

# Empire-Advance

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JANUARY 10, 2025 | EMPIRE: VOL 120 NO 21 / ADVANCE: VOL 139 NO 23 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS

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## Virden family's horses hit the big time Rose Bowl spotlight on Spotted Draft team



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Melissa and Chris Warkentin from Virden had three horses in the Rose Bowl Parade.

By Ken Waddell  
EMPIRE ADVANCE

The Warkentin farm at Virden has been around for a long time. Chris and Melissa are the third generation, their daughters are the fourth. Chris's Mom and Dad, Rob and Marilyn, the second generation, were preceded by Grandpa to the area in 1946.

The Warkentin family passion is horses, namely North American Spotted Draft horses. Over the holiday season, their work as horse breeders received some unique international recognition. Three horses they raised were driven by Craig Wilder of Washington state in the 2025 Rose Bowl Parade at Pasadena California. The parade was five miles long and is an elaborate production that draws marching bands and floats from far and wide. The parade sets the stage for the annual Rose Bowl football game on New Year's Day.

In an interview with the Virden Empire Advance Chris

Warkentin said, "It's quite the feather in our cap to have our horses in the Rose Bowl parade," It was the first time that Wilder had a team, an eight-horse hitch in the Rose Bowl parade.

Warkentin said that North American Spotted Drafts are a unique registered breed of horses but, "They are sometimes overlooked because of the prominence of Percheron and Belgian horses."

Although Warkentins have showed their horses at local fairs, there isn't a specific class for the Spotted Drafts. They do take the teams to various hayrides and wagon trail rides around the country and gain some recognition that way. "Our aim is to develop a modern looking draft horse. We use some Belgian and Percheron genetics in the process. The Spotted Drafts range as tall as 18.2 hands but some are 16.2 hands high."

You can learn more about these horses and this family's operation on Facebook under Warkentin Spotted Drafts and Percherons.



**VIRDEN  
OIL CAPITALS**


HOME GAME  
FRIDAY, JANUARY 17  
VS. NIVERVILLE  
NIGHTHAWKS  
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM

*Inside...*



**TEAM BROWN  
COMPETES**

**P9**



**WOODWORTH  
BONSPIEL**

**P8**

# Virден man critical following collision

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On Monday, following a tragic collision with a train on Sunday afternoon, Jan. 5, friends began an appeal for funds to help the family of the 22-year-old man, Kole Wheeler, who was badly injured in the collision.

From Terrence Crampain: "One of our best friends, teammate and our brother had gotten into an accident recently and is currently in Winnipeg hospital getting the care he needs. Most of you

know how Kole is, he's the most out going guy you'll ever meet, he is a such kind hearted guy, down to earth and respectful person.

"On behalf of myself and the Young Puckers hockey we'd love to do a 50/50 for Kole and to help cover expenses for his family... get a hold of myself for a square, \$40 per square. Numbers from 1-100, the draw will be made when all numbers are gone. Here's to a speedy recovery Wheels, love you buddy." E-transfer-Tcrampain16@hotmail.com

Kole was also a firefight-

er and the Virден Legion Br. No.8 is on board to help: "A boot from our local Virден fire department will be at the legion to raise money for a young man... Kole Wheeler. Please come help out one of our local fire guys."

From Amanda Jeanes Facebook: Kole "has a long road to recovery ahead of him. To ease the burden of financial stress for Kole and Teyanna... we are asking if anyone can help out in this time of need. Please e-transfer amandawheeler@outlook.com (mother). We are all



SUBMITTED PHOTO

## Virден Legion Ladies Auxiliary

Submitted  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Legion Ladies Auxiliary met on Wednesday December 4, 2024. President Tracy Pappel welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open for the transaction of business. Financial Report, Correspondence and Committee Reports were dealt with. Donations were made to Christmas Cheer, Virден & Area Food Cupboard as well as to the Westman Adopt a door. President Pappel presented years of service pins. Just a reminder to members that the 2025 memberships are due. After the meeting was adjourned the ladies enjoyed a Christmas lunch. There will be no meeting in January, the next meeting

will be February 5, 2025 at 1:30pm. The Legion Ladies Auxiliary would

like to wish all a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year.

### Bartel Seeds

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

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praying for him and for a speedy recovery."

Details of the accident are from the dispatch of Wallace District Fire Department to the accident approximately five miles

east of Virден along Highway One where a half-ton truck was struck by a west bound train.

Upon arrival, the fire department members, EMS, Oak Lake-Sifton

Fire and RCMP worked together to extricate a man from the truck. He was immediately transported to Virден medical centre before being life-flighted to Winnipeg.

## First time Christmas Light Village huge success



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of the Virден Lions Club at the campfire in Lions Campground for the Village of Light opening (l-r) Alex Sundell, Bryan Hayward, Paul Pennycook, Barry O'Grady, Suellen Cocquyt, Cassandra Hume and Gerald Ogilvie.

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The weather took a cold turn just when it was time to enjoy the Christmas Light Village at Lions Campground in Virден, but organizers pivoted from an initial foot traffic only plan to allow vehicle tours through the campground so people could enjoy the light displays on Wednesday and Thursday, Dec. 11 and 12. By Friday evening, Dec. 13, temperatures moderated allowing the planned activities to go ahead.

Wednesday evening, 360 people came through the gate in a motorcade, with donations amounting to \$1,227.56. Likewise, on a very chilly Thursday evening, 385 people attended and donated \$1,886.

On Friday night, the final night, nice weather meant that over 400 people are estimated to have attended. There was a campfire, a vocal choir and each of the two hayrides went round over 18 times. Donations were \$1,137.

Over the three nights \$4250 was raised for local football, Association of Community Living (ACL) and for Wallace District Fire Department (WDFD).

The light village was a fun new idea that came from the Very Virден Christmas campaign. A number of local businesses and organizations built light displays and helped out with the tours, which made the Christmas Light Village a reality. They were: ACL, Four Seasons Sales, Longshot Services, Oxford Assembly, MRG Signs, Strike Welding, Sunrise Credit Union, Town of Virден, Virден Super Thrifty, Valleyview Consumers Co-op, Virден Ag & Parts, Virден Collegiate Instituted, Virден & District Youth Choir, Virден Lions Club, Virден Recreation & Watersports, WDFD and Wolverine Supplies.

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# Pioneer Home Museum receives upgrades

Submitted  
By RICK KRISTJANSON

The Virden Pioneer Home Museum had another eventful year. While the museum board oversees the museum year-round, it is open to the public from May to the end of August.

This year the museum staff was comprised of two university students and two senior high school students. After a major cleaning, the museum was opened to the public on the long weekend in May. In May and June, the museum staff offered school tours and four school classes, and 106 students and school staff participated. The students were shown how early communications took place when Gerry Gatey demonstrated the telegraph and Jean Gatey demonstrated the telephone system where operators connected you with your party. For students who only know how to use a mobile phone, this was a fantastic lesson in the bygone days of communication.

Throughout the summer the museum staff offered tours to 221 people from various parts of Canada and elsewhere. On Aug. 9, the museum had its annual Museum Day complete with a BBQ run by the Virden station of Wallace District Fire Department, a silent auction of items donated by local businesses, many kids' games and forty-nine "toonie tours" of the museum. With the help of members of the community, the Royal Purple and friends of the museum, the day was a remarkable success.

The museum staff participated in the local farmers' market again this year selling produce from the museum garden and chances to win "Find the Joker."

Along with posting museum items on social media, authoring articles for the Empire-Advance, the staff also worked on projects of local interest and posted them to the museum website. The staff posted projects on the influence of Royalty in our local history, Queen Elizabeth's visit to Virden in 1959, Virden's banking history, and Virden and area's fallen soldiers and nurses during the Great War. These all can be seen on the museum website. The staff also answered queries from relatives of former Virdenites or their descendants as to their family history. The staff also accepted artifacts from the public for the board to consider for acceptance.

The museum experienced several improvements this year. With the help of a communications grant from the Province of Manitoba, the museum was able to have a video camera system installed. The system allowed staff to monitor comings



It a new sign!

SUBMITTED PHOTO

and goings at the museum, particularly when they were working in the office or elsewhere in the museum. This system allows for 24-hour monitoring of goings on in the museum and is a great security asset.

Besides general maintenance of the building which turned 136 years old this year, a group of citizens volunteered to replace the metal sign which has hung in front of the museum for well over 50 years. Virden Pioneer Home Museum would like to thank Ross and Susan Geini, Chris Geini and Sara Coffey of Prairie Sand Blasting for providing the metal sign and painting it. Also, the museum would like to thank Lance Mclean for applying the vinyl lettering to the sign and the Town for hanging the sign. The generous donation of those named above is greatly appreciated by the museum board.

Although the museum is closed for the season, I would encourage anyone who is interested in our local history to check out the museum website. Simply type Virden Pioneer Home Museum into your search engine and the site will pop up. You can also find us at [virdenpioneerhome@wgcwave.ca](mailto:virdenpioneerhome@wgcwave.ca)

The Pioneer Home Museum would welcome anyone who would like to become a board member or simply a Friend of the museum. Please contact the museum at [virdenpioneerhome@gmail.com](mailto:virdenpioneerhome@gmail.com)

Rick Kristjanson is Virden Pioneer Home Museum Chairperson

**Border Regional Library  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
Wednesday, January 15  
7:00 p.m. at the Virden branch  
Open to the public**

## Southwest Weed District PUBLIC NOTICE PESTICIDE USE PERMIT

Public notice is hereby given that the Southwest Weed District intends to conduct the following pesticide programs during 2025.

- To control noxious weeds on rights-of-way within the Municipalities of Sifton, Souris-Glenwood and Whitehead and within the Municipality of Grassland from mile 126W to mile 150W including all villages, towns and municipal properties within. The projected dates of application will be from May 1, 2025 to October 31, 2025. The herbicides that may be used include;
  - 2,4-D Amine 600 -Octtain XL (fluroxypyr & 24-D)
  - 2,4-D LV Ester 700 -Oracle (dicamba)
  - Hasten (methyl & ethyl oleate) -RT540 (glyphosate) -Torpedo (flumioxazin, pyroxasulfone) -Esplanade SC (indaziflam)
  - Milestone (aminopyralid) -Garlon XRT (triclopyr)
  - Tordon 22K (picloram)
  - Overdrive (dicamba, diflufenzopyr)
  - Par 3 (2,4-D, dicamba, mecoprop)
  - Navius Flex (aminocyclopyrachlor, metsulfuron-methyl)
  - LI 700 adjuvant
- To control snow molds, fusarium, dollar spot, anthracnose, leaf spot on golf courses within weed district boundary. The projected dates of application will be from May 1 2025 to October 31, 2025. The fungicides that may be used include;
  - Daconil 2787 Fungicide (chlorothanil) -Secure Fungicide (chlorothalonil)
  - Medallion Fungicide (fluazinam) -Instrata II Fungicide (chlorothalonil)
  - Liberate Adjuvant
- To control the following insect pests including mosquitoes, grasshoppers, elm bark beetles and cankerworms, emerald ash borer. The projected dates of application for these programs will be from April 1, 2025 to October 31, 2025. The insecticides that may be used include;
  - Sevin XLR (carbaryl) -Decis 5EC (deltamethrin)
  - Ripcord 400EC (cypermethrin) -Eco Bran Bait (carbaryl)
  - Vectobac (Bti) -IMA-JET (imidacloprid)
  - DeltaGard (deltamethrin)
  - Treeazin Systemic Insecticide (azadirachtin)
- To control rodent pests including rats and mice. The projected dates of application for these programs will be January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025. The rodenticides that may be used include;
  - Conrac All-Weather Blox (bromadiolone)
  - Final All-Weather Blox (brodifacoum)
  - First Strike (difethialone)
  - Temprid SC (imidaclopyrid, beta-cyfluthrin)

Anyone may send written submissions or objections to specific programs within 15 days of the publication of this notice to the department below;

MB Environment and Climate  
Environmental Approvals Branch  
Box 35, 14 Fultz Blvd  
Winnipeg, MB  
R3Y 0L6

# The RM of Wallace-Woodworth plans third well

By Dale Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

## UTILITIES

At the Dec. 19 regular council meeting the RM of Wallace-Woodworth and the Manitoba Water Services Board entered into an agreement which includes the installation and mechanization of a third well. Council discussed funding for replacing the generator at Booster Station 1. The generator is critical to supplying water, and its replacement is not covered by the current agreement with the Manitoba Water Services Board. A resolution to request technical assistance and funding support was carried.

## BYLAW ENFORCEMENT

Council discussed re-

newing a bylaw enforcement contract with Dale Hrenko. Questions were raised about exploring alternative service providers like commissionaires. The consensus was that in the past such alternatives were expensive or unable to fulfill specific duties, such as animal control and beaver removal. The motion to renew Hrenko's contract was carried.

## ACCOUNTS

The council reviewed and approved financial transactions, including cheques and direct deposits amounting to over \$1 million. Concerns were expressed about high heating costs for the Ward 2 shop, with plans to investigate whether heating can be turned off without compromising

chemical storage.

## ELKHORN RTM CHILDCARE FACILITY

The Child Care Facility project is progressing positively. Updates indicated funding from the province was expected, likely before Christmas. Training for alarms has been completed, and the facility is now operational, with favorable feedback from parents who appreciate the smooth and convenient setup.

## 2025 INTERIM OPERATING BUDGET

The council approved the 2025 interim operating budget, totaling \$5.555 million. Members commented on the early completion of this task compared to previous years.

## ASSINIBOINE WEST WATERSHED

## DISTRICT (AWWD)

Appointments for the AWWD were confirmed. Coun. Mark Humphreys and Darren Johnson will represent the Arrow River sub-district, and Coun. Val Caldwell and Robert Alexander, the Oak River sub-district. However, concerns arose regarding the lack of representation for funding partners at the management table, which opened a discussion about the board's structure and transparency. Suggestions included revisiting the constitution to address these issues.

## UTILITY CUSTOMER REQUEST

A customer raised concerns about a high water bill due to a leak. The council decided to forward the issue to the util-

ity committee for further investigation, clarifying policies, and ensuring a fair response.

## COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Coun. MacDonald attended the community pasture meeting and reported that although the year went well overall, not all the pasture was utilized, allowing for the possibility of more cattle next year. Council discussed implementing a policy for treating sick cattle upon arrival, potentially adding a fee or refusing entry for untreated animals.

Coun. Humphries

reported that significant progress has been made on the library project. The Brandon Area Foundation donated \$50,000, followed by Tundra contributing \$100,000. Kingston Midstream added \$35,000 and additional funding of \$2,500 came from the Oak Lake Foundation. These contributions enable completion of the four-phase library renovation plan. Tenders for the project are expected to be issued soon, and the library board is optimistic about achieving full project scope after more than 20 years of effort.

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

# Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



## CBC and me...

Travelling alone it is CBC/Radio Canada that keeps me company. Admittedly, there are some programs that appeal to me more than others, most times I enjoy, and learn from them. For the first time, in a long time, the guest so intrigued me that I pulled over to the side of the road to make notes. I wanted to know about Bill T Jones from his interview with Tom Powers on the talking about art segment.

The probing question was what did Bill want from life. Three things: to always keep his eye on the prize, not to die alone, and to be mourned, when his time came, as a cherished elder. That hit me right in the 'feels' for several reasons.

To keep his eyes on the prize; to focus on his goals and how to achieve them. Bill T. Jones is an African American choreographer. The tenth of twelve children of migrant farm workers, Bill worked hard at school, embracing sports, until he was introduced to dance. He went on to pursue a career, a successful career with dance, starting a studio and company with his husband Arnie Zane. He spoke eloquently of the obstacles they faced as a mixed race couple, the toll of AIDS in their circle of friends and associates, of how he wondered how he would have been received in public, by the public, if his husband had not been white. Focusing on his need and desire to explore human nature and sexuality through dance kept him working even after Arnie's death. Years later he married again, this time to one practicing the Jewish faith.

To not die alone. This is an emotion with which I am so familiar. From our first breath to our last breath we crave/need human contact. It is my privilege to work with folks preparing to say farewell, and on occasion have been the one holding their hands as they release their last earthly breath. It is a sacred moment. For those who have no family, it is often a friend that sits vigil and honours the space. There is comfort and strength in the quiet presence of a fellow being as we graduate from our life on earth. May I also not die alone.

To be mourned as a cherished elder. Both those words are deeply significant to me and placed together bring me to my knees. "Cherished" is such a lovely old fashioned word. It was the word that Gordon and I used to describe our relationship. We had both been married, divorced and remarried, and after the death of our spouses, found strength and comfort and love with each other. It was a different love, we cherished each other, valued each moment that was granted to us, respected each other and laughed and cried together. It was at a different stage of our lives, and it was a gift. "Cherished". A friend, now graduated, and I discussed the role we filled in our separate and yet the same world. We recognised we were seen as elders, not only in years, but as keepers of the wisdom, ready to seek and share knowledge with those who were ready. To be mourned as a cherished elder...

## Thankfully, many changes are ahead!

The New Year always sets the stage for reflection on the past year(s) and it's always a good time to plan ahead.

Let's start with the known things. No matter how upsetting world events have become, the sun will rise tomorrow. If it doesn't, we won't have anything to worry about anyway but I am nearly sure the sun will rise. The sun has a good track record.

Some would believe that we live in tough times and, to some extent, that is true. Prices are high, costs of running a household, a farm or a business seems out of control. Governments seem to have lost their minds. They are claiming to control costs but at the same time, they are doing some really questionable things. If people can spare a couple of hours, I encourage them to watch Jordan Peterson's interview with Pierre Poilievre. Whether you like or agree with either man, you owe it to yourself to examine what they have to say as they actually examine issues, problems, causes and solutions.

I know this sounds very biased but what Poilievre and Peterson cover contrasts starkly to what Prime Minister Trudeau has been telling us. Trudeau's answer to everything is "We as Liberals have always looked after the interests of Canadians and will continue to do so."

Well, I hope not as the Trudeau years have been a disaster for Canadians as the federal government has mismanaged just about everything they have touched. From drug policy to housing to COVID-19 to electric cars, the feds have stumbled from one disaster to another. All that stumbling has been in a deep muddy ditch called national debt. From personal experience, we know that Canada Revenue Agency is about four years behind in their work.

The problem with the Liberal government is that just about every person who knew what needed to be done has quit and/or been forced out. The basic problem is at the top, it rests



with the Prime Minister and at the risk of being unkind, his resignation is good news. Canada has always needed strong leadership and we have not received it in recent years.

Trudeau's predecessor, Stephen Harper was a much stronger leader. Where he went off track was listening to what us political observers call "the boys in short pants", the political back room people who convinced the conservative leader that he had to take on some liberal stances so as to appeal to a broader voter base. I personally watched the former Manitoba leader, Hugh McFadyen, go down the same path. To his peril, he found out the hard way that conservatives make very poor liberals. Fancy logos and cute sayings don't make for firm and good government. Good financial management makes for good government.

So what needs to be done? The bureaucracies have to be reined in. Canada, and Manitoba, spend a lot of money, yes, waste a lot of money, without solid, well thought out plans. A prime example is the doctor shortage. We have been short of doctors for decades but have not raised our medical college out put enough. We should be training our own people to be doctors and medical staff. Double the output if needed. When the Allies in WWII needed more pilots and air crew to win the war, they trained them by the thousands in a matter of two to three years.

We should not be recruiting foreign doctors, other countries need them as badly as we do and they have paid for

that training. We should be elevating, at great speed, approval of credentials of people who have immigrated to Canada be it in medicine or trades. I suspect there are doctors working jobs that are definitely not in the medical field.

Politics in Manitoba and Canada has become very dumbed down. There's lots of blame to go around causing the political downfall. Much of the blame rests with the media. Corporate ownership of media has killed off many newspapers, TV and radio stations. Fortunately, the corporate influence in newspapers has largely dwindled.

I will take my share of media blame but I am still plugging away trying to elevate political awareness. Many people don't understand the difference between government debt and deficit. Deficit is the annual financial shortfall, debt is the accumulation of the annual deficits. Sadly, both those numbers are huge, so big that most of us can't comprehend those kind of dollars. So part of the dumbing down process is how complacent we become about money.

The second dumbing down process takes place because some of the popular or trigger issues in a society. Politicians want to pump up the voters over issues that may be important but in actual fact are not pivotal. The only issues that really matter are the economy, public safety and national security. If the economy, public safety and national security are not kept both sacred and healthy, most other issues don't matter so much.

Please keep on learning and stay engaged.

**Empire Advance**  
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# Miniota News

## Submitted

By LINDA CLARK

As I write this on Jan. 6, I want to wish all our Ukrainian friends and family who celebrate on this day, a very Merry Christmas. And a Happy 2025 to all!

The Miniota School held their annual Christmas concert on Dec. 18. "Snow Biz" was enjoyed by all. Congratulations to the students and staff.

The Miniota Sunday School Committee delivered several Christmas hampers in Ward 1 again this year. Thank you to these ladies.

Certainly, the many beautiful light displays around the town and the rural area have added to the festive spirit. Awards in the Prairie View Light Up Contest went to Rob McKean and Mandy Sanders, and to Ted and Anna Oliver. The rural award went to David and Heather Lelond. Congratulations to you all!

Visiting with Margaret Still and here to attend their dad and grandpa, Glen Still's, funeral on Dec. 21 were Ken and Jody Still of Brandon, Geordan, Dannica and Conan from Peace River, Alta., and Glenda Still and Glenn Humphreys and their family along with Robert and Brenda Still and their family.

A full house attended the Christmas Eve service at the Miniota United Church with Rev. Sally Carter and Linda Clark presiding over the service. Music from our choir was welcomed warmly by all who attended.

Visiting with Linda Clark and family over the holidays were Kevin and Julie Halipchuk, Aidan, Reese and Carley from Ottawa, Ont., Daryl and Melanie Clark of Ituna, Sask.

and Ella and Cauy Clark of Saskatoon, Sask. and Christine Tougas, Aubrey and James from Red Lake, Ont. Part of our Clark Christmas was a gathering held at the Arrow River Hall on Dec. 22, when 53 Clark family members enjoyed visiting, games and a bountiful supper.

Elizabeth Hargraves and children Hudson, Alec, Savannah and Isabelle from Walsh, Alta. enjoyed Christmas with Edward and Beth Lelond and extended family.

The family of Marg Taylor enjoyed their family celebration at the Miniota Rink on Dec. 24. Home for the festivities were Joan Taylor and Jacquie Scantlebury.

John and Noreen Stowe had Steven, Catherine, Steven Jr. and Ryan Stowe home from Calgary to join in on the Christmas celebration held at the Miniota Rink on Dec. 25.

The Rollo and Sararas families held their Christmas celebration on Dec. 26 at the rink.

Visiting with Wayne Poppel and Jeff and Ashleigh Poppel and boys over the holidays were family Kathryn and Brandon Pollard, Quinn and Cassidy of Black Falls, Alta., and Laura Poppel and Travis Peters and Banks from Calgary.

Mikayla Young of Ottawa and Jessica Young from Regina were home for the holidays to visit with family and friends. As well Devon Sanders from Saskatchewan joined in on the family visits.

Sympathy is extended to Janice Kerr and her daughters Mallory, Tessa, Jill and their families on the death of Ken Kerr Sr., their father-in-law, grandpa and great-grandpa. Jill and her daughter Julia are visiting with Janice and family for a week.

Congratulations and appreciation to the Miniota Community Centre and the Miniota Fire Department for hosting a delicious roast beef supper in the hall on New Year's Eve, which was attended by many locals as well as guests from surrounding communities.

Sympathy is extended to Barry and Dianne Clark, Ross and Brenda Rowan and Bob and Doris Clark and families on the death of their brother, Richie Rollo. We also extend sympathy to Richie's wife Brenda. Team Brown with Tiffany and Lexi Brown, Joelle Barkley from Virden and Hanna Low of Maryfield curled in the Asham U18 Provincial Curling bonspiel held this past week at Morden, coming home in 6th place. This team is coached by Cory Barkley. Of note, Team Brown had a seven-ender one game. Jamie and Stephanie Brown accompanied their daughters. Congratulations Team Brown!

A warm welcome is extended to Harry and Dawn Wenzel who have moved from Kingston, Nova Scotia to Miniota. This is a coming home for Dawn, who was raised here at Miniota. Dawn is the daughter of Eleanor and the late Bill Cousins. Welcome Harry and Dawn.

"The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." -Pablo Picasso

### ISABELLA

Our young families were welcomed at many homes once again this year for their Christmas carolling. Following singing, they gathered at the home of Mike Knight and Lisa Eastley for fellowship. Thank you for this gift.

Community members and their guests gathered at the Isabella Church on Christmas Eve for worship. The church was beautifully decorated by Angie Heise for the service which was prepared by Hazel Wall was led by Randi Hunkin.

Hazel Wall travelled to Airdrie, Alta. to spend Christmas with Kris and Jen Wall and their family. Upon returning home, Hazel enjoyed a gathering with her Gill cousins at Rivers.

# Town of Virden council wraps up 2024

By Dale Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

## RCMP REPORT

Sergeant Cooper of the Virden RCMP presented a report, addressing staffing shortages and clarifying details about suspended or retiring members. Updates were provided on ongoing investigations, and policies for responding to recurring false alarms from local businesses due to malfunctioning alarm systems. Officials have sent notices to these businesses, stating that the police will not respond to alarms until the systems are repaired. The discussion highlighted community policing efforts, such as officers attending parades and interacting with children. These initiatives aim to build trust and positive relationships between the police and the community, particularly with younger residents.

## RCMP COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IMPACT

A letter template

provided by the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) was reviewed to address concerns over the RCMP's collective bargaining process, particularly regarding significant retroactive pay increases. The council expressed frustration over the lack of direct municipal input in negotiations and the financial burden it places on municipalities. A motion was passed to send the letter to Minister LeBlanc, emphasizing the need for greater transparency and municipal involvement in future negotiations.

## FINANCE

The council discussed the annual interim operating budget, which ensures municipal functions continue smoothly before final budget approval. A motion to approve the budget was made and seconded. During the discussion, it was noted that protective services costs have risen signifi-

cantly due to increases in RCMP fees, including retroactive pay. While funds for these costs had already been allocated, some items like camera charges are expected to be billed in future quarters.

## ANNUAL HISTORICAL AWARD

Council members discussed nominating individuals or groups for the Historical Award, which allows up to five winners. While the nomination forms are available online, nominations are not due until February.

## SOUTHWEST BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEUR EXPO

The council reviewed their sponsorship for the upcoming Southwest Business and Entrepreneur Expo in Oak Lake. It was noted that in previous years, the municipality contributed a \$1,000 pitch prize and a \$500 sponsorship, split evenly between cash and in-kind support. A motion was passed to continue with the same level of

sponsorship.

## SPONSORSHIP REQUEST - PRESCHOOL WELLNESS FAIR

The Preschool Wellness Fair requested sponsorship for its event, which supports local children and attracts vendors from nearby areas. The event will be moved to a larger venue this year, which prompted further discussion on hall rental costs. There was concern about taxpayer overlap since residents already fund Prairie Mountain Health and Fort La Bosse through taxes.

Ultimately, the motion for the one-third contribution for hall rental was approved, with one opposing vote registered for the principle of minimizing taxpayer burden.

## WESTMAN EMERGENCY GROUP (WEG)

Coun. Marc Savy addressed updates to the Westman Emergency Group (WEG) 2025 plan. Savy explained that the plan now includes updated

information from various town and rural municipalities and requires council resolutions before provincial review by Dec. 31 to ensure the plan's acceptance. A motion for the updated plan was introduced and passed with a discussion on the significant effort involved in creating and maintaining it. Functional and media training sessions were discussed.

## OTHER BUSINESS

The council approved renewing their membership with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) at a cost of \$971.88, based on a per-capita rate.

Coun. Mark Savy and Mayor Tina Williams rode the holiday train from Brandon to Virden. The event featured enthusiastic participation from local schools and daycares as Williams received a chorus of welcome voices when they arrived at Virden. Savy also attended the RM of Wallace-Woodworth staff appreciation event and

described the unique experience of a ventriloquist performance who noted that Savy's apparel matched the dummy's.

A collaboration between the Town of Virden, SAIL, New Horizons, and Age-Friendly Manitoba resulted in securing a \$7,480 community collaboration grant to support transportation services in the area for the next 48 weeks. A new Handyvan service for seniors will cost \$2 per trip for eligible users and is intended for trips to essential locations like their bank and medical appointments. Efforts are underway to establish dedicated parking spots for the van at key destinations.

CAO Rhonda Stewart expressed thanks to office staff for their initiative in collecting donations for Virden and Area Food Cupboard and Christmas Cheer campaigns. She extended congratulations to recently retired Floyd Houston after 15 years of service.

# Battling the After-Holiday Blues

**HOLISTIC WELLNESS  
CERTIFIED HYPNOTHERAPIST  
MARIE EVELYNE GINGRAS**

So, the holidays have come and gone, and suddenly it's just you, a mountain of used wrapping paper, and the glaring realization that "January me" has to deal with "December me's" credit card bills. If you're feeling a little blah (or a lot), welcome to the club. I've got my membership card right here. The "after-holiday blues" can sneak up on anyone, but there's good news: it doesn't have to be that way, and you've got more power to shake it off than you think.

Throughout November and December, life can feel a bit like living in a snow globe—twinkling lights, goodies everywhere, festive music floating through the air. Then January arrives, and it's more like trudging through a slushy parking lot while trying to recall how many peppermint mochas you charged to your credit card.

It doesn't help that the days are shorter and darker, either. Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is very real, triggered by less sunlight, colder weather, and a general reluctance to get out of bed because it's basically Antarctica in your bedroom. Even if you're not dealing with full-blown SAD, these dark days might make you feel extra cranky, fatigued, and ready to wrap yourself in a blanket burrito till spring.

The best way I've found

to combat these blues, aside from adopting a pet sloth so I can lounge guilt-free, is a holistic approach to wellness. That basically means looking after mind, body, and spirit in tandem. Instead of treating one symptom (like the desire to binge on leftover cookies), you address the big picture: how you're thinking, how you're moving, and what truly makes you feel alive.

To help your mind, I suggest starting your day with even five minutes of calm. Before you roll over and check social media to see what you missed while you were sleeping (hint: probably cat videos and someone's workout selfie), try a short meditation. Focus on your breath, visualize a peaceful place, or repeat a positive mantra—whatever feels right. This small morning habit can clear mental clutter and keep stress at bay.

For the body, I'm starting to become a big fan of yoga and, though, to be honest, "Downward Dog" sometimes looks more like "Confused Giraffe" when I do it. But it still helps me de-stress, makes my body feel more limber and gives me a mood boost. If yoga's not your jam, a brisk walk can work wonders, or you could channel your inner 90s kid with a hula-hoop. Another easy fix is to remember that you're not a cactus: you need more water than you think,

especially after the sugary and salty goodies from the holidays.

Spiritual care can be a game-changer, too and no, it doesn't have to mean going to a mountaintop and chanting with monks (unless you want to, of course). Maybe you try journaling to discover what you're truly grateful for, or you take an afternoon stroll in the park to just soak up some quiet. The goal is to feel more connected to something meaningful, whether that's nature, faith, or your own sense of purpose.

Now, about those New Year's resolutions: the key word is "realistic." I once vowed to work out every single day at 6 a.m. Let's just say that resolution died a swift, painless death by January 3. Instead, go smaller, like aiming for three workouts a week or adding an extra serving of veggies to dinner. Small wins build momentum, and momentum keeps you motivated.

Clearing out clutter is another surprisingly powerful trick. I'm no Marie Kondo, but let me tell you, donating that sweater I never wore was oddly liberating. Home organization is huge because the less you trip over piles of random stuff, the calmer you'll feel inside. And if you still need a little extra push, invite a friend over to help you figure out which items spark zero joy.

Routines can also be your best friend right now. If you're like me, you might crave a bit of consistency after the holiday whirlwind. Try a soothing bedtime ritual, make a cup of tea, light a candle, read something that's not on your phone. Good sleep isn't just a perk; it's essential for your mood and overall sanity.

So yes, the after-holiday slump is real. But it's also a chance to pause, re-evaluate, and maybe discover new ways to nurture yourself. The stretch after the holiday rush can be a gift in disguise. It gives you space to figure out how you really want to feel this year.

If you're knee-deep in January blues, take a breath. You've got this. By caring for your mind, body, and spirit, you just might turn this post-holiday slump into the start of something amazing. And when the first rays of spring finally show up, you'll be ready to bloom right along with the flowers!

# Police make arrests, serve warrants

**Submitted**

BY WESTMAN RCMP

**Westman RCMP Report Dec. 15 –19**

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 44 calls for service; 7 were traffic related including four traffic collisions. Also included in the calls for service were 4 suspicious person/vehicle/property files, 2 assault files, 4 times failing to attend court or surrender, 2 false alarms, 1 mental health act file, 3 mischief files, 4 uttering threats against a person, and 2 breach of peace files.

Dec. 13 RCMP executed a search warrant in Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. A search of the residence was completed and police located several weapons and firearms where seized. A 36-year-old woman was arrested and charged with unauthorized possession of a firearm, unsafe storage of firearms, two counts of possession of weapons for dangerous purpose, and Excise Act – possession of unstamped tobacco. She was released from custody. A 68-year-old man was arrested and charged under the Excise Act – possession of unstamped tobacco; he was also released and both people will attend court in March 2025.

Dec. 16 RCMP received two warrants for the arrest of two Sioux Valley youths who failed to attend court.

Dec. 17 RCMP sought a warrant for arrest for a 26-year-old male in the town of Virden, after multiple attempts to conduct curfew checks where he was bound by the courts to be at home during specified hours.

Dec. 17 police received a report of a domestic assault in progress in Sioux Valley. The subject of complaint was gone on arrival of the RCMP; however, was located shortly after and placed under arrest. The man, 34, was charged with assault and failure to comply with a probation order and will attend court later this month.

**Westman RCMP Report, Dec. 20 –28**

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 59 calls for service; 19 were traffic related including two impaired files. Also included in the calls for service were 5 assault files, 1 failure to comply with a probation order, 3 false alarms, 2 mischief files, 3 uttering threats against a person, and 1 unauthorized possession of a firearm/prohibited weapon file.

On Dec. 20, RCMP received a report from First Nation Safety Officers that a 19-year-old male in Sioux Valley Dakota Nation had a firearm outside of a residence. Safety Officers located the individual and detained him, he was transported to the Virden RCMP Detachment where he was placed under arrest for pointing a firearm. Statements were taken and the gun was seized. He will attend court in March 2025 on charges of possession of a weapon for dangerous purpose and carrying a concealed weapon.

On Dec. 22 RCMP conducted a search warrant at a residence in the community of Sioux Valley resulting in multiple individuals being placed under arrest. They were transported to the Virden RCMP Detachment and lodged in cells. A 41-year-old woman was remanded into custody and her next court appearance is in January 2025, she has been charged with possession for the purpose of trafficking – Schedule I: methamphetamine (crystal meth), possession of property obtained by crime less than or

equal \$5000, and 2 counts of failure to comply with a release order. A 19-year-old male was also remanded into custody; later being release on a court date for January 2025, he has been charged with unauthorized possession of a firearm, unauthorized possession of a prohibited weapon or restricted weapon, possession of a firearm when knowing possession unauthorized, unsafe storage of firearms, and three counts of failure to comply with undertaking condition.

On Dec. 23 RCMP received a report involving threats in the town of Reston. RCMP followed up with the complainant and a warrant has been sought for a 28-year-old woman who is charged with uttering threats against a person and uttering threats to property/animals.

On Dec. 23 Westman RCMP conducted routine traffic stops in Virden and Melita. Five traffic stops resulted in drivers being issued traffic offence notices for using a cell phone or other hand-operated electronic device while driving a vehicle, which a fine of \$672 and a 3-day licence suspension.

On Dec. 28 Westman RCMP were dispatched to an assault in progress in the Sioux Valley community. Police attended and a 61-year-old man was arrested and charged with assault. He was released on paperwork to attend court in March 2025.

**Westman RCMP Report, Dec. 29 – Jan. 4, '25**

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 72 calls for service; 18 were traffic related including six speeding files and one operation while impaired file. Also included in the calls were 7 assault files, 6 wellbeing files, 5 mental health act files, 9 failure to comply/disobeying court orders and 5 false alarms.

On Dec. 30 RCMP received a call that a 34-year-old man was failing to comply with a court order by attending a residence where he was bound by the court to not attend. He was gone on arrival of members and a warrant for his arrest has been issued by the court.

On Dec. 29 RCMP received a call from a resident of the town of Virden stating that they are bound by a protection order from a person who was parked outside of their residence. RCMP obtained a statement and the subject of complaint was placed under arrest. A 64-year-old female was charged with disobeying a court order and will appear in court in February.

On Jan. 2 during a routine traffic patrol in Melita, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 130 km/hr in a 100 km/hr zone. The driver was issued a speeding, which carries a fine of \$442.

On Jan. 4 RCMP were dispatched to a call for a domestic assault and threats in the RM Wallace-Woodworth. RCMP arrived on scene and a 31-year-old man was placed under arrest and remanded into custody, charged with uttering threats, assault, and failure to comply with release order condition. He will appear in court in February.

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#7 - 515 4th Avenue  
Burlington Place, Shoal Lake, MB



## Elkhorn Agricultural Society ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday, January 21  
7:00 p.m. at the Elkhorn Leisure Centre  
Everyone welcome

\$10.00 membership needs to be paid prior to the meeting in order to vote.

For more info, please contact Darren Johnson 204-748-8919



# Antique family treasures come to light



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Johnson family heirloom necklace.

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Terry and Joan Johnson have discovered a unique, carved wooden necklace brought to Canada by Joan's grandmother from England, circa 1890s. The necklace is about 34 inches, doubled, so 68 inches in total length. The Johnsons are keen to know more about this item which appears to have about 128 individual and intricately carved wooden beads.

Ebay, Etsy and other online sales sites feature a variety of carved wooden necklaces of varying vintages, but I found only one necklace with the same strange motif as Johnsons'. Said to be a 'rare find' it is said to be an antique Chinese carved piece, possibly of walnutwood. Very similar to Johnsons' but not as long, it was on offer for under \$100.

Todd Smetanka, founder of Ronin Machinewerks, runs a small family business based in Mich-

# Trivia Night at the Woodworth Legion



PHOTO BY CELIA NOLAN

Garry Draper, middle of left row, gets ready to test the Woodworth Legion crowd on trivia night in Kenton.

By Gerry Nolan  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Woodworth Legion in Kenton held a trivia night on December 20. We have already held 2 or 3 of these evenings after Chase the Ace and the event is becoming quite popular. Five teams of 5 or 6 people form a team to compete against one another.

Garry Draper who is vice-president of the legion is quiz master and spends lots of time researching the material. There are 5 rounds of questions to which your team writes down their answer. There are 5 questions for each round and some bonus questions as well.

After the round, teams correct their own answers. When the teams correct their answers, Garry gives the correct answer, so we learn the correct answers to the questions we got wrong.

igan. He says, "From ancient beads made in China to Victorian jewelry made with bog oak...wood has been used in myriad ways for jewelry production throughout history."

Terry Johnson submitted pictures of their curio, wondering if any readers might have knowledge about this type of Victorian treasure.

This last Friday, the Avengers came out on top with a 1-point victory. They got 89 out of a possible 100 points.

Some of the questions that were asked were to name the 12 days of Christmas in order. Most of the teams got the 12 days but not necessarily in the correct order.

Garry then sang a line out of a Christmas carol, a total of 10 songs. Teams had to name that song. The teams then had to sing a couple of lines out of 1 of the songs to get a bonus point. There are some pretty good singers in Kenton. Each team applauded the other as they took their turn singing some lines out of a carol. There were lots of laughs and a merry old time was had by all.

Thank you to all who came out and took part in a special evening. April will be our next trivia night.

Word has it that the Woodworth Legion President Vaughn Wilson may be just pulling out the karaoke machine for an evening in February. If you are up for some fun come on out and take part, it will be fun!

# St. Mary's Anglican supper



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Everything is ready for guests to join: Mike Bergman and Linda Lane were coordinators of this Christmas Day festive setting in St. Mary's Anglican Church Hall. Members pitched in for St. Mary's traditional Christmas dinner, an annual feast for community members. This year 57 joined around the tables.



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# TWELVE RINKS, TWO WINNERS



PHOTOS BY JESSICA COULTER

Six teams compete to see who will win the Woodworth Legion Branch #118 annual curling bonspiel.

By Jessica Coulter  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On Friday, January 3 and Saturday, January 4, the Woodworth Legion hosted their annual curling bonspiel. Twelve rinks came from all over to compete. There were teams from Rivers, Virден, Oak River and Oak Lake. All games were eight ends.

In the end, there were two teams that tied for first place with a score of 38 points each, the Oak Lake Legion team and Tom Ryall's team from Rivers. To

determine which team would receive the 1st place prize and which team would receive the second-place prize, each team pulled a card. The Oak Lake Legion pulled the high card from the deck of cards used for the Legion Chase the Ace.

Following the two-day curling event, the Legion Ladies Auxiliary served up a perfect roast beef supper with all the fixings and a half dozen different desserts for all to choose from. So many people came out for the supper, extra tables had to be set-up for all to have a place to sit.



Woodworth Legion sports director, Don Carter, presents Oak Lake Legion team leader Murray Olive with his team's prize.



Woodworth Legion sports director, Don Carter, presents Rivers team leader Tom Ryall with his team's prize.

# HAMIOTA TOURNAMENT OF CHAMPIONS

By Gerry Nolan  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The rural Tournament of Champions U11 took place in Hamiota this past weekend from January 3 - 5. At this age group, you begin to see the skills of players begin to develop. Teams that took part in the 3-day tournament were the host Hamiota/Shoal Lake team, as well as teams from Virден, Oak Lake, Hartney, Reston, Wawanesa/Glenboro, Deloraine, Tri-Valley and Russell. There were 3 pools of 3 teams that competed against one another to crown a champion. There were a total of 19 games played.

Congratulations to Hamiota on a well-run weekend. Kudos to all the volunteers who put in the time for such a big event to take place. Thank you to the officials who worked these games. Without them there are no games.

Thank you to the volunteers who worked the admission gate, the time clock and the score sheet. And let's not forget the Zamboni drivers for making excellent ice conditions. The canteen workers were excellent and were kept busy on this cold January weekend.

I want to express a special thank you to Dawson Brooks who played music all weekend long as well as keeping me informed and up to date on all the scores of the games. Dawson even played my favourite goal song, Chelsey Dagger! Thank you, Dawson, on a job well done.

There were some great individual efforts this weekend as well. Thank you to all the coaches, the managers and most of all the parents and grandparents who came out and supported their favourite teams. You are all winners.

Want to express a thank you to Ryan Carter who



PHOTO BY CELIA NOLAN

Russell Rams win the U11 Tournament of Champions.

organized the skills competition. It was great to watch these young athletes!

Now to the winners of the skills test.

Fastest skater was Kinsler Martin of Hamiota/Shoal Lake. This guy can skate.

Puck handling was Connor Elliott from Virден, great hands.

Top shooter Keaton Vanroboeys from Deloraine, heavy shot.

Top Goalie was Ian Shingoose Clearsky from Tri Valley, hard to beat.

There was also an all star team selected, the winners were.

Goalie Ian Shingoose Clearsky from Tri Valley.

Defense: Drew Derlago from Hartney. Theo Cowan Hartney.

Forwards: Jaxon Braybrook Virден. Brixton Desaul-

niers Russell. Hayden Davidson Wawanesa/Glenboro. Most valuable player of the weekend was Kinsler Martin.

So after 19 games and a lot of great competition it comes down to this. In the Bronze medal game, the host team from Hamiota/Shoal Lake won over the Hartney Devils by a score of 7 to 4. Congrats to both teams on a well played game.

The Gold medal game was everything and more you could hope for and capped off a great weekend as Russell edged Virден 3 - 2 in overtime to claim the championship. Congratulations to both teams in a hard-fought match.

This concludes the wrap on this tournament, and to the players thank you for the entertainment, you all should be proud of all the work you displayed this weekend! Best of luck in the remainder of the season.



# SPORTS

## TEAM BROWN COMPETES. COACH RECOGNIZED AT PROVINCIALS

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A young, local rink gained valuable experience while competing against Manitoba's best in the U18 female provincials.

Team Brown is skipped by 14-year-old Tiffany Brown from Miniota. Virden's Joelle Barkley plays third with Hannah Low of Maryfield, Sask. is at second. Both are 15. Brown's twin sister, Lexi, is the rink's lead. Cory Barkley coaches the team. What was he most pleased with about the rink's play at provincials? "I think just how much our game calling, focus, and on ice demeanor is improving.

The girls have picked up on so much in a short time and you can see their confidence growing," he said.

Coach Barkley was honoured at the event with the Coaching Award. It is voted on by the coaches and recognizes "a coach that exemplifies the attributes of a quality coach."

"The coaching award was a very special surprise. Being that it was awarded on a vote from my coaching peers, especially being my first provincials as a curling coach, means a great deal. Coaching is very rewarding and something I've always enjoyed," he said, adding jokingly, "and I hope will

continue to get to do into the future, if the girls will have me."

Team Brown placed sixth at the U18 provincials in Morden. It finished 2-5, but "had last rock shots for wins in two other games that the team narrowly missed," Barkley said. One of close losses was to the eventual champion - Caitlyn McPherson of Gimli.

"Being that we were the youngest team in the field, the girls more than held their own in what was a very even group of teams," he said.

The rink has a couple more bonspiels left to play this season.



PHOTO BY CONNIE LALIBERTÉ/CURL MANITOBA

Tiffany Brown skip, Joelle Barkley third, Hannah Low second, Lexi Brown lead, Back: Coaching Cory Barkley.

## REF MEMORIES

REF TO WRITER

GERRY NOLAN



### Getting a chance

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

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

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

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

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

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

The head Referee that night was Mr. Bill Little of Decker. I had met Bill before and knew he was a good official. One of the things he taught me that night was to pick up

the rule book and just go over some specific rules, which I did throughout my career!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# SPORTS

## OIL CAPS FOCUS ON MAKING STEPS

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Capitals are looking to continue to make strides during the 2025 portion of their schedule.

As of Jan. 4, the Manitoba Junior Hockey League team had a 12-21-0-0 record. The Oil Capitals were slated to play on the road against the Winnipeg Freeze on Jan. 7. On Jan. 12, the Virden team plays in Niverville and, on Jan. 14, the squad is in Selkirk. The next Oil Caps' home game is Jan. 17 versus Niverville.

"Our focus has to be to continue to get better every day and work to put ourselves into a position to make the playoffs," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said.

The Oil Capitals finished their 2024 schedule with a pair of contests versus the Swan Valley Stampeders. Noel Englot delivered the game-winning goal in overtime on Dec. 19 to lift the Oil Caps to a 5-4 home victory. Englot finished with two goals and three points. It was also a big night for Brett Sabel, who recorded two goals and two assists. Virden's own Bryce Bryant had a goal and an assist.

The next night in Swan River, the Oil Caps fell 5-4. Defenceman Tyler Dodgson had a goal and an assist.

On Jan. 4, the Oil Capitals fell 4-2 on the road to Steinbach in their first game of 2025. The host

Pistons led 1-0 after the first period and 3-1 at the second intermission. Scoring for Virden were defencemen Rhylan Baxter and Virden's own Ty Plaisier. Oil Caps goalie Gavin Renwick made 29 saves.

### Roster Moves

Ahead of the Jan. 10 Canadian Junior Hockey League national trade deadline, the Oil Capitals acquired 2006-born forward Liam Goertzen from the Winnipeg Freeze. The 5-foot-11, 175-pounder from Homewood had nine goals and 22 points as a rookie in 30 games this season for the Freeze.

"Liam is a good-sized body that can skate and has the ability to score," Ramsey said. "He will bring energy and pace to our team. We are looking forward to getting him in the lineup this week."

Going the other way in the deal were defenceman Jonah Vanderhorst and forward Parker Rolston. The 2007-born Vanderhorst recorded two assists in 19 games for Virden. Rolston scored once and had two assists in 17 games as an Oil Cap. The 2006-born player scored on Jan. 4 in his Freeze debut.

On Jan. 6, the Oil Capitals announced they added 2004-born goalie Loic Morin. The 5-foot-11, 183-pounder from Drummondville, Que. was acquired from the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League's Melville Millionaires for a player development fee. In nine SJHL games this season, he had a 2.79 goals against average. Last season Morin played for the MJHL's OCN Blizzard.

### Wright Named Community Ambassador

Carson Wright has been named to the RBC-MJHL Community Ambassador Team. One member of each MJHL franchise is selected to the team as recognition for their "outstanding citizenship and sportsmanship both on and off the ice and a commitment to volunteerism," according to the Oil Capitals' website. A donation will be made to a local school on Wright's behalf. In addition, one ambassador will receive the RBC Community Award and another donation made on their behalf to a local school.

### Oil Caps Coaches Picked for Showcase

Ramsey will lead his league's 18U White at the MJHL-SJHL Showcase. Oil Capitals assistant coach Curtis Brolund will serve on the coaching staff of MJHL 20U Black at the event.

The showcase will feature three teams from each league. It will be held at Seven Oaks Sportsplex in Winnipeg, Jan. 28-29.

### Scharff Honoured

In conjunction with Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries, the Oil Capitals recognize one volunteer a month. December's Volunteer of the Month was Cade Scharff. He operates a camera at the team's games. On Facebook, the team stated, "Whether he's capturing a goal, the hustle of a penalty kill, or our players' goal celebrations, Cade makes sure every play is covered."

## SABEL'S HARD WORK LEADS OIL CAPS

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Hard work has made Brett Sabel a key member of the Virden Oil Capitals.

The 20-year-old forward shared the Manitoba Junior Hockey League team's Gardewine Hardest Working Player award last season with Virden's own Grady Lane. Sabel's strong work ethic has helped him earn big roles as an assistant captain, defensive presence, and offensive contributor in his final junior campaign.

"Brett is a tireless worker," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He is relentless when he plays and works extremely hard off the ice. He takes great pride in his game and he leads by example. Our younger guys don't have to wonder what kind of work it takes to play at this level, they just have to watch Brett and what he brings everyday. As a coach, he is one of those guys who you

know is going to be going every night and he drags others along with him."

A Wisconsin product, Sabel first heard about the Oil Capitals' program from an advisor when he was in Grade 12. Now it is hard to imagine him not being a part of it next season.

"We have been very fortunate to have Brett spend his junior hockey career here with the Oil Caps," Ramsey said. "He has been great on the ice and in our community."

In 2022-2023, as a rookie, Sabel recorded five goals and 12 points in 55 games. He received the team's Top Defensive Player award. Last season Sabel increased his offensive output to seven goals and 22 points.

This campaign the forward is on pace to surpass his previous career highs. As of Jan. 4, Sabel had seven goals and 17 points in 31 games. On Dec. 19, he lit the lamp twice and recorded two assists for

four points. As of Jan. 4, he was tied for third on the team in goals and was sixth in points.

Sabel has appreciated various parts of being a part of the Oil Caps. He said, "I have enjoyed playing in the awesome facility and best community and fans in the league." Sabel has been billeting with Dave and Lynette Jordan. He said they "have been amazing and will always be part of my extended family."

Sabel hails from Fond du Lac, Wisc. His hard work in Virden has given him the opportunity to return to his hometown. For the 2025-2026 school year, Sabel plans to attend Fond du Lac's Marian University. It is a private Roman Catholic university whose sports teams compete at the NCAA Division III level. Sabel went to some Marian University hockey games when he was younger. He plans to study business and play hockey there.



Virden Oil Capitals #12 Brett Sabel

SUBMITTED PHOTO

# SPORTS

## SKATE VIRDEN SUCCEEDS AT SECTIONALS, LINNEY OPEN



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Virden's Nate Greenbank.

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Skate Virden's Nate Greenbank has earned the opportunity to compete in a new Skate Canada competition.

The Moosomin area resident, who trains in Virden, has earned a spot in the 2025 Skate Canada Trophy. The new competition combines the former Novice Canadian Championships and Skate Canada Challenge – Pre-Novice/Novice event.

"This is my first time competing at a challenge event," Greenbank said. "I am looking forward to the opportunity to compete and gain some new experiences."

Greenbank qualified for the event due to his strong performance at the Skate Manitoba Pre-Novice/Novice Sectionals Championships and Gordon Linney Open. These events were held together at the Winnipeg Winter Club, Dec. 14-15. Greenbank placed first in Pre-Novice Men at the sectionals. His brother, Luke Greenbank, was first in Pre-Juvenile Men (U11) freeskate at the same event. Also at sectionals, Ainslee McGregor was fifth in Pre-Novice Women. She trains with Skate Virden and competes for the Waskada Figure Skating Club.

In the Juvenile Women U12 freeskate category at the Gordon Linney Open, two skaters who train with Skate Virden finished first and second. Emma Errington of the Moosomin Skating Club was first. The Elkhorn Figure Skating Club's Kaylee Malcolm was second.

Skate Virden's Mia du Plessis earned first in the Juvenile Women (U14) Freeskate. In the STAR 8 Women Free category, Vaida Maas skated to a first place finish. Gracy Russell finished fourth. Both skated for the Moosomin Skating Club.

Addison Cousins and Evie McAdam both competed in a deep STAR 6 Women Freeskate category. Both train with Skate Virden with Cousins representing the Elkhorn Figure Skating Club.

Falyn Brown was second in the STAR 5 Women (U13) Free Program. Bailee Dane placed fourth in the STAR 5 Women (13&O) Free Program. Both train with Skate Virden and compete for the Wawota Figure Skating Club.





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## REID, WALLACE MAKE SUCCESSFUL MOVE TO SENIOR RANKS

By Robin Wark  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

After wrapping up their eligibility last season with the Virden Oil Capitals, Eric Reid and Nolan Wallace are enjoying the opportunity to keep competing for the community as Oil Kings.

The two ex-junior standouts are now playing in the senior ranks for the Virden Oil Kings of the Tiger Hills Hockey League. Reid, a Virden product, is a goaltender. Brandon's Wallace plays defence.

"Having Nolan Wallace and Eric Reid join us following their success in the Caps' uniform has been great. ... Both players have fit into the room great with their laid-back personalities and knowing a lot of the team," Oil Kings coach and general manager Ryan Mathieson said.

The Oil Kings enter the week with an 8-2-0-1 record. That led the THHL Western Division. The Oil Kings host the Carberry Plainsmen on Jan. 9 and play in Neepawa on Jan. 12.

They wrapped the December portion of their campaign by beating the visiting Boissevain Border Kings, 5-2, on Dec. 20 and the host Souris Elks, 10-2, on Dec. 27. Against Boissevain, in a battle of the division's top two teams, Bradley Bowles racked up five points, while Ty Lewis scored twice and finished with four points. Versus the Elks, Bowles recorded four points, including a hat trick. With a goal and three assists, Tanner Lewis also recorded four points.

The team started off 2025 with an 11-1 drubbing of the MacGregor Wild on Jan. 3. The Wild did not score until the third period. By then, the Oil Kings had built up an 11-0 lead.

Reid made 30 saves. Bowles led the team with six points. He and Ty Lewis each netted a hat trick. Ty Lewis and Jackson Orr, who had a goal and four assists, each recorded five points. Seven different players scored for Virden.

As of Jan. 4, Bradley Bowles led the THHL with 38

points and 26 assists. He was second with 12 goals. Teammate Jeremy Johnson was third with 20 points.

### Eric Reid

Reid's father, Kent, was a prolific points producer during his playing days as a forward for the Oil Kings. Born a couple of years after his father's senior career concluded, Reid has formed a formidable netminding duo with Tristin Rinn this season. As of Jan. 4, Reid had a 4-2-0-1 record and a 3.69 goals against average. Rinn was 4-0-0-0 with a 2.24 GAA.

"Reider has been huge for us this season, not only with big timely saves but also the less obvious plays to control rebounds and allow us to reset when we need to," Mathieson said. "Eric is a great puck-handling goaltender, which takes a ton of pressure off our defence."

Of playing at the senior level, Reid said, "I am enjoying having the chance to continue to play hockey with the Oil Kings and doing so with such a great group of guys."

He is in his first year studying at the Asper School of Business at the University of Manitoba. Reid is pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce degree.

### Nolan Wallace

Wallace is very happy to continue his hockey career as an Oil King.

"I've really enjoyed how great of a group it is in Virden," he said. "I was welcomed in with open arms and have been appreciative of how great the guys are off the ice. I've really enjoyed how high intense the games are, with lots of skill on the ice at all times. It's been a lot of fun."

In 10 games, as of Jan. 4, Wallace has two goals and five assists.

"Wally is a rock on the backend," Mathieson said. "He's a heads up player always looking to make a play either with the puck or a big hit. It's clear Wally has a great mind for the game. With his play on the ice and communication off of it, he improves everyone's game."

Wallace is pursuing a Bachelor of Science degree at Brandon University. Afterwards, he would like to study physical therapy.

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# CLASSIFIEDS

## Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY  
 LYNNE MARIE HEAMAN  
 DECEMBER 21, 1946 TO JULY 14, 2024



Lynne passed away July 14th, 2024 at the St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg, with family by her side. She was born in Virden on December 21st, 1946 to Herb and Iris Gray. She grew up on the family farm northeast of Cromer. She was big sister to Murray and Colleen. Lynne attended the Sanderson School and often told us how she rode her horse, known as Fly, down the road to school. She was also a member of the 4-H club, where she proudly showed cattle.

Once in high school, Lynne was bussed to Virden Collegiate Institute. She graduated in 1964, and that same year met Keith Heaman, fell in love, and they were married later that year on October 31st. Shonda came along on December 28th, and Blair completed their family, on April 4th, 1967. They lived on their farm NW of Virden, in the Harmsworth District.

Lynne loved to drive, she was always chauffeuring Shonda and Blair when they were growing up, to figure skating, hockey, baseball, and eventually to curling.

Lynne's passion was curling and bonspiels were a big part of her life. She was pretty well known at all the small town rinks, and all the teams had their eye on Lynne's team. She always seemed to come home with trophies and prizes more times than not. Lynne was on the Curling Board for many years as well.

Golfing was her other big interest. She loved going in tournaments and she helped organize many of these tournaments. She looked forward to the girl's weekend trips to either Kenosee Lake or Clear Lake every year. She was on the Golf Board, too.

Lynne loved to watch her grandchildren play their chosen sports. She and Keith went up to Sherwood Park, Alberta, to watch granddaughter Cassidy pitch for her team to win Provincials. They also enjoyed watching Cassidy play Ringette in the winter. As Keith and Lynne were avid bowlers' they were very comfortable in the bowling alley watching grandson Cody play. As their other grandson, Kieran, lived close by, they always were sure to watch him play ball, curl and help him out with golfing tips and advice.

Lynne loved to play cards, and I really don't think there was a game she didn't like. She loved Crib, Canasta, and especially Bridge. She loved Bridge Club days, and at one point, was in 3 different Bridge Clubs. She was always so excited to spend time with her Bridge Buddies. You all meant the world to her!

You always knew if the Blue Jays were playing, because if you dropped by their home, you would be sure to find Lynne watching them on TV. I recall her saying she actually saw them play live, years ago. I wish she would have got to see them live, once more.

Lynne is survived by her loving husband of 59 years. Keith, daughter Shonda (Blair), son Blair (Valerie), grandchildren, Cassidy, Cody and Kieran, her sister Colleen (Neil), sisters-in-law Beth, Fern, Ellen, and brother-in-law Dale (Kathy), as well as numerous nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents, Herb and Iris Gray, stepmother, Nora Gray, brother Murray Gray, and her in-laws Lorne and Daphne Heaman.

Lynne loved her big yard on the farm, which was evident by the huge garden and all the beautiful flowers she grew. Cassidy has inherited that 'green thumb' and loves to garden as well. She also enjoyed baking for her family. Known for her chocolate cake, Kieran would be sure to stop by and cut a piece out, right in the middle of the cake. This always got a chuckle out of her!

A Celebration of Life was held on Tuesday, July 23rd, 2024 at the Legion Hall, with a private inurnment at the Virden Cemetery, followed by a lunch at the hall. A slide show was presented that held many happy memories of Lynne over the years.

Lynne is survived by her loving husband of 59 years. Keith, daughter Shonda (Blair), son Blair (Valerie), grandchildren, Cassidy, Cody and Kieran, her sister Colleen (Neil), sisters-in-law Beth, Fern, Ellen, and brother-in-law Dale (Kathy), as well as numerous nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents, Herb and Iris Gray, stepmother, Nora Gray, brother Murray Gray, and her in-laws Lorne and Daphne Heaman.

To all Lynne's curling, golfing and bridge friends, she loved every minute she spent with all of you. She was playing what she loved, with true friends.

Keith, Shonda, Blair and families would like to say thank you for everyone's generosity at the time of moms passing, for all the cards, phone calls, texts, flowers, and food brought to our homes. Your kindness is truly appreciated. We would also like to thank Marilyn Warkentin for her kind words and to Carscadden's for their care and concern.

## Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY  
 JOYCE ANNE HEAMAN



Joyce Anne Heaman was born May 3, 1931 in Elkhorn, Manitoba. She was the eldest child of George Peter and Irene Annie (nee Gallinger) Veldhouse. She was raised in the Joslin District, where she attended the first years of her schooling. Joyce and her sister completed their education in Virden boarding in town during the school year. After completing Grade 10, she returned home and worked out as hired help during the summer and helped at home in the winter.

On July 4, 1951 Joyce married Alvin Clarence Heaman. They lived and farmed in the Joslin District until 1959 when they purchased the Milne farm (14-11-27) in Hargrave. Years later they purchased the Gordon farm (13-11-27). They continued to live and farm there until February 1989 at which time Joyce and Alvin moved to Hargrave St. in Virden. Joyce remained there until 2006 when she moved to the Princess Lodge. At the time of her passing she was a resident of the Sherwood Personal Care Home.

Joyce was an industrious and hardworking woman. When a job needed to be done, she rolled up her sleeves and got to it. Whether it was milking cows, hauling grain, picking stones, feeding chickens, or tending the house, garden and yard. Many of these jobs were done with children in a carriage beside her or toddling after her. Like most farmers they had good and bad years, so when it was necessary Joyce also worked off the farm. As she said "I had four kids to feed and I needed money". At first, she did private house cleaning, then held jobs at the Sherwood, Shell Restaurant, Westman Nursing Home and with the Whiteford family. From July 1979 to July 1996, Joyce was Postmaster at Hargrave, with the post office located in the family home.

Never one to sit idle Joyce had many interests. She was a life time member at both St Andrew's United Church in Hargrave and St Paul's United Church in Virden. She was a member of Wallace United Church prior to moving to Hargrave. She willingly participated in services and activities the church had and held various Board positions. In addition to the churches, Joyce was an active volunteer in the community and a member of many organizations. Hargrave Cemetery is graced by a border of trees that Joyce planted (often multiple times) and watered faithfully until they were established. She was determined to see a fence put up and lobbied the local Councillor until it was built. Those who knew Joyce knew she was driven, direct and always found a way to get things done. An active member with the Virden Agricultural Society for almost 30 years, Joyce was also a qualified judge for flowers, houseplants, fruits, vegetables, flower arrangements and photography. She attended many fairs and exhibitions throughout southwestern Manitoba judging. Joyce also dedicated time to Centennial Housing, New Horizons, the Horticultural Society, the Art Club, Virden Community Arts Council and Costume Closet. Both she and Alvin were volunteers of Citizens on Patrol and were still patrolling well into their 70's.

Joyce loved music. She took piano, organ, accordion, violin and ukelele lessons. She thoroughly enjoyed the musical entertainment provided at the Princess Lodge and the Sherwood Care Home and seldom missed a show. She was also very creative and artistic. Her hobbies included sewing, knitting, crocheting, painting, paper tole, ceramics, tatting, doll making, scrapbooking, and quilting. Every member of her family and most of her friends have in their possession articles made by Joyce. She was meticulous and didn't settle until it was perfect in her mind.

Joyce was predeceased by her husband Alvin, parents George and Irene Veldhouse, in laws Gordon and Agnes Heaman, brothers and sisters in laws; Lyall Pateman, Emma and Bill Allison, Clifford and Bernice Heaman, John and Lilian Heaman, Lorna and Neil Rowan, Betty Heaman and nephew Eddie Rowan.

Left to mourn her passing are Marilyn Kinnear and her partner Calvin Dion (Carla, her partner Dez and Melvin), Gwen and Clayton Blodgett (Gordon and Claire), Norma and Stan Millar (Mike, wife Courtney, and children Seth, Abigail and Bailey), Brian and Sandy (Jonathan Lesyk and partner Beth), Sister Evelyne (Gordon) Brennand, brother Harvey (Karen) Veldhouse, Walter Heaman, numerous nieces and nephews and many treasured friends.

Interment was held at Hargrave Cemetery on December 19th, 2024 at 2:30 pm. Active Pallbearers were Gordie Allison, Rea Kinnaird, Tyler Pateman, Tanner Pateman, Brian Collier and Mike Millar. A Celebration of Life Service will be held at a later date.

Memorial tributes in memory of Joyce can be made to Heart and Stroke Foundation of Manitoba, Diabetes Canada, or to Virden and Area Foundation.

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

When I'm Gone  
 When I come to the end  
 of my journey and I travel  
 my last weary mile,  
 just forget if you can,  
 that I ever frowned and  
 remember only the smile.  
 Forget unkind words  
 I have spoken,  
 remember some good  
 that I have done.  
 Forget that I ever  
 had heartache,  
 and remember that I've  
 also had fun.

Remember I have fought some

hard battles and won,  
 ere the close of the day,  
 then forget to grieve  
 for my going,  
 I would not have you sad  
 for a day,  
 but in summer just gather  
 some flowers and remember  
 the place where we lay,  
 and come in the shade  
 of evening when the sun points  
 the sky in the west,  
 stand for a few moments  
 beside us and remember  
 only our best.



## Notice

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF JOHN CAMERON MANSER, late of the Town of Virden, in the Province of Manitoba, deceased;

ALL claims against the above estate, duly verified by Statutory Declaration, must be filed with the undersigned at their office, 243 Raglan Street W., Box 520, Virden, MB, R0M 2C0, on or before the 12th day of February, 2025.

DATED at Virden, Manitoba, this 18th day of December, 2024.

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IN LOVING MEMORY  
 RAYMOND MORRIS GALLANT OF WINNIPEG



On Monday December 30, 2024, Ray passed away peacefully with family by his side at Seven Oaks Hospital at the age of 86.

Memorial tributes may be sent to [www.neilbardalfuneralhome.com](http://www.neilbardalfuneralhome.com).

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## Coming Events

### Virden New Horizons

Notice of  
 Annual Meeting  
 New Horizons  
 270 Nelson St W  
 January 20th 2025  
 at 1 pm.

**Obituary**

**IN LOVING MEMORY  
JANUSZ JERZY PIC  
MARCH 2, 1951 – DECEMBER 24, 2024**



Janusz Jerzy Pic, fondly known as Pic, passed away peacefully at the age of 73 in Sundre, Alberta, after a courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

Born on March 2, 1951, in Virden, Manitoba, to Jan and Stasha Pic, Pic spent his formative years on the family farm in Scarth, Manitoba. It was there, working alongside his beloved Uncle Albert, that he developed his lifelong love for the great outdoors. Hunting, fishing, and trapping weren't just hobbies—they were a way of life that brought him joy, purpose, and countless adventures.

Pic was a man of many talents. As a pipeliner and business owner, his skills and curiosity led him down countless paths, from tinkering with rare tractors and classic cars to exploring the hidden corners of Canada in search of the perfect hunting spot. His journeys eventually brought him to Sundre, Alberta, a place he cherished deeply and called home in his later years.

He is survived by his daughter, Linda Jean, who was the light of his life, and an extended family of friends, each of whom he held close to his heart. To know Pic was to be welcomed into his circle, where you weren't just a friend—you were family.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly asks that any donations be made to the Heart and Stroke Foundation or Ducks Unlimited Canada in honour of Pic's generous spirit and love for nature.

Celebrations of Pic's life will take place in Sundre, AB, at dates to be announced. Celebration of Life in Virden, MB, will be held on April 19th at the Legion

Pic will be remembered for his warmth, his adventurous spirit, and his ability to turn ordinary moments into extraordinary memories. He will be deeply missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him.

**IN LOVING MEMORY  
CONNIE ELLIS  
MAY 14, 1952 TO DECEMBER 21, 2024**



It is with sadness we announce the passing of Connie Ellis (Alexander) beloved wife of 50 years to Harry Ellis, loving mom to Stacey (Craig) Lane, Kari (Steve Haggarty), Amy (Jamie) Bell, and the late Mark Ellis; and treasured Grandma to Grady and Holly Lane, Quincy and Paisley Haggarty, and Spencer, Corbin, and Reagan Bell. She is also survived by her siblings Debbie Hunter, Greg (Lynne) Alexander, Melanie Alexander (Torrice Carter), Linda Alexander and Lori Alexander, brother-in-law Loren (Cynthia) Ellis and sister-in-law Heather McKinnon, as well as numerous nieces and nephews and cousins. She was also fortunate to have many good friends and neighbors who have been wonderful supports to both her and Dad over the years. Mom had a battle with Alzheimer's and passed away after having a stroke at Elkwood Manor, where she had resided since March of 2024.

She was predeceased by her son Mark in 2020, her mom Doreen in 2019, her dad Jim in 2001, her brother-in-law Barrie McKinnon in 2010, mother-in-law Frances Ellis in 2008, and father-in-law Jim Ellis in 2011.

A funeral service will be planned at a later date. Donations may be made in Connie's memory to Kenton Community Enterprises, Kenton, MB R0M 0Z0  
Campbell Funeral Home, Hamiota are in care of the arrangements.  
[www.campbellfuneralhome.ca](http://www.campbellfuneralhome.ca)

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**Online McSherry Auctions**

**Estate & Moving #1**  
January 15th @ 7:00PM  
Featuring High End Studio Dolls

**Estate & Moving #2**  
January 22nd @ 7:00PM  
Featuring Snap On Tools

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**or 204-886-7027**  
[mcsherrytld@gmail.com](mailto:mcsherrytld@gmail.com)

**Service**

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**Lost**

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1 very small digital camera 4" by 6" - Greyish Silver in colour with Métis Key Chain Attached!  
Reward \$25.00  
Contact Kel Smith 748.3321  
Keep your eyes open  
Lost: Dec 12/24

**Help Wanted**



**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY  
LANDFILL SITE ATTENDANT – HARGRAVE & KOLA**

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth is seeking a motivated individual for the position of **Landfill Site Attendant (TERM)** for the Hargrave and Kola Nuisance Grounds location. The Landfill Site Attendant assists the Public Works Superintendent in operating the waste disposal grounds in compliance with the Waste Disposal Ground Operating Permit for the site, municipal policies, and Workplace Health and Safety regulations.  
Certificate in Landfill Operations is an asset (applicant must be willing to take the necessary certification courses).

**Description and Qualifications**

- Term, full-time position
- Must be willing to work Saturdays, and one evening per week during the summer months.
- Direct all users to appropriate disposal or storage locations for all items being disposed.
- Ensure source separation of garbage and recyclables.
- Accept tires, general scrap iron, and spray containers; store at proper locations and keep area tidy.
- Assist in transferring or disposing of waste, as required.
- Maintain daily records of waste entering the disposal site.
- Keep all buildings and areas of the landfill site clean and well maintained.
- Ensure that fires are not set and all controlled burns are supervised and recorded.
- Report all concerns to the Public Works Superintendent and Chief Administrative Officer.
- Other duties, as required.
- Must be punctual, motivated, self-starter, and able to work without supervision.
- Good interpersonal skills to deal politely and effectively with the general public.
- Ability to meet physical demands of the position and have an excellent safety record.
- Class 5 Driver's License required.

Interested candidates should submit a resume with three references by:

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

This posting will remain open until a suitable candidate is located.  
This position commences as soon as possible.

# 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

## Submitted EMPIRE-ADVANCE

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

The bake sale was to raise money for equipment for the Sherwood, the Westman Nursing Home, the Virден Hospital and EMS. There were baked goods, dainty trays, and 50/50 raffle tickets. All proceeds going towards the previously listed facilities. The Auxiliary also gives a scholarship to a grade twelve graduating

student entering university/college in a healthcare field.

An Auxiliary member organized the delivery of Meals on Wheels from Westman Nursing Home kitchen, as well as purchasing TV's for the hospital patient rooms to be rented by the patients.

The bake sale was very successful as they had sold all of the dainty trays in just over an hour and only a few baking items left to be sold. Ninety customers attended. There are 12 Auxiliary members in the photo but many more had attended and provided help.

# 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

## Upcoming Council Meetings: January 14 & 28

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

## LiveBarn

Now available at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.  
Use code **togp-live** for 10% off.  
Visit [livebarn.com](http://livebarn.com) for more information.

## Utility Bills

Any bills not yet picked up from the previous cycle have now been mailed.

Payment due date for this billing cycle is **January 31, 2025.**

## Garbage & Recycling

2025 schedules are now available at the Town Office or online at [virден.ca](http://virден.ca).

## Noon Hour Shiny

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

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

## Virден & Area Food Cupboard

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

✉ [info@virден.ca](mailto:info@virден.ca) 🌐 [www.virден.ca](http://www.virден.ca) 📘 Town of Virден 📷 @virдентown ✂ @virдентown

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155 Summit St, Melita  
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Brandon, MB  
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# Sioux Valley holds Christmas sleigh ride

By Anne Davison  
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

During the Christmas season, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation (SVDN) held a day of sleigh rides. A highlight of the day on Dec. 29 was when the Champion Chore Team winner at Agribition 2024, Scott Ferguson (congratulations!) and his son Cody, of Minnedosa, brought a team of percherons to the community.

Two additional teams were provided by Chief Vince Tacan's friend Darryl Ryder and by Travis Mazawasicuna of Sioux Valley. These teams took kids and adults on a large circuit in the centre of the community.

It required snow clearing to prepare a track for the horses, which Zane Tacan and Lance Manchese accomplished.

A number of community members helped out with the event and some rode along on their own mounts.

On a Facebook post Chief Tacan also thanked the community's safety officers and other volunteers for their help. He said, "Thank you for making this a wonderful day for our youth!"

Earlier in the Christmas season, SVDN held their traditional Christmas dinners. These included an Elders Dinner where 76 attended, followed by the Brandon Community dinner where 206 people were served and a dinner at Winnipeg for over 370 people. The final dinner was held in Sioux Valley in the Veterans' Hall. Each dinner included visiting with family and friends and activities such as games, door prizes, photo booth, "and of course a



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Horses and sleigh heads past Sioux Valley governance building on Dec. 29.

big surprise for the kids when Santa Claus popped in for a visit!" according to the SVDN Facebook post.

New Year's Eve did not go by without a celebra-

tion in the community. A recently formed SVDN events organized the fun and safe Dry Social, to help bring in 2025. Live music was provided by

the Roadside Prophets, a live band from Portage la Prairie. Sioux Valley's own Bill Taylor was emcee. Snacks were served buffet style along with "great

music, fun games for youth and adults (which, by the photos included musical chairs) and some great company."

# Sunrise CU distributes \$37,000 to communities

Submitted

By SUNRISE CREDIT UNION

This fall Sunrise Credit Union is supporting impactful projects in communities.

The Westman Mental Wellness & Suicide Prevention Association will receive a \$16,000 grant to help develop school mental health resource libraries in seven Sunrise Credit Union communities: Boissevain, Deloraine, Hartney, Melita, Reston, Virden, and Waskada. The resource library will have age-appropriate and professionally reviewed, sourced, and supported literature via paper and online books, wellness activities, and mental health content, including directories for available support through local, provincial, and national services and programs.

This is just one of several grants where \$37,000 will be disbursed through this fall's Building Communities Grant Program, a testament to Sunrise Credit Union's commitment to supporting impactful projects in communities. For this fall's program, SCU reviewed close to 50 applications to award four deserving projects with funding, based on the criteria outlined in the guidelines.

"The Building Communities Grant Program continues to be a resounding success, supporting a varied range of community organizations and initiatives in the areas Sunrise Credit Union serves," said CEO/President Tim Klassen, "We're especially pleased with the diversity of this fall's recipients, supporting mental health and wellness for youth and seniors, assisting with new construction of a new community amenity and honouring our historic past."

Pipestone Memorial Park Committee is also receiving \$5,318 to complete its fundraising goal and finish a project which saw a vacant lot become an attractive, inclusive green space, a testament to the program's contribution to community development. The park's centrepiece, the cenotaph, symbolizes the community's commitment to preserving history.

Deloraine Agricultural Society 'Share the Shed'



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Pipestone Memorial Park Committee is receiving \$5,318 from Sunrise Credit Union's Building Communities Grant Program to complete its fundraising goal: (l-to-r) Lindsay Boulton (Reston branch manager), Kim Davis, Kim MacKenzie, Wiley Gilliard (park committee), Teresa Vandenberghe (project admin officer, Reston branch) and Bruce Luebke (community engagement coordinator).

project will receive a \$12,500 grant toward construction of an open-sided shed at the fairgrounds. It will be used to host events such as poker, bands, cornhole, and other entertainment.

The Cypress River Senior Centre is currently undergoing updates and a \$3,000 grant will assist with these renovations. Specifically, the grant will cover the cost of replacing the centre's baseboard heaters and the related electrical work, demonstrating the program's support for community facilities.

Since its launch in the fall of 2024, the Building

Communities Grant Program has contributed \$131,318 to 11 projects and initiatives. The next intake period for the program will be in the spring of 2025.

About SCU

Sunrise Credit Union, formed in 2008, offers personalized service to approximately 35,000 members across 19 branches including: Baldur, Boissevain, Brandon, Cypress River, Deloraine, Grandview, Hartney, Holland, Laurier, Melita, Minnedosa, Reston, Sandy Lake, Shoal Lake, Ste. Rose du Lac, Strathclair, Treherne, Virden, and Waskada.

# JANUARY CLEARANCE SALE



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### MATCHING POWER LOVE SEAT

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