$25 billion in debt while continuing to incur losses, and needs to renew its aging infrastructure. Meanwhile, Manitobans pay 33 cents of every dollar on their hydro bills to cover interest on that debt. A rate freeze today would bring rate shock and surging prices tomorrow, and any savings for consumers through a hydro rate freeze would be wiped out by the NDP's upcoming fuel tax increase.

It's the same lack of accountability from the Kinew government on other taxes. Instead of investing properly in education this year, they are giving school divisions funding increases of less than inflation and have hit homeowners with a \$148-million education property



FILE PHOTO

Greg Nesbitt, MLA

tax hike. The NDP will eliminate the school tax rebate on property tax in 2025 and put an end to the education property tax phase-out. At the same time, they have cancelled plans for construction of nine schools that were to include more than 770 daycare spaces. Manitobans are paying more and getting less from this government and are wondering where all their taxes are going.

It's a good question. Our previous PC government left Kinew with a surplus of more than \$250 million last year and federal transfers are increasing, as Manitoba has received \$4.3 billion in equalization payments that began in April. However, just a year after forming government, the NDP have pushed the province into a \$2-billion deficit.

With their mention of economic development in the Throne Speech, the NDP are giving Manitobans more false hope. In fact, this government has put Manitoba into an economic tailspin while driving up unemployment from four per cent to 5.9 per cent this year. Kinew's first order of business in government was to shut down the provincial Economic Development Board, and Manitoba has lost more than \$5 billion in direct foreign investment during the NDP's first year in office.

This Christmas season, people across the province are getting optics rather than action in the premier's smoke-and-mirrors approach to affordability, taxation and the economy. The session will resume in early March, and I will continue to work with my colleagues on the opposition side of the House to push the Kinew NDP government to do much more, and much better, for Manitobans.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Greg Nesbitt is the Member of Legislative Assembly for the Riding Mountain constituency. He can be reached at 204-759-3313, toll-free 1-844-877-7767 or by email at gregnesbittmla@mymts.net. When contacting MLA Nesbitt, please provide a phone number and address.

Oak Lake Memory Tree and hayrides night

By Oliver Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On December 7, in Oak Lake, MB the town had restarted an old tradition called the Memory Tree. This had stopped due to the uprising of covid-19 but recently has found it's way back into the spotlight. The purpose of this tree is to serve memory to those who have passed, people had the chance to purchase a light for the tree for their loved ones. The memory tree was lit at 5:30 at the Oak Lake & Area Garden Club and can still be seen lit up. This event has a special place in the hearts of the community as it is a chance to get together as well as pay tribute to those who have passed. This also brought people together as there was a fire in a large tire rim just outside of the garden area for people to stand or sit around. Sponsoring this



Oak Lake enjoyed a night of old-fashioned hayrides.

event was the Oak Lake and Sifton Fire Department, as well as the Oak Lake Co-op who provided hotdogs and buns as well as condiments for free. This event also had a Hayride from Emily and

Ken Jasper for all who were interested. As well at this event there was a 2024 Quad Raffle. The winner will be picked and announced on December 24 at noon at the Fire Hall, tickets can

be purchased at the RM of Oak Lake or by contacting any member of the Oak Lake and Sifton Fire Department. The event had quite a large turnout with approximately 55 people.



PHOTOS BY OLIVER NOLAN

Oak Lake and area Garden Club hosted the Memory Tree Lighting at 5:30pm.

Another great fall of hunting



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Garry and Holly moved into their parents farm in 1984.

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

This story begins in the fall of 1955. An Air Force Controller who was stationed at the Rivers Air Force base was on his way to Virden. He could not help but notice the large amount of ducks, feeding in a field near Lenore. He stopped and asked the owner of the farm if he could hunt there. The farmer told him, you can shoot them all!

The Air Force Controller then drove to Lenore and purchased a double barrel shotgun and 2 boxes of shells. He drove back to the field and had a very successful hunt.

The Air Force Controller returned to his home after his leave from Rivers Air Force base to Carleton Place in Ontario, not that far from Ottawa.

In the fall of 1955 Bert and Molly Draper purchased

the farm that the hunter was drawn to. The next year 1956, 8 hunters drove out in 2 station wagons to the Draper farm. The hunters had driven 30 hours non-stop to get to Lenore. They asked Bert if they could hunt there, and the answer was yes they could. Bert told them, they were welcome to stay in a recent vacated house if they chose to.

The hunters agreed, so they stayed in the house. They slept on the floors in sleeping bags, ate cold meals and shot waterfowl to their delight.

In 1957, 17 hunters drove by car, the 30-hour trip to the Bert Draper farm. Also making that trip was a high-ranking Air Force officer who flew to Rivers in a Fighter Jet. When arriving at the farm the officer asked where do we sleep.

The answer was a sleeping bag on the floor. The officer asked Bert if he and his grain truck were available for the afternoon. Bert said yes, they could do that.

With a trip to Rivers base, they returned with cots and mattresses for everyone. As well they brought back kitchen utensils, a propane stove and heater. One of the hunters was a gas fitter, so now the meals were hot and the house cozy!

After another great fall of hunting, they wondered how to get all these ducks back home. The Air Force Officer volunteered to take the ducks on the fighter jet where he was sure no one would bother with him.

To date over 1000 hunters have visited and hunted on the Draper farm. They still use the same cots although the mattresses have been updated.

One of the original hunters, Bill Bennett, made his last

visit to the farm at age 82. His buddies had him flown to Winnipeg then they travelled by car to the Draper farm. When he arrived at Drapers he stepped out of the car and stated in a loud voice, well we made it!

Bill was very excited and happy to have one final hunt.

In 1968, the old house was run down and so the hunters stayed in the Drapers basement and still do so to this day.

Drapers have hosted hunters from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia. They have also had guests from the United States such as Minnesota, Georgia, Wisconsin, Michigan, Arizona and Florida.

The hunters stay from anywhere from 4 to 7 days. Hunting season runs from September 24 to October 24.

Garry and Holly moved into their parents farm in 1984 and have continued to host these special hunters from all over North America.

In return, Drapers have gone to visit these hunters at their homes and have met more wonderful people, who they would not have met except for that day in 1955.

Next year will be the 70-year anniversary of the hunters coming to the Draper farm.

Usually about 4 to 6 hunters come at a time. Of course the time of year they come is harvest time so things can get hectic taking off the harvest.

Just a couple of stories but there are many more.

One of the hunters was told not to have another drink unless company arrived. The hunter went out to the highway and was waving down cars to stop and look at all the ducks they had with the sole purpose of having another drink! Pretty crafty I would say.

One of the first trips to Lenore, the hunters were told not to drive down dirt roads but stay on gravel. Well they did not listen! They thought it would be like the roads back home. Wrong! The prairie gumbo is a very special type of earth when it gets wet. Spending the better part of an afternoon pushing and pulling their vehicles and walking in the clay they discovered that they had a different boot size. Walking was cumbersome and difficult with all that clay on their boots.

Over the years the Draper family have become very close with many of the hunter friends, as Garry and Holly said, they are just like family!

Over the years sons and grandsons of those original hunters have come to stay and hunt, relax and have a holiday!

Big Guy's Helpers connect people



SUBMITTED PHOTO

This cute little tree is your clue to finding the drop off box for Christmas greetings and even prayer requests.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Sad to say, a postal strike has thrown a spanner in the works for those hoping to send Christmas cards this season, but a Virden family has come up with a

unique way to express Christmas greetings and share needs. Project Mailbox awaits your cards and letters. Oh, and they're taking 'prayer requests' too.

“So far, most of the cards and notes in the mailbox are from kids,” says one of the Big Guy's Helpers. “Anyone can drop off a letter and we'll respond.” Kids are taking the opportunity to write to Santa.

Helpers says, “I'm trying to add in something extra with a letter when I can... I got permission from Arts Mosaic to put colouring sheets in some letters. I also created a Christmas light/decoration scavenger hunt

that's tailored to Virden and that will be going in some letters as well.”

One letter writer mentioned reindeer which prompted Helper to include some first-hand photos of Canada's North.

“If you would like a response, please include a physical, Virden delivery address where we can drop off the response

letter.” Helper explains, “Response letters will be hung either on the door handle or hand rail of the residence/business, at night throughout December. This isn't just for kids, but for all who are young at heart. Letter deliveries will begin mid-month and continue up until Christmas. The mailbox is for anyone and everyone.”

There's also a plan for prayer requests: “If you would like your prayer request to be shared, please indicate that. If you would prefer that the prayer request not be shared, we'll pray for the request privately as a family. Please don't feel that you need to include any names, this can be anonymous. God will know who we're praying for.”

Since Project Mailbox began, the Helpers have received an actual appeal for help: “We've received a lot of letters in the Christmas mailbox over the past week, but a particular set of letters, written on three sections of a carefully torn piece of scrap paper, really touched my heart. Only one of the authors provided their age, but where the letters were all addressed to Santa, I'm going to refer to all three authors as children...” They asked for food, winter coats, winter boots etc.

Needless to say, Helper is helping, and has secured some items for this family, and says its “God's provision – [we're] watching everything come together for the family we're gathering donations for.”

What do the Big Guy's Helpers get out of this? There's a satisfaction in helping people connect.

Are you mystified as to the location of Project Mailbox? The invitation is on Facebook, or find the little post office location on the street, beside a Christmas tree (lit up in the evening) in the northeast quadrant of Virden.



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

SAIL singalong draws people together

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Tuesday afternoon the beautiful sanctuary of St. Paul's United Church was filled with local voices singing Holiday Season favourites and Christmas carols.

This was the third singalong organized by Seniors Access to Independent Living (S.A.I.L.) this year. Over 50 attended from Virden, Oak Lake and other communities. Leading singing, Krista Pederson and Julie Mason put everyone at ease with their banter and good humour. Karyn Penner of Oak Lake accompanied on the church's beautiful grand piano.

Pederson, said, “I was so pleased with the turnout. It's so nice to have a full sanctuary ... full of people, and music.”

And believe it or not, with vocal cords warmed up and the key down from the original music, the gathering concluded by singing, “O Holy Night.” Terry McLean's huge nativity art piece adorned the front of the church as sun shone in the southwest stained-glass windows. It was a special afternoon where We Wish You a Merry Christmas, and Auld Lang Syne (Scottish melody for old friends) were heartily sung with meaning. But before folks left, coffee, tea and homemade treats were served in the next room (hall).

Pederson says more singalongs are planned with the first one of the New Year to be in January or February.

“We are always looking for ways to engage the older



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Adults, mainly 55 plus, from several communities singing in St. Paul's United Church in Virden on Tuesday, Dec. 3.

adults in the community.” She noted that while the 55+ buildings/apartments have a built-in community with music and other activities happening on a semi-regular basis, Pederson was looking for a way to engage the older adults in the wider area.

“I wanted to provide more for the larger community, so I've been working to get more activities going in the community. We already do a weekly coffee, weekly exercises, and some presentations, so adding the music fills a gap for us,” and she adds, “people love to sing, or listen to music, and we wanted to provide a space.”

SAIL has created an opportunity for musicians to play. “We have some jam sessions as well, if there are musicians who would like to play their instruments.”

From October to April on the third Sunday of the month, singers, dancers and listeners, are welcome at the afternoon Elkhorn Music Jam in the village's Legion Hall.

On Tuesdays, “Get Active with SAIL” is in Virden Legion with Tracy Pappel guiding the fitness sessions. Wednesday morning enjoy a coffee and conversation in the Legion Club Room. On Mondays and Thursdays people can catch a ride with a volunteer to stretch their legs on the walking track at TOGP.

To be sure of the Christmas schedule, check with SAIL coordinators: Krista Pederson at 204-748-2323, or Julie Mason at 204-851-7100. These are low-cost activities, some are free. But Pederson adds, “We do accept donations, though!”

Young actors shine in Lights! Camera! Christmas!



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Rudolf with his nose so bright, is playing Santa - (back row centre) and as the show draws to a close, the famous reindeer (playing Santa, yes it's complicated) is lauded as the hero of "Lights! Camera! Christmas!"

Lenore WI Christmas party



PHOTO BY HEATHER HUNTER

Sara Curtis gave an appreciation donation to the Woodworth Legion for hosting the Christmas supper. Gerry and Celia Nolan accepted on behalf of the Legion.

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Lenore WI institute held its annual Christmas party at the Woodworth legion club room in Kenton on November 30. A total of 16 people were in attendance for supper which was catered by Brierwood Creek Cafe.

Next year, 2025 the Lenore ladies will celebrate 110 years of volunteer service for their community.

Some of the events these ladies host to help out with are the Lenore Christmas

party, potluck suppers in the Lenore Hall and park, movie and game evenings.

The ladies donate to the Woodworth firefighters, Christmas cheer, the Virден Hospital Auxiliary and the Hamiota Foundation, just to name a few.

The ladies also host guest speakers at the monthly meetings with subjects ranging from nutrition to fire safety, gardens and pairing wine with the correct appetizers.

Currently they have 8 members but are in need of others to step up and help keep this organization

strong, which is a huge part of the Lenore Community.

At one time there were more than 20 members. If you serve for 20 years you become a life member. At the party this year there were several life members present.

Sara Curtis is the president of Lenore WI. If you want to join the group, give Sara a call.

If you call Lenore home, get involved in your community, volunteer some time and have some fun while doing it! You will not be disappointed!

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Mary Montgomery K-Gr. 4 students were pros on the AUD Theatre stage last week. Their play, "Lights! Camera! Christmas!" takes place on a movie set for the creation of a movie about Santa Claus... but what style of movie fits the elfin hero of all time? And that's where the comedy comes in as several directors make their case for their style of Christmas feature.

Wing Ding Turkey Bingo



PHOTO BY JOEL NEUMIER

Wing Ding Turkey Bingo a huge success.

By Jessica Coulter
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On Saturday, December 7, the Wallace District Fire Department Station No. 1 hosted their annual Wing Ding Turkey Bingo at the Virден Legion Hall. Approximately 160 people

attended the Bingo afternoon event.

Ten members of the Fire department worked the event along with eighteen members of the Virден Oil Caps. Former firefighter and current Deputy Mayor Mark Savvy helped being the bingo caller.

Over the course of the

four hours bingo players won twenty hams, 20 turkeys, eight boxes of oranges and a Santa cake. There was also a door prize and a 50/50 raffle draw. The winner of the 50/50 generously returned her winning to the fire department for this fundraiser.

SPORTS

NAHACHEWSKY PROVIDES COLOUR TO BOMBERS' GAMES

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

In his unique style, Virden's Don Nahachewsky entertains and educates the Sioux Lookout Bombers' fans.

The Ontario squad competes in the Superior International Junior Hockey League. Nahachewsky is the team's regular colour commentator for the online SIJHL TV broadcasts. The Bombers' volunteer splits his time between Sioux Lookout and Virden. When in Ontario, he appreciates the opportunity to call games.

"Besides getting to watch some great hockey, I work with a great group of volunteers," Nahachewsky said. "I also work closely with the team and have learned some broadcast skills. I was honoured to be chosen co-recipient of Broadcast Crew Volunteer of the Year that first year. It was also awesome being involved with last year's playoff/championship run and being on the call for the league winning goal in overtime."

In addition to calling the team's 2024 SIJHL title, one of the highlights of Nahachewsky's time so far with the Bombers was sharing the broadcast booth with TSN analyst and ex-National Hockey League executive Craig Button. This took place on Nov. 15 during a game against the Red Lake Miners. The opposition included Elkhorn product Foxx McColl.

Button's wife hails from Sioux Lookout. They were in town for a family gathering. The Bombers' communications director James Brohm said, "I mused aloud to one of our board members, who is also in the family, that it would be great to have him do guest commentary. He sat in for a period and he was such a pro. You would have thought he was calling Bombers games all season."

"He is a true broadcast professional, an outstanding hockey mind, a wonderful storyteller and a super guy," Nahachewsky said of Button. "What a pleasure and privilege!"

While the Bombers were pleased to have Button join the

broadcast for a period, they are definitely thrilled to have Nahachewsky as the team's regular colour commentator.

"We're so blessed to have him be one of our commentators," assistant coach and general manager Austen Hoey said. "The team of him and Mitch Simmons is both funny and insightful, while maybe being a bit too homerish at times, but they are awesome."

"Don's ability to riff while also giving insightful comments about hockey or giving some crazy anecdote about a small Manitoba town that one of the players is from is incredibly entertaining."

Nahachewsky continues to reside in Virden but works for the Kwayaciiwin Education Resource Centre in Sioux Lookout. He works with school administration as an education consultant offering support and professional development.

After a golf game in Sioux Lookout in 2022, Nahachewsky asked Hoey how things were going as the team prepared for its first SIJHL season. The general manager was actually looking for some volunteers for the broadcast crew. Brohm explained it was challenging as Sioux Lookout does not have a radio or TV station. After hearing no one was signing up, Nahachewsky volunteered. He has been with the team ever since.

Now in their third season together, Simmons and Nahachewsky have done the majority of Bombers' home games during that time period. Brohm said, "The media crew are a pretty tight knit group. And we have a lot of fun together." When the communications director was asked what he enjoyed about working with Nahachewsky, Brohm said:

"Everything. He's very knowledgeable. Don is like our walking Manitoba encyclopedia. I brag that Don can tell you the distance and direction between any two small towns in the province. And he will likely know the minor hockey team name. He'll always have a story to tell and usually a first hand connection to each place. This is great for our viewers as a third of our players come from Manitoba. I know the families enjoy it on the SIJHL.TV broadcast."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Craig Button, TSN hockey broadcasts and Don Nahachewsky.

PLAISIER PLEASED TO PLAY IN HOMETOWN

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The hometown fans love Ty Plaisier and he greatly appreciates being able to play the sport he loves in the community he grew up in.

For the past two seasons, the son of Shawn and Debra Plaisier has won or shared the Virden Oil Capitals' Fa Choice Award. Plaisier appreciates the encouragement and backing he receives from local junior hockey fans.

"The best part of playing in my hometown is for sure the support from the community," he said. "There are so many people who come out every night to watch and support the team,

and I couldn't be luckier that my hometown has such a good fan base."

Oil Caps fans likely appreciate many of the same aspects in Plaisier's game and personality that his teammates and coaches do. The third-year defenceman plays a key role on the back-end.

"Ty is a huge part of our team," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He is a true competitor in every sense of the word. He brings the intensity of our games and practices up and he forces guys to play harder. His game is physical and hard and he wants to win every night. He is excellent on our penalty kill and logs a ton of minutes against the other

team's best players. Ty makes our team better in several different ways."

The 6-foot-2, 200-pounder has a goal and three points through 13 games, as of Dec. 8. Plaisier is one of the team's assistant captains this season. He was humble when asked about his leadership role.

"I think this team is led as a whole by all of the older guys and the leadership group," the 19-year-old Plaisier said. "I think our older guys do a good job of continuously pushing the physicality, as well as challenging guys in practices to always be their best."

The Oil Caps are pleased to have Plaisier as a leader and player back in the lineup. He was out from Oct. 20 to

Nov. 22 with an injury.

"It was, of course, extremely frustrating to be out for a large portion of the start of the year," Plaisier said. "I couldn't be more happy to be back and have the chance to make a difference in the game every single night and being back in the room with the guys every day."

One benefit of playing in his

hometown is that Plaisier's friends and family can be in

the stands for many home games. His family has played a big role in his career on ice.

"My family couldn't support me more in my hockey," Plaisier said. "My parents are always doing everything they can to give me any opportunity I want, and I'm truly thankful for their support throughout my whole life."



SPORTS

OIL CAPS LOOKING FOR CONSISTENCY



PHOTO BY CHRISTINE WADDELL

Teddy Bear Toss night at the Virden Oil Caps game resulted in a flood of stuffed toys being flung onto the ice on the occasion of Virden's first goal. Team members spent several minutes filling a truck with all 213 toys that are headed to needy kids at Christmas time.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

After having their Sunday contest postponed due to bad weather, the Virden Oil Capitals are looking forward to hopefully getting back to playing - and winning - games this week.

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League club has three contests on the slate. Two of those are versus MJHL Western Conference foes who, as of Dec. 8, sat ahead of the Oil Capitals in the standings. Virden was fourth in the division with an 11-16-0-0 record. The Neepawa Titans, who were to visit on Dec. 12, were a spot ahead at 15-12-1-1. The second-place Northern Manitoba Blizzard (16-12-0-1) host the Oil Capitals in The Pas on Dec. 15. In between those games is a Dec. 14 tilt in Virden against

the Eastern Conference's Selkirk Steelers (17-9-0-1). The Oil Capitals are looking to get back to their winning ways after not being able to earn a victory in their last four contests. The focus heading into this week's contests?

"We are still trying to find the consistency in our game," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "It seems like when our compete is there, we are off in our execution and when we are sharp with our execution, then our compete lags behind. We need to start being consistent with all parts of our game. Our special teams are also a focus for us right now. We

aren't doing ourselves any favours with our powerplay or our penalty kill. These need to improve."

Last Sunday's Oil Caps game versus the host Winnipeg Blues was postponed. The Virden squad lost last week to Titans and Waywayseecappo Wolverines, both by 4-1 scores. **Wolverines 4, Oil Caps 1**

The host Wolverines scored three times in the first period to take an early 3-0 lead en route to a 4-1 victory on Dec. 3. In the opening session, Cole Hunter (on the powerplay), Tootoo Fotheringham, and Mikey Thomas had Waywayseecappo's goals.

In the second period, Oil Capitals forward Noel Englot's 10th goal of the season made it a 3-1 score. About two minutes later, Maddox Mason's powerplay goal put the lead back up to three, 4-1, where it would stay.

Gavin Renwick started the contest for Oil Caps. He

made six saves on nine shots. Nik Trakakis relieved him in the first period. Trakakis stopped 23 of the 24 shots he faced. Jase Wareham made 24 saves.

Titans 4, Oil Caps 1

After a scoreless first period on Dec. 5, the visiting Titans scored back-to-back powerplay goals in the second session. Cooper Kasprick and Talen Wallis did the honours. At the 15:32 mark of the period, Marek Miller scored on the powerplay for Virden to send teddy bears streaming onto the ice. The Oil Capitals' annual Teddy Bear Toss event is one of the team's community efforts. In the third period, Mason Hartley and Talen Lewis had goals for Neepawa. The latter scored on a powerplay into an empty net.

Trakakis made 17 saves. Neepawa goalie Mason Lobeau stopped 30 shots.





Contact:
info@pphmb.com
204-748-1788

Services:

- Plumbing
- Heating
- HVAC
- Hydronics
- Geothermal
- Septic Tank
- Electric & Gas Boilers

COSENS PROVIDES VETERAN STABILITY FOR OIL KINGS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Joel Cosens pulls on a Virden Oil Kings jersey for his children, his community, and the competition.

Cosens first played for the local senior men's hockey team in 2004. He has taken some time away from the squad, but now continues to play for various reasons.

"I enjoy representing our community," Cosens said. "I enjoy the competition, physicality and the challenges. We've been able to bring in quite a few guys that played higher level hockey than I ever did and I enjoy learning more about how to play the game from them. I enjoy being a part of the team."

The Oil Kings were off last week. The 4-2-0-1 club gets back into Tiger Hills Hockey League action on Dec. 14 when it plays in Melita. The next home game is Dec. 20, when the Boissevain Border Kings visit.

Cosens captained the Oil Kings for a number of seasons. So far in this campaign, the defenceman has two goals and four points in seven games.

"Joel brings a veteran presence to the Kings,

and, with the condition Joel keeps himself in, his game has not aged a day," Oil Kings general manager and coach Ryan Mathieson said. "With the depth we have at defence, Joel doesn't have the responsibility we put on him in previous years, but in senior hockey there's times when a short bench means guys need to step up and Joel always does."

Cosens did not play for the Oil Kings in 2020-2022. He said he has taken time off from the team for various reasons: "Injuries, having kids, there were better players around at my position at the time."

"The competitiveness of hockey is what brought me back," Cosens said. "I played rec hockey when I was away from it, but I love the physical nature of the sport. I also wanted my kids to grow up watching me play to hopefully inspire them."

He is the father of three. He has two sons playing U15 hockey including one for the AAA Southwest Cougars. His daughter figure skates, dances, and competes in volleyball.

Cosens has played various roles in the local hockey community. He served a shortened term as Virden Minor Hockey president during the COVID-19 pandemic. He has helped coach various teams.

Serving Westman

Terri Cosens
tcosens@remax.net

RE/MAX 204-748-7699
Valleyview Realty
Unit A, 1209 Richmond Ave. ~ Brandon, MB ~ R0M 2C0



Serving

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Oilfield
- Residential



540, 7th Avenue
Virden, MB R0M 2C0
Phone: (204) 748-2790
Email: info@lrbelectric.ca
Web: www.lrbelectric.ca



CROSS
PLUMBING & HEATING

AIR CONDITIONING DRAIN CLEANING
PLUMBING HEATING

204-748-2108

SPORTS

VCI VARSITY GIRLS DISPLAY TEAM EFFORT AT PROVINCIALS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A true team effort was on display for the Virden

Collegiate Institute varsity girls volleyball team at the recent provincial AAA tournament.

In Winnipeg on Nov. 28-30, the squad won its first round playoff game and fell in the second to the Stonewall Rams. The Rams lost in the finals to host Westgate Mennonite Collegiate. VCI went 1-2 in the round robin.

"I was most pleased with their teamwork, attitude, and effort," VCI head coach Georgia-Rae Maxwell said. "Alexis (Bukarz) made a great play on a ball before landing on the bleachers. Tyra (Wilkinson) and Mya (Plaisier) covered a lot of ground diving all over the court. Georgie (Smith) never let a ball hit the ground without making an effort to dig it. Every single person made a great defensive play to keep the rally alive at some point at provincials. Leila (Verran) and Chloe (Jourdin) had some big blocks at key moments in games."

The Golden Bears earned their spot in the provincial tournament by defeating the St. John's-Ravenscourt Eagles in a wildcard game. VCI prevailed in the best-of-five contest in three straight sets: 25-23, 25-22, 25-23.

"We were dominant in the first two sets," said Maxwell, who coached with Gina Reiner. "Unfortunately, near

the end of the third set we were losing, but we made a great comeback to win the set and secure our spot in provincials."

VCI had five Grade 12 players this season: Plaisier, Jourdin, Verran, Zayda Clarke, and Harley Hagan. Verran and Jourdin co-captained the squad. In regard to the team as a whole, Maxwell said:

"I enjoyed seeing them learn and grow as both a team and individuals on and off the court."

With a small roster right from the start, Maxwell noted that "some of the girls had to learn to play a new position. This is especially true of Leila Verran. She learned to be a great middle in only three months."

During the season, the VCI girls placed second at Dauphin tournament. They beat Stonewall in three sets in a best-of-three to win the consolation side of the Virden Fall Classic.

"Although we did not defeat them at provincials, we did win a set forcing the number two team to play a third set (in a best of three match) in the quarterfinals of provincials," Maxwell said.

This year's team consisted of: Alexis Bukarz, Zayda Clarke, Harley Hagan, Chloe Jourdin, Shae Paton, Mya Plaisier, Georgie Smith, Leila Verran, and Tyra Wilkinson.

CLASSIFIEDS

Manitoba Community Newspaper Association Province Wide Classifieds

NOTICES

Advertisements and statements contained herein are the sole responsibility of the persons or entities that post the advertisement, and the Manitoba Community Newspaper Association and membership do not make any warranty as to the accuracy, completeness, truthfulness or reliability of such advertisements. For greater information on advertising conditions, please consult the Association's Blanket Advertising Conditions on our website at www.mcna.com.

URGENTPRESSRELEASES

- Have a newsworthy item to announce? An exciting change in operations? Though we cannot guarantee publication, MCNA will get the information into the right hands for ONLY \$35.00 + GST/HST. Call MCNA (204) 947-1691 for more information. See www.mcna.com under the "Types of Advertising" tab for more details.

Service

Will Do Custom Snow Blowing Of Driveways
204-748-5144

BOOK YOUR LAST 2024 ADS RIGHT NOW!

Maximize your business plan before year end. Early deadlines are in place. Now booking advertising for the remainder of 2024. *Plan your success!* Have your blanket classified ads seen in the 31 Member Newspapers which are seen in over 368,000+ homes in Manitoba. Please Call THIS NEWSPAPER NOW to book,

or call MCNA at (204) 947-1691 for more details or to book ads. MCNA - Manitoba Community Newspapers Association. www.mcna.com
FINANCIAL SERVICES
Private mortgage lender. All real estate types considered. No credit checks done. Deal direct with lender and get quick approval. Toll free 1-866-405-1228 www.firstandsecond-mortgages.ca

School

Responsive Career Pathways Project

Are you mid-career and employed in Winnipeg? Do you want to increase your career confidence and work satisfaction?

Take part in this research to:

- Get Career support in person and online options
- Receive an honorarium

Apply by

Thursday, Dec. 12, 2024
<https://mittcp2024.weebly.com/>
Starting Jan. 9, 2025

Funded by:
Government of Canada,
Future Skills Centre,
and MITT



For Sale

WANTED

COIN COLLECTIONS



CASH FOR COIN COLLECTIONS & ACCUMULATIONS OF COINS! ROYAL CANADIAN MINT COINS, OLD COINS, OLD PAPER MONEY, SILVER COINS, GOLD COINS, RARE COINS ETC.

Also buying all Silver, Gold, Nuggets, Scrap, Coins, Old Jewelry, Bullion, Ingots, Sterling Silver, Old Quality Watches working or not, Rolex, Omega ++

Todd
204-904-9705

VEA BUSINESS DIRECTORY

YOUR LOCAL MARKETPLACE FOR GOODS & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Assiniboine WINDOW & DOOR

Supply & Install Residential Windows & Doors
- FREE ESTIMATES -

Call Kevin Bonner today! 204.851.5240

Reston/Melita Chiropractic Clinic
Dr. Shannon Gervin, D.C.

Box 456 Melita, MB R0M 1L0

Reston- 204-877-3104
223-4th St, Reston
Mon and Fri 8:30a - 4:30p

Melita- 204-522-3543
155 Summit St, Melita
Tues and Thurs 8:30a - 4:30p

Sanders WATER & ICE

Michael & Jennifer Sanders and Family
204-748-1907 ~ sanderswaterandice@gmail.com
Not Just N'ICE People!

BDO CANADA LLP www.bdo.ca

Chartered Professional Accountants

Accounting and Auditing • Ag Advisory and Farm Programs
Bankruptcy and Insolvency • Business Advisory
Business Valuations • Estate and Succession Planning
Information Technology Solutions • Taxation Services

255 Wellington St W, Virden | 204-748-1200 | 1-866-236-7656

McNEILL HARASYMCHUK
McCONNELL
Attorneys at Law

Glen Harasymchuk, B. Sc., LL. B. • Anique Timmerman, JD
Larissa Sosnowski, JD • Jessica Humphries, JD

Buckingham Building, 243 Raglan Street West
P.O. Box 520, Virden, MB R0M 2C0
Phone: 204-748-1220 • Fax: 204-748-3007

KEYSTONE WEALTH MANAGEMENT **aviso wealth**

1204-748-6823
512 - 7 Ave South, Virden, Mb R0M 2C0 PO Box 975

Mutual funds and other securities are offered through Aviso Wealth, a division of Aviso Financial Inc.

MNP

National in scope, local in focus

Proudly providing Accounting, Consulting, Tax & Digital Services

Virden Office | 204.748.1340
Wherever business takes you MNP.ca

Empire-Advance **CONTACT US TODAY TO BOOK YOUR SPACE!** **ONLY \$20.72 + GST PER WEEK***

sales@empireadvance.ca | 204.748.3931

*2 column x 2.0" ad when booked for 52 weeks

CLASSIFIEDS

Help Wanted

We are hiring!

We have a new opportunity to highlight:

Engineering Services Manager

Facilities

Full-Time, Regular

Brandon, MB

Comp #60-24/25

Salary: \$97,345.73 to \$124,221.08 annually

Under the direction of Director of Facilities, this position is responsible for the safe and efficient operation of the power plants and all ancillaries for Assiniboine College. The incumbent is also responsible for the supervision of power engineers, oversees all related budgets and expenditures, capital and maintenance management all while ensuring excellent client/customer service relations are maintained. This position, along with the Facility Manager and/or Operations Manager are the main points of contact for service requests. This position will at times fill in for the Director of Facilities on key projects or initiatives.

Discover full details about the position in the Job Description on our careers' website at www.assiniboine.net/careers.

Assiniboine welcomes applications from all qualified candidates who are legally entitled to work in Canada, including Indigenous peoples, persons of all abilities, members of visible minorities, all genders and sexual orientations, and all other groups protected by the Human Rights Code.

Assiniboine College is privileged to provide learning opportunities on the lands of the Dakota Oyate, Nakoda Oyate, Ininiwak, Nehethowak, Nehiyawak, Anishinewuk, Denesuline, Anishinaabeg, and the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

For accommodations or alternative formats, contact careers@assiniboine.net or 204 725 8729.

If you are interested in this career opportunity, please email your resume and cover letter with reference to Competition #60-24/25 to:

careers@assiniboine.net

We thank you for your interest. Those selected for further consideration will be contacted.



School

Tutoring and Fitness

Grades Five to Eight

LA Review (as in oral reading, creative writing, letter writing, and general knowledge), Math, and Handwriting with Fitness (Exercise and Weight Training) plus posture instruction. Cost is Community Service either now and/or spring and summer.

High End Amway Products available delivery a problem with the postal strike some products on hand though.

Walking Tours of Historical Virden not until late spring and for sure during the summer 2025. No winter walking tours.

Help with letters, news releases, etc. Have Pen Will Travel.

Phone Kel at 748-3321 that's 748-3321

two hours during work week or half days on weekends for tutoring.

Help Wanted



Valleyview Co-op in Virden, Manitoba is hiring a Part-Time Branch Delivery Driver (16-20 hours per week) to provide internal delivery service for our branches.

The Branch Delivery Driver is responsible for completing pickups and deliveries to our branch locations. A company vehicle will be available for usage. Must have a valid Class 5 driver's license and a driver abstract will be required.

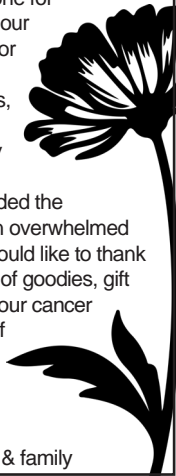
To apply send application and resume to, hr@valleyview.coop or call (204) 748-6700 ext 307

Thank-you

Thank-you

We would like to thank everyone for their generosity at the time of our Dad (Huck) Smith's passing. For all the baking brought to the house, beautiful cards, gift cards, baskets of goodies, flowers & all the expressions of sympathy on the street & at the funeral. Thanks to everyone who attended the funeral. Dad would have been overwhelmed with the attendance. Also we would like to thank everyone for their generosity of goodies, gift cards & get well wishes during our cancer journey this summer! In lieu of individual thank yous we will be making a donation to the Virden handivan!

Terry & Dianne Hayward & family



Thank-you

Goulter Christmas Lunch committee would like to thank the following sponsors for our annual school luncheon.

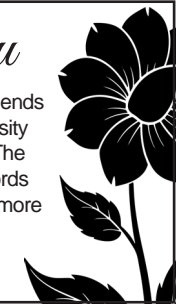
Nielsen Seeds Ltd.
TL Penner Construction
Valleyview Coop
Core Ag Inputs Ltd.
Tundra Oil & Gas
Alex & Randi Renard
Candice VanDamme
Pat & Jen Hammell
Jessica Brown
Karla Robertson



Thank-you

I wish to thank our family and friends for their kindness and generosity in making my 90th birthday. The thoughtful wishes and kind words have made this occasion even more meaningful.

-Alice Kingdon



Announcement



Response Builder Advertising WORKS!

- GET SEEN by over 360,000 Manitoba Homes!
- Create instant top of mind awareness
- Showcase your info, business, product, job, announcements or event
- We format it, to make it look great!
- Starting at \$239.00 (includes 35 lines of space)
- The ads blanket the province and run in MCNA's 31 Manitoba community newspapers
- Very cost effective means of getting your message out to the widest possible audience

Contact this newspaper NOW or MCNA at 204.947.1691 or email classified@mcna.com

www.mcna.com

For Sale

BATTERIES FOR EVERYTHING! 50,000 BATTERIES IN STOCK

- *Auto *Farm *Truck
 - *Construction *ATV
 - *Motorcycle *Golf Carts
 - *Rechargeables *Tools
 - *Computers *Medical
 - *All phones *Chargers
 - *Marine *RV & more
- Shipping/Delivery avail.

THE BATTERY MAN
1390 St. James St.
Winnipeg
TF 1-877-775-8271
www.batteryman.ca

Visit our website
www.empireadvance.ca

HOOPER'S LAKE BUCK NIGHT THANK YOU

2024 SPONSORS

- Bonchuk Farms
- Enns Brothers Ltd.
- Lakeside Autobody
- Shoal Lake Farm Equipment
- Rocky Mountain Equipment
- Richardson Pioneer
- Mazer Group
- Syngenta
- Moulson's Welding
- Gardham Bros. Construction
- Scotty's Welding - Ross Priestley
- Valley Rock Construction
- Still's Septic Service
- Northstar Insurance
- Sims & Co.

Prairieview Municipality
Twin Valley Co-op Birtle
Nutrien

- Fusion Credit Union
- Bicknell's Trucking
- Birtle Pharmacy
- Sista Shop Birtle
- Campbell's Funeral Home
- Howie's Septic
- Hamiota Healing
- Rawlings Home Hardware
- Knight Seeds
- Hamiota Feedlot
- Four Seasons Sales
- My Precision Ag Ltd.
- Wolverine Supply
- Parrish & Heimbecker Elevator - Virden

Still Water Adventures
Virden Ford

- Fountain Tire - Virden
- Integra Tire - Virden
- The Dollar Store - Virden
- Norrie's Hauling Ltd.
- Lenny & Brenda Stowe
- Sandy Spring Ranch
- Threadz Print Shop
- Star Fire Farms
- Neil & Cheryl Stewart
- Pattison Ag
- Ric & Carly Wheeler
- Global Ag Risk (Ashlee Gurr)
- Malchuk Farms
- Kent Mitchie (Loan Wolf Tax.)
- Muir Farms

2024 WINNERS

Youth Typical

1. Cruz Dushnikey 156 5/8
2. Alister Hagen 150 3/8
3. Luke Plett 138 4/8

Youth Non-Typical

1. Drayson Sheridan 169 6/8
2. Carter Malchuk 158 1/8
3. Kallen Waldor 148 2/8

Youth Mule Deer

1. Luke Plett 122 7/8

Men's Typical

1. Jody Evans 151 5/8
2. Blake Kennedy 151 4/8
3. Joe Fluery 146 7/8

Men's Non-Typical

1. Derrick Lane 168 7/8
2. Jon Glass 166 6/8
3. Justin Lowes 160 2/8

Ladies

1. Holly Bonchuk 152 3/8
2. Wendy Flintoff 151 2/8 NT
3. Megan Bell 148 6/8

Ugly

Blaine Lee 104

Thank you to everyone who attended, donated auction and raffle items, and volunteered to make our event a success once again. All proceeds from this event help support improvements and initiatives of Hooper's Lake Recreational and Camping area. See you next year!

Province grants \$500,000 toward Airport reno

Town of Virden Council Meeting Dec. 03

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

At the recent Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) convention Glen Simard, Minister of Municipal and Northern Relations announced that the province will provide funding of \$500,000 toward Virden's airport expansion project.

Work on the project has progressed, with extension and paving of the runway, apron and taxiway. The total project cost is \$6.1 million, with approximately \$4 million spent to date.

This grant will allow airport renewal to continue, but further funding will still be needed to complete the automated weather observation system (AWOS), lighting, fuel system and security fencing.

Coun. Bruce Dunning said AWOS and lighting are critical for the project as demonstrated by a letter of support from Shock Trauma Air Rescue Service (STARS).

Since its inception the project has received funding from Air Andrew Ltd., the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, the Town of Virden and now the provincial government. A grant application

for the \$1.6 million needed to complete the project has been submitted to Manitoba Growth, Renewal and Opportunities (Manitoba GRO), a program designed to help Manitoba municipalities advance critical infrastructure.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council agreed to provide support of \$500, as last year, as sponsorship of Skate Virden's Fun Skate program.

Councillor indemnities will increase by 2.5 per cent as per the bylaw.

Couns. Lynette Grumpelt and Tara Maxwell brought information about a municipal food waste diversion device known as FoodCycler. The machine takes food waste that would otherwise go to the landfill and turns it into readily compostable material. Councillors expressed interest in finding out more about the process and the cost.

Coun. Mark Savy said, "I think first step would actually be having a delegation come in online to explain this program to everybody around this room."

Coun. Travis Penner asked, "What's the business case for this?"

Mayor Tina Williams will

be going to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) conference in February. She said, "There's multiple booths like that at the one that I'm going to. So, I will ask some questions."

BOOST COMMITTEE

Coun. Cruikshank attended the Virden Boost committee meeting and said a new citizen is willing to join the Boost committee. She said that Russ Khosa, the new owner of Home Hardware, came to the recent meeting. Cruikshank said, "We'd like to formally invite him to join the committee." Council agreed that Khosa is involved in the community and will be an asset to Virden Boost.

REPORTS

Coun. Maxwell attended a Prairie Gateway Tourism meeting and explained a strategy to continue a strong presence in tourism. She said, "We are looking at paying a social media company to do some social media for us over the winter... and we're doing some winter photo shoots for the website and marketing."

AMM RESOLUTIONS

Maxwell attended the AMM conference where she presented a resolution to lobby the Province of Mani-

toba to review the Manitoba refrigeration course exams to better reflect the practical aspects of the job performed by arena technician staff and create a revised exam focusing on understanding refrigeration systems, maintenance procedures, safety protocols and other relevant skills. The resolution was passed.

Coun. Grumpelt attended AMM and met with provincial cabinet ministers including the Minister of Justice to discuss community safety issues.

She presented a resolution stating that when the gates are closed on Highway No. 1 due to weather, travelers have no alternative but to seek shelter in Virden, and the Town has a limited number of hotel and motel rooms for stranded travelers. In this situation the Municipal Emergency Coordinator will open the Sunrise Banquet Hall for these stranded travelers, and local RCMP and Fire Department are called out to assist. The resolution was passed to have the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to obtain funding to reimburse municipalities for costs incurred during the hosting of stranded travelers.

Coun. Cruikshank read a resolution at AMM stating the Province of Manitoba has been the source of annual project funding for Virden Employment Skills Centre for 29 years, and staff have consistently met and exceeded targets set out by the province as a requirement of that funding. The population within the catchment area has increased but funding has had less than a 10 per cent increase over the last 10 years. The cost of operations and cost of living have increased but the project has been chronically underfunded. The resolution passed asking AMM to lobby the Province for equitable resources to operate employment centres throughout the province.

Coun. Penner attended the Manitoba Watershed Districts conference where keynote speaker Jerry Doan of Black Leg Ranch (North Dakota) told how he utilizes holistic management to regenerate the grassland and cropland while propagating native wildlife species and improving water quality.

Coun. Bruce Dunning attended the AMM conference as well as a Pioneer Home Museum meeting. From the museum meeting he reported the board is planning to acquire a manager for at

least five months of the year to operate the facility.

Coun. Savy attended the AMM convention and a Handi-van meeting where the committee decided that from Nov. 25 to Dec. 31 all trips made on weekdays between 9:30am and 2:30pm will be discounted by 50 per cent.

UKRAINE

Mayor Williams, CAO Rhonda Stewart, Russell-Binscarth Mayor Judy Snitynsky and AMM Executive Director Dennis Volkov met virtually with delegates from Ukraine to discuss partnering with them.

Stewart said, "It was pretty eye-opening for all of us because one of the communities couldn't come on... they had been bombed and the electricity had been turned off. And, these are all Western Ukrainians, so not the people that have been having issues with this normally."

The facilitator from the Ukraine reported that while talking earlier with these Ukrainians, the sound of missiles could be heard in the background.

Stewart noted, "It's amazing the resiliency these people have. And they're so positive... they want to hear all about our communities."

Council plans to collaborate with Snitynsky and Virden EDM to plan a presentation to Ukraine delegates.



VIRDEN

CENTRE OF IT ALL

Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

Town Office: 204-748-2440

Waste Disposal Grounds: 204-748-6033

Animal Control: 204-851-1810

Skate with Santa

December 22 from 4:00 - 6:00 PM at Tundra Oil and Gas Place



Milk, juice and cookies will be served.

Noon Hour Shinny

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).

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.

Citizen of the Year

Congratulations to **Everett More**, the Town of Virden's 2024 Citizen of the Year!

LiveBarn

Now available at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.

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

Visit livebarn.com for more information.

Upcoming Council Meetings:
December 17 & January 14

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

Virden & Area Food Cupboard

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

Special Holiday Hours

Town Office

December 24	OPEN 8:30 - 12:00 PM
December 25-27	Closed
December 30	OPEN 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM
December 31	OPEN 8:30 AM - 3:00 PM
January 1	closed

Tundra Oil and Gas Place

December 24	OPEN 8:30 AM - 12:00 PM
December 25	Closed
December 26	OPEN 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
December 31	CLOSED 3:00 PM - 6:30 PM
January 1	Closed

Virden Landfill

December 25-26	Closed
December 31	OPEN 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM
January 1	Closed

Garbage & Recycling Pickup

2025 schedules are now available at virden.ca or at the Town Office.

Virден & District Health Auxiliary Bake Sale



PHOTO BY OLIVER NOLAN

Organizers: Glynis Danielson, Gwen Clarke, Members: Lynda McDonald, Judy Russell, Laura Wright, Marilyn Carruthers, Dona Lyons, Maxine Routledge, Meryl Browning, Linda Lane, Janice Wilson

By Oliver Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On Friday, December 6, the Virден & District Health Auxiliary helped organize a bake sale at the Arts Mosaic from 1:30 to 3pm.

The bake sale was to raise money for equipment for Sherwood nursing home, Westman nursing home, hospital, and EMS. The bake sale had baked goods, dainty trays and a 50/50 raffle, all proceeds going towards the previously listed locations. This money also goes towards a scholarship to a graduating student entering health care.

The Virден & District Health Auxiliary also deliver meals on wheels to nursing homes year-round, as well as renting TVs for the hospital.

The bake sale was very successful as they had sold out within the half hour, with approximately 100 customers. In total there were eleven members of the Virден & District Health Auxiliary at the bake sale.

Sioux Valley delivers buffalo gift to Birdtail

It's for the children

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Sioux Valley Dakota Nation presented a gift of deep cultural significance to Birdtail Sioux First Nation on Dec. 3. A load of 11 young buffalo were delivered to Birdtail, one of them being a rare white buffalo calf.

SVDN Chief Vince Tacan said, "SVDN is working with Birdtail Sioux to restore buffalo to their community. This is in response to a meeting I had with an elder about this time last year when there was a murder in their community. The elder asked for our help as he wanted to approach things through ceremony and culture."

The trailer loaded with 10 buffalo born in 2024 and one yearling stopped at the entrance to Birdtail community at noon. Here, members from both reserves, plus students from three school buses gathered for ceremonial drumming, songs and to hear words of wisdom. SVDN Councillor Anthony (Tony) Tacan's message was particularly directed to youth as he told them of the significance of buffalo returning to the valley. He admonished them to appreciate their community, to "take care of each other" and never to be bullies.

Buffalo were established on the pasture hills of Sioux Valley over 20 years ago when Vince Tacan was on the school board. He found the seed money for their very first 14 head by re-purposed an existing building rather than buying new, to be used as a portable school room. Those years ago, he saw the buffalo as important culturally for their youth. "That was our motivation to get the buffalo going at home." And now in turn Sioux Valley is gifting the traditional animals, including a sacred white calf, to another Dakota community. He said, "So in actuality, it's a gift from our students to the students here."

That first herd was built up, but then sold in about 2009, a disappointment to Tacan at the time. But shortly after that, the City of Winnipeg made a gift of two buffalo to the community. A CBC story, March 29, 2010, "Gift of white bison deemed historic event" reported, "Mayor Sam Katz presented two calves — one white and one brown — to the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation..." At



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Released into their paddock, yearlings from this summer's calf crop, including the white calf, gallop from the trailer. A large crowd lines the fence line, some watch from the road above.

the time, Chief Donna Elk said, "For me, [this] signifies a new beginning... to say to our children that the white buffalo has come home."

This prompted Vince and his brother to once again take action and find out if the calves among the herd recently sold were still in a feedlot, and sure enough they were and were bought back.

Tacan briefly related the historic legend of the white buffalo calf: "Our people were not able to find game or food and they were struggling. The story is that the White Buffalo Woman appeared as a brown buffalo calf at first. As it got closer, it turned into the woman. [She] instructed the two hunters, the scouts, to get back to the community, to get ready, that she was going to come and meet with them and give them some teachings. So that's what happened. From there, we got the seven ceremonies for our people...the sweat lodge songs, sun dance songs, all those came with those teachings." As the woman turned to leave the community and was walking away, "She turned into the white buffalo calf."

It has been some 250 years since buffalo roamed on

Birdtail land. On Dec. 3, after their release into the fenced few acres, Tacan said with satisfaction, "It's good to have them back here. We have a shared history. We almost all got wiped out, the same as the buffalo, and so now, we're on a reserve and it's funny, that the buffalo are on a reserve too. We're still living together."

Vince Tacan is a chief with innovative ideas, but he recounts the wisdom of his ancestors: "There's a prophecy that when every First Nation has buffalo that we'll all get back to where we should be. I think that's the message of the white buffalo calf woman's story. You know if you're not appreciating things and you're not living in sync, bad things happen. I believe that's why the white buffalo calf woman appeared to our people."

He sees value in their ceremonies and says in today's world things seem to be going the wrong way, and says, "We're not in sync, not appreciating things, not utilizing the teachings, the traditional medicines that we used to use before. We need to start going back the other way, getting more grounded, back to better decisions. So that's the goal long-term."

BOXING WEEK SALE



SOFA CHAISE

2 COLORS IN STOCK
FABRIC COVER
NOW \$799.00



LEATHER SOFA & LOVE SEAT

(2 ONLY)
ALL SEATING SURFACES ARE LEATHER ~ 2 PIECES
NOW \$1999.00



5 PIECE DINING SET

TABLE AND 4 CHAIRS
8 IN STOCK
NOW \$588.00



5 PIECE DINING SET, SOLID TABLE

PINE LEGS, WIPEABLE CHAIR SEATS
MADE IN CANADA (STOCK ONLY) WAS
\$1999.00
NOW ONLY \$1399.00



COMPACT WASHER

4 IN STOCK
MSRP \$699.00
NOW ONLY \$399.00



BUILT IN DISHWASHER

STAINLESS STEEL INTERIOR
MADE IN ITALY ~ 6 IN STOCK
NOW \$599.00



SEALY POSTUREPEDIC QUEEN MATTRESS

FIRM SUPPORT
NOW \$659.00
PLUS, WE PAY THE TAXES



CONCEPT ZZZ QUEEN MATTRESS

700 POCKET COILS ~ 6 IN STOCK
NOW \$599.00
PLUS, WE PAY THE TAXES

Wrap up this Holiday Season in amazing savings!



346 King Street Virden, MB 204-748-3331 www.kullbergs.ca Find us on Facebook!

LAYAWAY
OPTIONS
ASK YOUR SALES ASSOCIATE



FINANCING AVAILABLE BY TEXTING
KULLBERGS TO 75837
FROM YOUR SMART PHONE

**FREE
DELIVERY**

within 200km
from Brandon, MB
(Manitoba only).

Ask our Sales
Associates about
Delivery Options!