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NOVEMBER 22, 2024 | EMPIRE: VOL 120 NO 14 / ADVANCE: VOL 139 NO 16 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS


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CHRISTMAS HAS BEGUN IN VIRDEN



PHOTO BY JESSICA COULTER

Virden Collegiate Institute Grad class of 2025 students at the Pancakes with Santa event. Front (Left to Right): Riley Grieve, Jesse Roach
Middle Row (Left to Right): Carter Hayward, Santa, Kendall Charles, Tess Coulter, Zayda Clarke, Mya Plaisier, Leila Verran
Back Row (Left to Right): Hudson Davidson, Maxx Hamelin, Tyson Draper, Jaxon Hayden, Jerrin Browning-Lozinski, Nathan Rowan, Autumn Davidson, Dylan Williment, Jayda Sparks, Kate Craig, Ace Babiak, Maria Sanchez, Harley Hagan, Keisha Talon

By Jessica Coulter
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Buttery maple syrup was flowing over fluffy homemade pancakes on Sunday, November 17, served up by the Virden Collegiate Institute Grad class of 2025 students.

The grads with parent volunteers and principal Mark Keown booked the Sunrise Credit Union banquet hall at the Tundra Oil and Gas Place to host this annual event. They started early, setting up tables and decorating them with Christmas table cloths, ornaments and napkins to help bring holiday spirit to

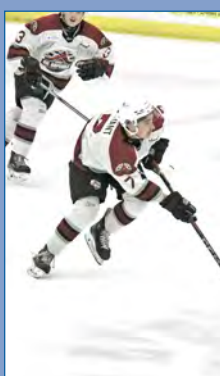
the room. To help with the holiday cheer, the group wore their best ugly Christmas sweaters, and a couple had on their elf hats to help Santa when he arrived to visit with the kids.

[read more about Pancakes with Santa on page 2...](#)

VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

HOME GAME
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 22
VS. WINNIPEG BLUES
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM

Inside...



OIL CAPS RACK UP GOALS
P10



VIRDEN & DISTRICT YOUTH CHOIR
P8

PANCAKES WITH SANTA



VCI Grad students hard at work making pancakes and sausages for the crowd.



The kids are at the colouring table making pictures for home and Santa.

continued from page one

People started arriving by 8am to enjoy this great event. Families arrived in their best Christmas outfits to take beautiful pictures with Santa.

Dozens of batches of pancake batter were mixed up for the community to enjoy. Six hundred breakfast sausage patties were fried to perfection. All cooked up to feed the 250 plus people who came out to enjoy the

Pancakes with Santa event. Some of the grad students were in the back making the food, some were serving, some were helping with the entertainment, some were working the front door, and some were cleaning up the tables as the meal continued. All of them did a great job.

A table was set up in the far corner for the children who came to have their faces painted by a couple of the grad students with artistic talent. Kids could be seen around the room with face paint that made them look

like reindeer or kittens, some had cane candy moustaches drawn on instead. They were all having a great time. Another table was also set for the kids to colour different Christmas themed pictures.

Santa was set up near the main entrance to meet and greet everyone as they came in to eat pancakes and see him. He made sure to visit with every little one who wanted to meet him and the elves helped by taking pictures. Some of the children made sure to give Santa their best coloured pictures from the colouring table because Santa needs a present too.

A wonderful event and a great way for the Grad Class to fundraiser for their graduation.

VERY VIRDEN CHRISTMAS RAMPS UP THIS WEEK!

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Excitement is running high throughout Virден as the Christmas season approaches. There are new events and new twists on tried and true events this year.

On Thursday, Nov. 21, as you early bird readers open your Empire-Advance you are reminded to head out to the Very Virден Christmas Downtown Dance Party & Smores with Santa. It's in the heart of downtown, at the intersection of 7th Avenue South and Nelson Street West and will get going at 6pm. The street will be closed to traffic and music, lights and a festive atmosphere will welcome all ages. There's even a bonfire planned so you can warm up in its glow and build delicious smores. Santa will be at the Dance Party, so you can share your Christmas list and take some unique photos.

Local mascots and Virден Oil Capitals players will also be there to meet, greet and boogie with.

Light-up of the Memory Tree has always anchored the Season's kick-off and again this year, on Nov. 21, the community will gather on Nelson Street at the beautiful spruce outside the Flower Attic. It's a special time as loved ones are remembered in lights and with carolling at the Memory Tree, at 7-7:30pm. The \$5 for each light (donation boxes can be found at businesses throughout town) becomes a donation to help out Virден cemetery with improvement projects at these beautiful grounds.

Also, on 7th Ave. Border Regional Library hosts Holiday Storytime with Mrs. Claus.

Funshine Early Learning Centres, are holding their Christmas Tree Charity Raffle draw downtown as well, at 6:45pm. Stay tuned for the DJ's announcement.

Just down the street at Custom Creations, The Grinch will attend in person and yes, you can get a photo with Grinch. This is also an opportunity to support Virден Pet Network and their work to rescue or rehome pets, especially felines.

Arts Mosaic in the CPR Historic Station on 6th Ave is holding Open House with all kinds of photo opportunities and a chance to grab a hot chocolate and do some holiday art.

This night, Nov. 21, is the kick-off for the late-night THURSDAY shopping season in Virден, to accommodate Christmas shopping needs. It's a great time to get started



PHOTO BY JESSICA COLEMAN

This Christmas window display is at Shear Expressions on 7th Ave in Virден. It is all ready for the Very Virден Christmas celebration.

with the street activities and a meet and greet with the Oil Caps.

Visit Red Apple's Moonlight Madness; Shear Expressions is hosting Permanent Jewelry by Jess Becker; T's Dining & Lounge has a prime rib special (reservations required) and beer flights.

Here's a new treat - the Sweet Spot Bakery on 7th Ave will host a \$5 cookie decorating opportunity. While you're out and about, pay Farley Kempthorne CPALLP and Patersons LLP, a visit for a chance to win a door prize.

Drop in to MJ's Coffee Bar & Bistro on Nelson St. W. for a taste of specialty beverages.

The activities are made possible by the business community: Terri Cosens, RE/MAX Valleyview Realty is sponsoring the kick-off activities and Valleyview Co-op is providing the smore chocolate. Strike Welding is providing the fire pit.

Late night shopping until 8pm will continue on Thursdays through November and December until Dec. 19. You will find Virден businesses offering specials and promotions.

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Oak Lake childcare centre unpacks

Submitted
By TAMMY HALL

Oct. 24 was a very exciting day for the RM of Sifton and Oak Lake CARE Centre Inc.

After over a year of planning and collaboration with Early Learning and Child Care, JQ Built and Pretium, we were handed the keys to our brand new child care centre.

Oct. 26 and 27 was a busy weekend at the new centre, when staff, board members, parents and volunteers all worked together to move equipment and furniture from storage into the new building. It was very exciting to open all the boxes and start building the furniture to equip our rooms. Since then, the staff at OLCC have been very busy setting up each room with all the furniture and equipment needed for licencing the new centre and getting ready for the grand opening.

Stay tuned for details of a grand opening and open house, so you can see all the hard work that has gone into creating this beautiful new centre.

Tammy Hall, ECE III is Executive Director of Oak Lake CARE Centre Inc.



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

The Oak Lake CARE Centre under construction throughout the summer of 2024.

Government announces more boots on the ground

Roadmap for Safer Manitoba

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

As regular as clockwork, Manitoba RCMP report the most serious crimes of homicide. Theft and property crimes seem an every day event, province-wide. Closer to home Westman RCMP weekly calls include mental health interventions, and non-lethal crimes including assaults and serious traffic infractions.

Crime and public safety have been on the minds of public officials and this past week the Manitoba Government brought forward a plan that includes more funding for more enforcement. Minister of Justice Matt Wiebe announced a strategy to be tough on crime and the causes of crime.

In a recent Town of Virden Council meeting, following their monthly report by RCMP Cpl. Ed Giannico, councillor discussion indicated that addictions and mental health are concerns for Virden. In September the Virden Justice Committee announced they are looking for volunteers to divert offenders from jail time into rehabilitation.

Last week within the province, the death of a 23-year-old woman on Nov. 12 in the community of Norway House was determined to be a case of manslaughter and two days later Manitoba Major Crime Services arrested and charged a 35-year-old from the community. Tragically this is by no means the only life taken by violence in our province this year.

On Nov. 14, Dauphin RCMP posted security camera footage of two men robbing container cars at Lake Dauphin. This all too common crime also occurs right around Westman.

A welcome announcement on Nov. 14, came from the Manitoba government. The Safer Neighbourhoods, Safer Downtowns Public Safety Strategy,

was described by Minister Wiebe as “a roadmap for a safer Manitoba across all regions.”

The strategy addresses violent crime and retail theft, and the roots and causes of crime, the minister noted. The strategy also

recognizes the need to invest in communities through community-led justice, reconciliation and ending violence against women and girls.

The plan outlines these initiatives:

- making the Retail Crime Initiative permanent by funding 12 new Winnipeg Police Service officers;
 - a two per cent increase in funding for municipal law enforcement, providing stable and consistent funding for more boots on the ground;
 - establishing a new Centre for Justice in Dauphin that includes culturally appropriate supports, educational resources and vocational training;
 - strengthening Manitoba’s impaired driving legislation with input from Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD);
 - expanding the electronic monitoring program outside of Winnipeg and enhancing protection order enforcement in rural areas;
 - increasing funding and training opportunities for First Nations police officers and First Nation safety officers;
 - hiring 100 new mental health workers to work alongside first responders to strengthen mental health supports for both adults and youth, starting with 25 workers by the end of March; and
 - holding a youth summit to bring young leaders together to hear their voices, empower them and discuss solutions.
- “The justice system shouldn’t be the end of the road for Manitobans,” said Wiebe. “It should be the beginning of accountability and real change. We’re committed to ensuring our justice system provides support for those

Manitobans who are ready to turn their lives around, find meaningful work and give back to their communities.”

The Safer Neighbourhoods, Safer Downtowns Public Safety Strategy was crafted after extensive consultations with stakeholders including a public safety summit which had representatives from 210 community groups, social service agencies, health-care professionals, law enforcement agencies, Indigenous organizations, legal professionals, business leaders and government officials. The Manitoba government also held regional consultation sessions and engaged with nine First Nations governments and organizations including the Manitoba Métis Federation, Inuit organizations and other community partners.

Grand Chief Garrison Settee, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak said, “This report marks the beginning of what we hope will result in safer communities for our citizens in the north and for all Manitobans. This Public Safety Strategy represents true ReconciliACTION and is a framework that will continue to evolve. Ekosani.”

“All Manitobans deserve to feel safe in their communities,” said Kathy Valentino, interim president, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. She called the Public Safety Strategy a critical step toward creating safer communities for all Manitobans. She said, “We also thank the government for conducting provincewide consultations with our members to help inform the development of this strategy as well as committing to annual escalatory funding to support municipal law enforcement. As we move toward implementation, ongoing collaboration between the Manitoba government and municipalities will be key to ensuring safer, more secure communities across our province.”

The Safer Neighbourhoods, Safer Downtowns Public Safety Strategy can be viewed at: gov.mb.ca/justice/pubs/publicsafety_strategy.pdf.

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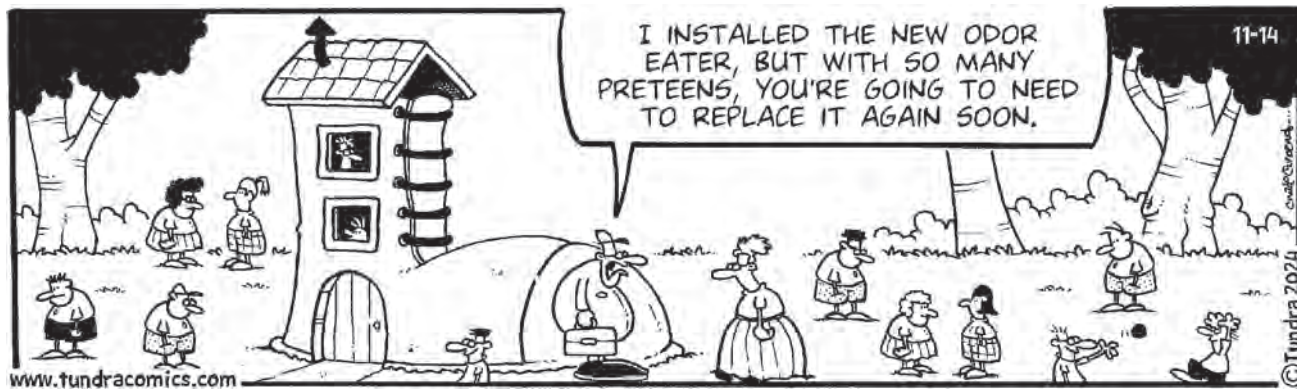
VIRDEN LIONS HALL

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Hall capacity is limited based on current Manitoba Public Health restrictions/guidelines; renters and attendees must comply with up-to-date Manitoba Public Health Orders.

Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



Inevitable changes are coming

It's been a few years now since the Manitoba NDP government of the day enforced amalgamation on municipalities. Their theory was that rural municipalities with less than 1000 residents needed to join forces to form a larger entity. The initiative was not met well by many affected municipalities for several reasons.

For starters, people don't like being told what they have to do and then have it forced by legislation. Some municipalities saw that amalgamation had some advantages and went along somewhat willingly. Others fought it tooth and nail and are still bitter about the move to this day.

The NDP government wasn't wrong, in that some municipalities and towns needed to amalgamate. The problem was that it was forced by law. Many people don't know or understand that the province, by way of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, can set up or dissolve a municipality with the stroke of a pen. But just because they can do it, most ministers don't and that's wise.

But, as stated above, many towns and RMs should have amalgamated and many more should do so while they still have basic services.

It's getting pretty tough to find councillors and Reeves as it is also getting difficult to find Chief Administration Officers (CAOs) and other skilled administrative people. That is in part because the rules and paper work involved in running a municipality or town has become onerous to say the least. Many municipalities are still declining in population and some are aging too so it's difficult to provide the services, finance them and administer everything that people want and need in 2024.

I have seen some very unnecessary duplication of services across west-

ern Manitoba. Providing rural and urban water treatment and pipelines is a huge cost and the maintenance is pretty steep.

There's another factor that causes rural grief and that is the cost of road construction and maintenance. Most RMs can't afford any more than two grader/snow plow units and I hear many complaints about road grading and snow clearing and the delays in service. In addition, as one reeve from a few years ago stated to me, the towns should just leave the RMs alone as all they do road graveling and snow clearing. Well life has gotten a lot more complicated than that. Municipal governments now involves water and sewer as noted above as well as recreation services, health care, handi-van service and libraries.

Rural people want and need a higher level of service than many expected 30 years ago.

As a matter of full disclosure, I served twice as mayor of Neepawa and I will be the last one to say that I had all the answers. That said, we all need to look at better answers or our communities won't survive. I can actually remember back 70 years and there are dozens of communities that used to be able to provide retail and educational services. Little towns used to have stores, an elevator or two, a school, skating and a curling rink. Those dozens of communities

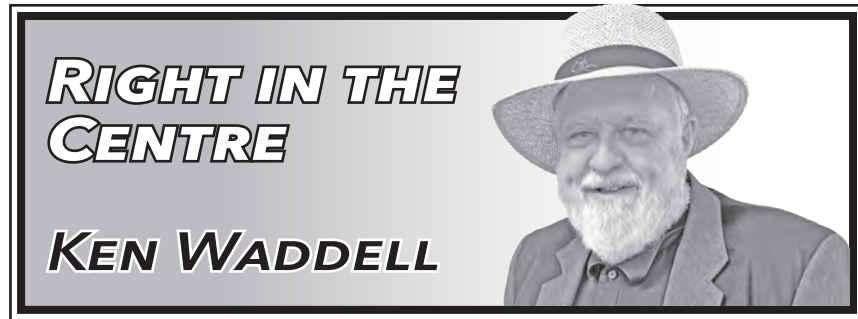
are in many cases, simply gone or are inhabited by so few people there isn't even a coffee shop.

A few years ago, somebody in Saskatchewan suggested that the largest 14 or 16 towns and cities should become a hubs for the surrounding areas. Seeing as there are 296 RMs in Saskatchewan, the suggestion may have merit. Manitoba has 79.

I think that many more towns and RMs need to seriously look at amalgamating, but another attempt by government to force it would be ill-advised. I can guarantee that many towns will continue to dwindle, services will continue to disappear, farms will continue to get larger. Citizens will have to figure out how to make it work. Those areas that figure it out will survive and thrive. Those areas that don't figure it out will not survive. It's a definite problem, but it's only being made worse when stubborn refusal to talk is the first answer.

Most people don't want change and don't want to pay more taxes. Unless, they allow for change, which means development, they will be driving a lot further for services. I guess it just depends on how far you want to drive.

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



A simpler time...

Half awake and yet not back in today, the images and scents that filled my mind where those of my childhood. Seated on a three legged stool, my forehead settled against the warm flank of Penny, the one horned Jersey cow, and the sound of the milk filling the pail moving steadily from the ping on the empty metal to the splash on the half filled pail, to a gentle whoosh when the task was nearly done. I felt the comfort of the beast, trusting in me, and my ability to care for her. I felt her solidness. I felt her life and purpose. Still safe in my bed I smelled the warm cow patties, the hay in the manger and the straw in the alley. Separating the smells I located the sheep at the other end of the barn and the chickens roosting on the stall walls. All familiar, endless smells that speak to me of a simpler time, a time when we moved with the flow of the days, the weeks, the seasons and the years.

My mind moved to the chores just before the milking. A quiet barn was much preferred when a job allowed one to sit. The sheep had been fed. Once all the old girls lined up at the hay bar, the lambs had space to frolic. They pranced and danced, leapt and dashed, challenging each other, away from the watchful eye of their mammas. No chore was a single action. While feeding them one watched for signs of illness or perhaps a lamb that was not getting enough to eat. It was easy to lean on the rail and observe the state of their union. The pigs, not many but just enough, were always fed first. Their high pitched squeal needed to be silenced. Here, too, it was pausing to note the health of the herd and gratitude for their role in the farm economy.

In my imagination, I stepped further back into the early morning. The household was just rousing when I had slipped out to chore. The fire in the furnace had been stoked, shaking down the embers to glowing coals that welcomed the fresh fuel. Breakfast was routine; porridge and toast, none of this cold cereal or yogurt, and skipping breakfast wasn't an option. The days were long and filled with activities and the human furnace needed to be fed as well.

It was with reluctance that I re-entered my real world. Perhaps it was that I was tired of being strong. Perhaps it was the words of the song 'Grandpa, tell me about the good old days' that lingered and fermented. Perhaps, for just a moment, I wanted to be free from decision making and responsibility. In that simpler time, and I acknowledge that it may not have been a simpler time for my parents! but in that simpler time, for me, I did what needed to be done, in the way that I had been taught to do it. It simply was.

Giving thanks for cherished memories, shaking the past to make way for the present and the future, fuelled by coffee, hello today!

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HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

Mexico is home to some of the most well-known and loved dishes in the world. The indigenous inhabitants of Mexico used corn, beans, and chili peppers in their cuisine. The Spanish colonizers introduced them to wheat, beef and cheese. When the Spanish came to Mexico their tortillas were made of corn which in Aztec were called "tlaxcalpacholi". The Spanish renamed these corn wraps, tortillas and when filled with meat and veggies they called them tacos. I invite you to explore a taste of Mexico at your own table.

Delicious, flavorful chicken is the star of these tacos.

Pollo al carbon (chicken tacos)

- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil, divided
- 1 onion, cut in half and then sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1/2 green bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1/2 yellow bell pepper, thinly sliced
- flour tortillas, warmed
- 1/2 tsp. paprika
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper flakes, optional
- 1 1/2 pounds chicken breasts, boneless, skinless, cut into thin strips

For serving your choice of:

- shredded cheddar cheese
- salsa
- guacamole
- sour cream

In a bowl combine the spices. Add the chicken pieces and dredge meat with the spices. In a large frying pan, heat one tablespoon of oil. Sauté the onions for one minute. Add the garlic and bell peppers and cook until soft, about 3-4 minutes. Remove. Add the remaining oil in the frying pan and heat until hot. Add the chicken pieces and cook for 5-6 minutes, stirring continually to prevent burning. Return pepper mixture to pan; heat through. Spoon filling down the center of tortillas; fold in half. Serve with your favourite additions.

It is easy to make tacos with the purchased packs of spices. However prepared taco spices are very high in salt. This taco spice mix tastes like the purchased versions is much cheaper to make and contains less than half the salt. Your heart will thank you for this. Use your homemade taco seasoning in: soups, dips, as a rub for chicken, pork or beef and any Mexican dishes.

Homemade taco seasoning

- 1/4 cup flour
- 3 Tbsp. ground cumin
- 2 Tbsp. powdered garlic
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- 1/4 cup chili powder
- 3 Tbsp. powdered onion
- 2 tsp. salt

Combine the spices and store in an air tight container in a cool dry place.

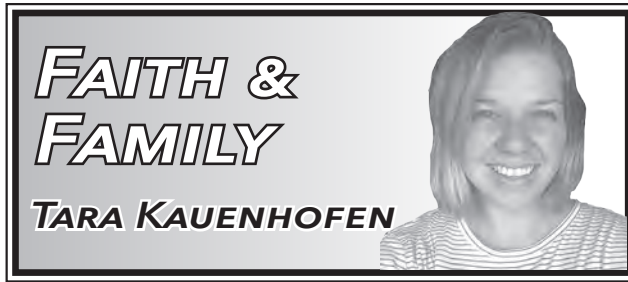
I tasted my first fish tacos in New Mexico. It was love at first bite! Start with a meatier white fish like tilapia, basa, haddock, cod or halibut. The thicker fillets work better as they do not fall apart as easily. If you like it spicy add minced jalapeño pepper to taste.

Tacos de Pescado or fish tacos

- 1 1/2 lb. white fish fillets
- 2 Tbsp. oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs
- Corn tortilla shells
- Coleslaw:
 - 3 cups shredded cabbage
 - 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
 - 1 tsp. honey
 - 1/2 tsp. salt, or to taste
- salt and black pepper
- 1 lime, juiced (about 2 Tbsp.)
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1/2 tsp. paprika
- 2 Tbsp. oil
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced red onion
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1 Tbsp. lime juice
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

Season the fish with a little salt and pepper on both sides. In a mixing bowl whisk together the oil, lime juice, garlic, chili powder, cumin and paprika. Add fish to a large Ziploc bag and pour marinate over fish. Seal bag and allow fish to marinate for 20-30 minutes. After the fish has marinated, place the bread crumbs in a bowl and gently coat each piece of fish. In a large frying pan heat the oil to medium high heat and cook the fish for several minutes per side until golden brown. Take care when flipping the fish as not to break it up. While fish is cooking mix the coleslaw ingredients together. Warm the tortilla shells up. Assemble your tacos and enjoy.

Age is just a number



We recently went on a cross Canada trip to surprise my sweet sister-in-law for her 40th birthday!

Her wonderful husband pulled off the surprise and we got to watch her face light up in shock and joy as she realized what was happening.

On the drive up, the topic of age was one we talked about a lot!

But we found ourselves coming back to the same questions, who decided which ages were the 'big ones'? Why 40? Why 50? Why are we told to act our age?

After hours of conversation, we can get to the conclusion that, despite the cliché, Age is just a

number! You can be 95 and feel like you did on the inside at 35!

You can be 25 and feel 65 on the outside!

Age is simply a way to mark time that has passed.

How you take care of your body, your soul, your mind is what ages us.

If we spend our days eating junk food, sitting on the couch and filling our brain with nothing but social media and TV, our bodies become stiff, our mind becomes mush, and our soul becomes lifeless.

But the good news is, if we exercise and stretch regularly, if we fill our minds with God's living word, good conversation,

literature and more, if we spend time with friends and family, if we fuel our bodies with food that is whole and good for us, we stand a chance to feel young and vibrant for many years to come.

We came to the convicting conclusion that we only have ONE life, ONE body, ONE mind and ONE soul to take care of.

God gave us each one vessel to steward well and I think I can say with honesty that most of us (myself included) have not always taken care of ourselves in a way that would be considered good stewardship!

But when I think about the difference my choosing to take care of myself now will make for when I am 50, 60, 70, 80 years old, I am reminded why I take the time to take care of myself and I encourage you to do the same, so that age is simply a number for you to.

Funding for agroforestry and grazing management is now available.

Apply today to the Resilient Agricultural Landscape Program: Carbon Sequestration and Grassland Resilience.

The application deadline is December 12, 2024.

For more information, please visit manitoba.ca/scap



Police hand out tickets, arrest two for assault

Westman RCMP Service Report for Nov. 10 – Nov. 16



During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 50 calls for service. Of these, 10 were traffic related including 3 traffic collisions. Also included in the calls for service were 3 suspicious person/vehicle/property files, 3 assault files, 3 wellbeing checks, 3 false alarms, 5 mental health act files, and 3 mischief files.

On Nov. 10 during a routine traffic patrol in the RM Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 132 km/hr in a 100 km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted and driver was issued a speeding ticket carrying a fine of \$469. The driver was also issued a traffic offence notice for

driving while disqualified, which carries a fine of \$672 and the vehicle was impounded for a minimum of 30 days.

On Nov. 10 RCMP were dispatched to an assault at a residence in Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Police attended and spoke with two victims who had been assaulted by a 49-year-old woman. She was arrested and will attend court in February for two counts of assault.

On Nov. 14 RCMP were dispatched to an assault at a residence in Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Police attended and located a 47-year-old male outside his residence with a machete beside him, the male was placed under arrest and will attend court in February for

possession of a weapon for dangerous purpose and resisting/obstructing a peace officer.

On Nov. 16 during a routine traffic patrol in the town of Virden, RCMP stopped a vehicle that was not registered. The driver was issued a traffic offence notice for driving an unregistered vehicle which carries a fine of \$298.

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

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

Miniota and Isabella News

Submitted

BY LINDA CLARK

Congratulations to Karla Anderson on opening her new business 'K's Kreations' on Main Street.

Braeden and Davey Passalis and big brother Calder welcomed their daughter and little sister Imogene June on Sept. 25. Congratulations to you and to extended family members.

Our deepest sympathy is extended to Marc and Mel Rivard on the death of Marc's brother Jeff Haugen on Nov. 13 following a long battle with cancer. The funeral service will be held at Saskatoon.

The Isabella and Miniota communities extend deepest sympathy

to Margaret Still, Robert and Brenda Still and their family, Glenda Still and Glenn Humphries and their family, and Ken and Jody Still and their family on the death of Glen, dear husband, dad, grandpa and great grandpa. Glen passed on Nov. 16 at the Brandon hospital. Glen and Marg farmed at Isabella for many years, moving to Parkissimo Lodge in 2018. They had celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary the end of October. A Celebration of Life will be held Dec. 21. Our thoughts are with you all.

"With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts."-Eleanor Roosevelt.

What is Holistic Wellness, Anyway?



In a world that's always go-go-go, it's easy to forget about *you*. But if you've been hearing a lot about "holistic wellness" lately and wondering what it actually means, you're not alone. Simply put, holistic wellness is all about taking care of the whole you—body, mind, and spirit. It's about finding balance and harmony in all parts of your life, so you can feel your best inside and out. Let's dive in!

So, What Exactly is Holistic Wellness?

Holistic wellness is a way of living that looks at *you* as a complete person—not just a collection of parts. It's the idea that your physical health, mental state, emotions, relationships, and even your spiritual connection all play a role in how well you feel and live. Think of it as a "total package" approach to health.

Rather than just treating symptoms when something goes wrong, holistic wellness focuses on nurturing all areas of your life so that you're thriving as a whole. It's about finding balance between mind, body, and spirit—and it's way more than just popping vitamins or hitting the gym (though those are good too!).

The Big Areas of Holistic Wellness

Physical health is the foundation of holistic wellness, but it's not just about looking good or losing weight. It's about feeling good. Getting your body moving (whether it's yoga, running, or dancing in your living room), eating real, nourishing foods, and getting enough rest are all key to feeling energized and strong.

But wellness doesn't stop at the physical. Mental and emotional health are just as important. It's easy to forget about them when life gets busy, but taking care of your mental state is a big part of feeling your best. Practices like meditation, journaling, or simply taking a few moments each day to breathe can help you calm your mind and reconnect with your emotions. If you're feeling stressed, anxious, or just overwhelmed, these moments of mindfulness can make a huge difference.

Spiritual wellness is another piece of the puzzle. This doesn't necessarily mean religion (though it can be part of your life). It's more about finding a sense of purpose, connection, and inner

peace. Maybe it's spending time in nature, doing yoga, or just finding some quiet time to reflect. Whatever helps you feel grounded and connected to something bigger than yourself counts here.

And then there's social wellness. We all need people in our lives. Healthy relationships with friends, family, and community not only make life more enjoyable, they also help reduce stress and boost your mood. Whether it's calling up a friend for a chat, joining a club, or simply spending time with loved ones, nurturing your social connections is key.

Your environment matters too. The space around you can impact how you feel. If your home is cluttered, your mind probably feels cluttered too. Holistic wellness encourages you to create surroundings that make you feel calm, happy, and at peace. This might mean tidying up your space, adding a few plants, or getting outside for a walk in nature to clear your head.

And don't forget about intellectual wellness. A healthy mind isn't just about keeping stress at bay—it's about staying curious and engaged. Whether it's reading a book, learning a new skill, or solving a puzzle, keeping your brain active and sharp is important for long-term well-being.

Next time we can touch on how Holistic Wellness can make a difference!

BE ON TIME!
Advertising deadline:
12 noon Tuesday

From Calgary to cowgirl

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Morgann Hunter was born and raised in the city of Calgary, Alberta. She took all her schooling there. Upon graduating, Morgann went to the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology for 2 years and enrolled in administrative technology computer. After graduating from there she worked at Goulder as an assistant for 4 years.

Morgann and Dillon were introduced to each other by a mutual friend and were eventually married and have made their home in Kenton.

Morgann works from home for the Atlas Global Company. This company fights with the city to lower taxes in all of Alberta except for Edmonton which has its own company. Glad someone is fighting against tax!!!

Morgann is much busier here than in Calgary. She has discovered there are many more opportunities here in rural

Manitoba. Things we may take for granted in rural Manitoba are not available in the city.

Examples of that are painting classes, gardening, pets, and the arts. It is also easier to make friends and get to know people. Morgann says she already has more friends here in Kenton than she had in Calgary. I asked her if she missed Calgary and would move back to the city and the reply was emphatic no! Morgann wants to be here and is very happy here.

Morgann loves animals, particularly chickens which she has purchased and is raising. These pets have names, and the chickens now are laying rainbow eggs. What are rainbow eggs. These eggs are produced by the breed of the chicken which determines the colour of the egg.

Black and white chickens lay brown eggs. Grey hens cream colored as to Speckled Sussexs. Olive eggers lay various shades of green or white eggs and others lay bluish green

eggs.

Morgann has 15 hens, 8 of which are laying right now! She intends to expand her flock to include other breeds as well, because she has the time and the space to do so. Couldn't do that in Calgary.

Morgann her favorite time of the season is spring when all the newborns are arriving. Morgann also intends to have donkeys and pigs going forward.

In just a short time, Morgann has become very involved in our community. She volunteers at Harding fair, the Harding fair pit BBQ supper July 1st held in Kenton and is treasurer of Kenton Community Enterprises! Morgann has really just grafted into the community, and it is so nice to have Morgann and Dillon chose to live here in Kenton and take such interest in the town.

Oh yes, and if you like, she will be selling eggs, maybe you will find your favourite at the end of the rainbow.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Morgann Hunter is hanging out with her chickens in her polka dot painted chicken coop.

Memories of a hockey official

By Gerry Nolan
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

With hockey season starting up for another winter I thought I would share some officiating memories with you. Seeing the game in a different light, comes through the eyes of an official!

I was a referee for 25 years in the Westman area. I went as far north as Roblin, MB. south to Pierson, MB. as well as from Moosomin, SK to Winnipeg, MB. with a lot of stops in between. You will hear of some familiar names as well as some hockey people you won't have met.

Hockey people are special! They care about game. They are one of a kind. They are passionate about their team. They are a brotherhood and while they compete

hard against each other, they also lean on each other in real tough times. A example of this was the Swift Current and Humbolt tragedies.

As a youngster, I loved watching Hockey Night in Canada. I really lived for Saturday Night Hockey. I also listened on the radio to Sunday Night hockey on CBC radio.

Foster Hewitt, who is a Canadian hockey icon, was probably my favourite announcer. On television, it was Bill Hewitt and Danny Gallivan who did the play by play. When the NHL expanded in 1967, I listened to Lloyd Petit from Chicago and Al Shaver from Minnesota.

Where were you when Foster Hewitt yelled Paul Henderson shoots he scores?

Still get shivers from that game, we won the series, but barely.

As a kid, my dad would take me up to Kenton to watch Griswold play in the North Central Hockey League. Most of the Griswold players were from Sioux Valley. Cliff Mazawacuina and his brother Carl along with Wilf Hapa were my favourite players.

When I watched Hockey night in Canada for some reason, I started paying attention to the Officials and how they worked the games. At that time there was 1 Referee and 2 linesmen doing the game. Ron Wicks and Lloyd Gilmour were my favourite referees and John D'Amico and Ray Scapinello were my favourite linesmen.

I continued to watch officials and when I went to Kenton to watch Griswold play, I watched how those officials worked as well.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Gerry Nolan, former referee, and aspiring writer.

Today they use the four-man system, two referees and two linesmen. Personally, with so many officials out there how do they miss so many calls?

I wasn't really looking to officiate but one day the door just sort of opened and I walked through. I got a phone

call asking if I would officiate a minor hockey game, so I said yes, and the journey began. I wasn't a certified official the first year of so but eventually I went to an official clinic and was a registered official and it was game on.

Over the course of 25 years of officiating I was

Referee-in-chief of the North Central Hockey League for 17 years, 4 years Referee-in-Chief of the Yellowhead region and was Referee-in-Chief of the Junior C league in Manitoba.

It all began when.....,Next part of the story in next weeks edition, so stay tuned!

Choir voices resound in AUD Theatre



PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

VDYC perform 'Bubblegum in My Hair'.



Female voices of VCI Choir.



Male voices of VCI Choir.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A Monday evening concert, 'Sing Me a Song,' in the AUD Theatre, featured Virden & District Youth Choir Gr. 4 – 9 voices and Virden Collegiate Institute Choir. The Youth Choirs are under the direction of Monique Waller, Susan Martens, Kelsey Brown, and Luke Munchinsky.

'Humble & Kind' performed by Gr. 7-9 was accompanied by Luke Munchinsky on the grand piano and Jesse Gray on guitar. Next, 'Go Down Moses' a rousing "challenge piece" featured choir soloists.

Gr. 4-6 joined Gr. 7-9 with Susan Martens piano accompaniment in 'Sing Me a Song'. Luke Munchinsky accompanied the next three pieces: 'Erie Canal Boogie, Loch Lomond (with Kelsey Brown playing flute) and a character piece – Bubble Gum in My Hair. VCI singers joined VDYC, to perform in Spanish and English, 'Oye' meaning 'listen.'

The final set was the VCI Choir directed by Luke Munchinsky. 'Let the River Run,' a powerful piece, featured male and female parts. 'Poor Wayfaring Stranger' followed by, 'For the Fallen' and finally 'Over the Rainbow' completed the set.

The choir handled their parts producing beautiful harmonic interest.

Michelle Chzyk and Lisa Cranston were acknowledged for providing the administrative support and emcee Monique Waller said, "We are grateful that Michelle trusts us with the direction of the choir she began." She said parental support is key, adding, "Every year we see the kids grow so much in their skills and confidence." Paul Archambault managed the technical details and sound system.

The evening concluded with the choir directors and several VCI graduates (junior assistant directors), singing 'Scarborough Fair.'

Join us for the
Virden Santa Parade
Saturday November 30, 2024
Start time: 6:00 PM
Starts at the Fair Grounds

For more information please contact:
Herb Warkentin (204) 748-5250 or Hank Kyle (204) 748-1427

SPORTS

VCI JV BOYS WIN ZONE, JV GIRLS HOST PROVINCIALS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A Zone 9 playoff championship was one of the highlights of the Virden Collegiate Institute junior varsity boys volleyball team's successful season.

The team was 5-1 in league play. It won the Hamiota tournament and the Zone 9 playoffs. In the interzone playoff tournament in Swan River for a provincial berth, the VCI squad fell in a tough five-set battle to Neepawa in the semifinals.

"The boys still have lots to be proud of, including winning their final tournament of the year in Hamiota," said Nathan Holovach, who coached the team with Mac Dryden. "We are hopeful that this group of guys will help restart the varsity boys volleyball program in our school, along with continuing to grow

within our JV program."

The JV team had three returning players and 10 first-year athletes this season. The experienced players - Brayden Rowan, Kyle Casuga and Hayden Southam - took on key roles. Rowan was an important left side attacker. Southam was heavily relied upon and played both left side and middle throughout the season. The energetic Casuga was a sparkplug. The VCI team beat Boissevain in three sets for the Zone 9 title.

"I feel that what allowed the boys to capture the Zone 9 banner was a balanced skill set," Holovach said. "We have a number of excellent passers and servers. Two strong left side attacks (Rowan and Isaiah Barrate) and our rookie setter, Jace Fernandez, does a great job of running the team and he has a very high compete level."

Playing for VCI were: Grade 9 - Jace Fernandez, Rus-

sell Genove, Blake Potter-Lukye, Salvador Sanchez, Damian Smith-Barre, Logan Stuart; Grade 10 - Isaiah Barrate, Kyle Casuga, Mac Fefchak, Brayden Rowan, Taiz Sawatsky, Hayden Southam, and Dixon Tough.

JV Girls Host Provincials This Weekend

The VCI JV girls team coached by Curtis Plett hosts the provincial tournament Nov. 21-23. It will be part of what has already been a successful season for team. The squad heads into the event ranked No. 1, Plett said. The Golden Bears won their provincial qualifier in Swan River.

This season the team won its home tournament. In addition, it was second at tournaments hosted by Vincent Massey and Tech Voc and placed third at a Niverville event.

As for the VCI varsity girls team, the squad placed second at the Dauphin tournament.

OIL KINGS START SEASON OFF STRONG

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Kings are off to a torrid start with an eye on making history this hockey season.

The senior men's squad had a 4-0-0-0 record, as of Nov. 19. That topped the Tiger Hills Hockey League's Western Division. As well, that record matched that of the co-THHL Eastern Division-leading Killarney Shamrocks and River Jets.

"We have had success to start our season and I believe that comes back to the commitment of our players," Oil Kings coach/general manager Ryan Mathieson said. "They understand how strong our group is and

the opportunities we have as a result. We have added a few new faces to the room and our core group have integrated them into the team well with plenty of on-ice chemistry developing."

The Oil Kings and their fans are hoping this strong start is the beginning of campaign that ends with a title.

"With the depth and skill of our team this year, we are setting our sights on a league championship," Mathieson said. "Looking into Oil Kings history I can find records on 54 seasons dating back to 1958 with the Oil Kings starting in the South West Hockey League, then 25 seasons in the North Central Hockey League and now the Tiger Hills Hockey

League. Virden has never won a league championship in those 54 seasons with back-to-back finals losses in 1998 and 1999 being the closest. I feel this is the most talented group we have iced and, if we can come together as a team, we have a real shot at ending that drought."

As of Nov. 19, Virden paced the league in goals for with 34 in four games. It had allowed nine goals against. As of Nov. 19, Bradley Bowles, who joined the Oil Kings from the on-hiatus Miniota-Elkhorn C-Hawks, led the THHL with 16 points in four games. He was one of three players tied with five goals for the league lead. Elisha Bambridge was fourth in the THHL in scoring with nine points. Jason

Bowles was seventh with eight, while fellow Oil Kings Jeremy Johnson and Devon LeBlanc each had seven points to sit in ninth and 10th, respectively. Tristan Rinn led the THHL with a 1.00 goals against average and a .964 save percentage.

The Oil Kings have certainly given fans plenty to cheer about early on this season.

"The atmosphere at our first two games have been great," Mathieson said. "The home opener versus Hartney had a playoff feel to it with two good teams going back and forth in front of large, engaged crowd. That support extended to our next game versus Souris with plenty of supporters out to it. We are fortunate to have great fans who

come out and make the atmosphere one of the best in the league."

This week the Oil Kings were slated to host the Minnedosa Bombers on

Nov. 21, after the Empire-Advance deadline. They play in Hartney on Nov. 24. On Nov. 28, the Shamrocks visit for a much anticipated tilt.

LGCA 1567-BI-45512

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Admission \$10 each • Cards 25¢ each

1 free card per round **No tie breakers.**
Please bring your own bingo markers.

This is a fundraising event, please do not bring outside food or drinks.

SPORTS

SIEMENS LEARNS HOCKEY SKILLS ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden Oil Capitals forward Brooks Siemens has developed his game on both sides of the 49th parallel.

The Bottineau, N.D. product is in his first season with the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's Oil Caps. The 6-foot-1, 160-pounder has two assists through 13 games this season, as of Nov. 17.

"Brooks is a very smart, skilled forward," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "He has good structure to his game and, although not big, he tries to finish every check. He can play up and down the lineup and has filled a role on the powerplay this season. I think Brooks will have an impact offensively as the season rolls along."

Siemens is a dual citizen of Canada and the United States. His father is from Boissevain, while his mother hails from Bottineau. Siemens started his hockey career in Mandan, N.D., before moving to Bottineau when he was still young.

Siemens played in Bottineau before heading to Winnipeg's RINK Hockey Academy. He suited up for the program's U15 prep squad in 2020-2021. The next season Siemens played for the RINK's U16 prep team.

"My time at RINK helped my game by the exposure you got by traveling to different provinces and playing in front of a bunch of different people," he said. "Also, going to the rink and practicing and working out every day helped with my game and also helped by getting you into a good routine."

Siemens returned to Bottineau for his final two years of high school. He was a force to be reckoned with on the Bottineau-Rugby high school hockey team. Siemens led the state in points (66) and goals (42) in 24 games. Siemens, his team's captain, was picked as All-Region and All-State.

"Brooks is a down to earth kid that is a great teammate and leader," B-R head coach Jesse Nostdahl said. "He is great at knowing when to have fun and when to buckle down."

Siemens enjoyed his high school experience. His older brother, Ethan, was a leader on the team a few years ago, and his younger brother, Landon, plays for it now.

"Playing back home the last couple seasons was great," Siemens said. "You get to play with and in front of all your buddies that you grew up with. Another thing was all the fans support we got. Even if it was a road game, people still came out and watched."

Siemens' talents are not limited to just the ice. On a road trip last season, some of the B-R hockey players bought yo-yos for fun. Nostdahl said Siemens would demonstrate his expertise in the locker room and during McDonald's stops. While Siemens downplays his yo-yo skills, he said "they are always fun to try and maybe learn a few tricks with them."

While Siemens is now in Virden, Nostdahl said, "Everyone back home is super supportive and proud of him." Siemens, who billets with teammate Bryce Bryant's family, has enjoyed his time with the Oil



Capitals.

"The things that I enjoy playing for the Caps are how the fans are always there to support us at our games no matter what and my teammates and coaches are awesome. I enjoy coming to the rink every day."

OIL CAPS RACK UP GOALS, WIN TWICE



PHOTOS BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Capitals' offence had goaltenders seeing red last week.

The Manitoba Junior Hockey League team beat the visiting Swan Valley Stampede, 9-2, on Nov. 15. Noel Englot lit the lamp four times in that contest. The next night, the Oil Caps had the hometown fans cheering again with a 7-1 win over the Winnipeg Freeze. Those wins improved the Virden team's record to 9-12-0-0, as of Nov. 18. What allowed the Oil Caps to score 16 goals over two games last weekend?

"I think we played the game with more pace and were able to make some plays to create offence," Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said. "We attacked the net and finished to the net and were able to score some goals by going to the harder areas of the ice, which we have struggled with at times this season."

Englot, a 2005-born forward, racked up five points against the Stampede. Versus the Freeze, he recorded a goal and an assist. Englot was named one of the Original 16 MJHL Stars of the Week. Through 21

games, he paced Virden with nine goals and 18 points.

"Noel is a very intelligent player and always gives a great effort. He didn't do anything drastically different, the puck just started to go in for him," Ramsey said of Englot's play on the weekend. "He plays a simple game and does little things well and so it was nice to see the puck go in for him."

This week the Oil Capitals were in Selkirk on Nov. 19, after the Empire-Advance deadline. On Nov. 22, they take on the Winnipeg Blues.

Oil Caps 9, Stampede 3

The last time Englot scored four goals in a game was his second season of U15 hockey. What allowed him to net a quartet against Swan Valley?

"I think just being confident with the puck, and some nice plays by my teammates to set me up for some easy goals," Englot said.

The Oil Capitals jumped out to a 4-1 first period lead against Swan Valley on Friday night. The Oil Capitals' offence kept humming in the second session. They built up an 8-1 lead before the Stampede were able to respond. Each team scored once in the third

period. On the night, Virden was one-for-five on the powerplay, and Swan Valley was two-for-six.

Oil Capitals forward Rhett Platt finished with four points. He scored once and recorded three assists. Scoring for Virden, in addition to Englot and Platt, were Rhylan Baxter, Marek Miller, Kyran Grouette, and Marshall Light. In his first game with the Oil Caps, the recently acquired Miller posted two points. Peyton Shore, the Virden netminder, made 27 saves.

Elias Giaccari-Dimitriou started in net for Swan Valley. He had 10 saves on 17 shots. Rowan White came on in the second period. He made 25 saves on 27 shots.

Oil Caps 7, Freeze 1

The Saturday night contest between the Oil Capitals and Freeze was knotted at 1-1 after one period of play. In the second period, the hosts took a 2-1 lead. The Oil Caps exploded for five goals in the final frame.

Seven different players scored for Virden. They were Daniel Tokariwski, Baxter, Englot, Luke Robson, Hudson Davidson, Bryce Bryant, and Carson Wright. Wright and Davidson, who is a Virden product, both scored their first MJHL goals. Maxx Hamelin, Englot, and Virden's own Bryant each recorded two points. Oil Capitals goalie Nik Trakakis stopped all but one of the 23 shots he faced.

Bauer Kasdorf scored the Freeze's goal. In net, Braxton Burdeny started for the Winnipeg team. He made 31 saves on 36 shots. Ben Chornomydz came on in relief. He faced six shots and turned away four.

Personnel Moves

The Oil Capitals have swapped 2006-born forward Acoyen Fehr to the Superior International Hockey League's Thunder Bay North Stars for a player development fee. The rookie had two goals over eight games for Virden this season.

Last week the Oil Capitals announced the signing of two more players for the 2025-2026 campaign: 2009-born forward Hunter Ethelston and 2007-born goalie Micky Gross. Cornwallis' Gross has 2.83 goals against average and a .922 save percentage for the U18 AAA Southwest Cougars this season. Through 16 games, Ethelston had two goals and four points for his hometown U18 AAA Brandon Wheat Kings.

SPORTS

HARD WORK EARNS CHARLES SPOT WITH COLLEGE POWERHOUSE

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

After years of hard work, Virden's Kendall Charles has achieved the opportunity to play the sport she loves at the next level.

The daughter of Joel and Dori Charles announced her commitment earlier this month to play softball at North Dakota State College of Science starting with the 2025-2026 school year. NDSCS is based in Wahpeton, N.D.

"North Dakota State College of Science has a very at home atmosphere," Charles said. "The campus is not too big, and everything is within walking distance. The team is very competitive and has had great success within their conference. When I met with the team, the girls were very welcoming, and I really liked Coach (Mike) Oehlke."

The Wildcats have one of the top programs at the National Junior College Athletic Association Division III level. They were the national champs in 2023 and placed second last season.

"NDSCS is excited to have Kendall Charles joining our program next year," Oehlke said. "We have been following Kendall's career for a while and are excited to add her to our outfield next year. Kendall has been to our campus a few times, and we think she will be a great teammate and a

leader in our program. She brings a great bat, as well as strong arm and glove to the defence. She can also run, which will fit well in our system. A great ballplayer and family."

At NDSCS, Charles plans to pursue the first two years of her Bachelor of Science degree. After that, she could potentially continue her studies and softball career at another school.

In a social media post announcing her commitment, Charles expressed her appreciation for her friends, family, and coaches for "helping me along the way." In an interview, in regard to her parents, Charles said:

"My parents have made a huge impact in my life through softball. They have always been there supporting me whether it was getting me to practice on time, flying me to our tournaments, or cheering for me on the sidelines. My parents have never missed a game, and I think that shows how dedicated they are to push me to my best. My dad has coached me for years, starting in T-ball, all the way up to the AAA level. He passed his love, passion, and knowledge for the game down to me, making me the player I am."



PHOTO BY TRIPLE CROWN SPORTS

"special shout out to Faron Asham and the TC Bulldogs organization for helping me gain my confidence with my hitting as well as my understanding for the game."

Asham, who is affiliated with Brandon's Triple Crown Sports, has coached Charles in various capacities the past few years. He said:

"She's committed to becoming the best player that she can be. I'm so proud of her on getting to go play in North Dakota state. It's a high-quality program and she's going to help that program right off the hop."

Recently Charles helped the Team Manitoba female softball squad win the Lake of the Ozarks' Fall Showcase in Missouri. She had one of the team's top slugging percentages.

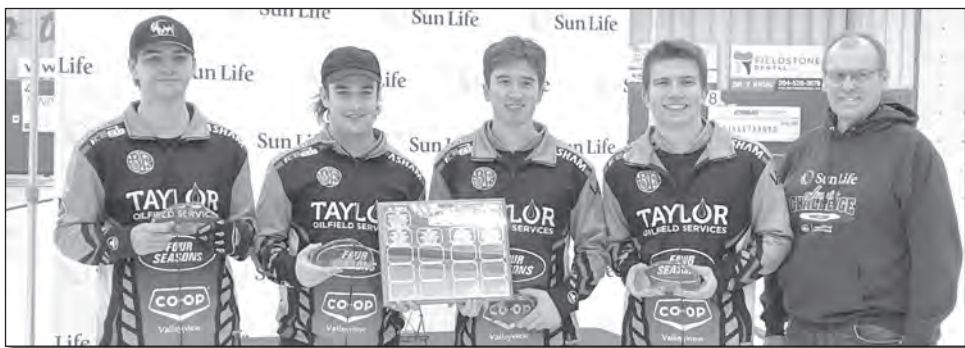
"She's put in the work for that," Asham said. "Right now, she's still coming in weekly ... She had come in about two years ago to completely revamp that swing. She put in the work to do it. It's paying off dividends here."

In addition to adding power to her swing, Charles has also been a student of the game in the outfield.

"Kendall has got one of the strongest softball IQs that I've been involved with," Asham said. "She can read the ball off the bat very quickly. But, overall, it's her commitment to be a good outfielder. She takes the time to work on her footwork - getting that first step. She takes great routes and angles to the ball."

In her social media post, Charles also praised the softball programs that she said helped her "grow as a player." These included the Westman Magic and the Saskatchewan-based 222's Fastpitch. She gave a

FREEMAN RINK REPEATS AT SUN LIFE



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Jace Freeman, Timothy Marin, Nick Senff, Luke Robins being presented by Shawn Taylor from the Host Committee.

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virden's Jace Freeman and his rink repeated as Sun Life Junior Challenge champions.

At the prestigious event, which was held Nov. 14-17 at the Brandon Curling Club, the Freeman rink defeated Selkirk's Team Campbell, 4-3, in an extra end to win the title. The Freeman rink built up a 3-1 lead by the fifth end. Campbell earned singles in the sixth and eighth to tie things up and force a ninth end.

"We played a near perfect extra end where we kept the house as clean as possible, which was the goal," Freeman said. "Rylan (Campbell) tried a tough draw on his last rock but slid too far, so I did not have to throw

my last rock."

In pool play at the bonspiel, the Freeman rink was 2-1. It earned three playoff victories to post a 5-1 overall record.

As always, the Sun Life Junior Challenge drew quality rinks. This year's men's draw included teams from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the United States. The 2024 U.S. U21 national champion Team Wendling was one of the rinks competing. Past participants have included national champ Matt Dunstone and Olympian Jocelyn Peterman, to name a couple.

"I really enjoy the social aspect this event brings to the junior team every year," Freeman said. "With teams staying in hotels together and the banquet on Friday night, it really helps the

event stand out and have a really fun vibe to it."

The Virden Curling Club is the Freeman rink's home club. Freeman is the son of Roxanne and Graham Freeman. Winnipeggers Luke Robins, lead, and Nick Senff, second, were with the team last season when it also won the Sun Life Junior Challenge. Senff's father, Danny, grew up in Virden. Newcomer Timothy Marin, who plays third, grew up in New Brunswick.

In the women's draw at the Sun Life Junior Challenge, Team Hayward fell in the finals to Team Dundas, 7-6. The Hayward rink is skipped by Shaela Hayward, who is the daughter of former Virden resident Darcy Hayward.

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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ASSISTANT CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Job Description

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

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

The successful candidate should possess excellent financial and managerial attributes.

Duties and Responsibilities

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

Skills and Qualifications

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

MUNICIPAL ACCOUNTANT

Job Description

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

Duties and Responsibilities

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

Skills and Qualifications

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

WEED SUPERVISOR

Job Description

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

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

Duties and Responsibilities

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

Skills and Qualifications

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

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

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

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

CLASSIFIEDS

Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY
MARGARET RAINEY



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Margaret Rainey (nee Callaghan). Margaret is predeceased by her first husband and father of her three children, John Fredrick (Jack) Granelli (1976), and by her beloved daughter, Patricia Anne Morsky (2019).

She leaves to mourn her loss, husband Raymond Rainey as well as her son, John (children: Jacqueline (Robert) Brewer, Paul (Iris) Granelli), her daughter, Catherine (Curtis) Vossen (children: Laura, Kelcey, Julia, Paul, Leigh, Keith) and son-in-law Brian Morsky (children: Bryce (Song), Blake (Brianna), Erica, Mark (Taylor)). She is also survived by eight great-grandchildren: Xavier, Vivienne, Nathaniel, Mateo, Sofia, Alessandra, Laurence and Miller.

Margaret's love of life was surpassed only by her love for, and joy in being with, her grandchildren. This legacy of love will live on through her dedication to, "creating memories" as she so often referred to and truly cherished, for those precious young people in her life.

Funeral service will be held on Saturday, November 23, 2024, at 1:30 pm at Sacred Heart Parish, 481 Queen Street West, Virden, MB.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Holy Family Home, 165 Aberdeen Avenue, Winnipeg, MB.

Until we meet again.

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Prairie View Municipality

Regular Meeting Nov. 12 mins;

Submitted

BY PRAIRIE VIEW MUNICIPALITY

The meeting commenced at 9am; Members Present: R. Wilson, M. Fulcher, M. Butler, D. Oliver, T. Peel, D. Cole, R. Bonchuk Virtually Via Zoom: L. Clark

Staff Present: CAO C. Bonchuk, Admin Assistant M. Amy

The agenda and minutes from Oct. 22 were adopted.

DELEGATIONS

Miniota Fire Chief Nick Young;

Birdtail Museum Committee.

STAFF reports included CAO and Fibre Committee.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Tax Sale report.

Motion: Manitoba Growth and Renewal Opportunities Grant, a motion to apply for grant monies; Moved by Linda Clark; Seconded by Darcy Oliver WHEREAS Municipal and Northern Relations Outcomes and Strategic Policy Branch have announced the Manitoba Growth and Renewal Opportunities for Municipalities Program; municipalities outside of the city of Winnipeg are eligible to apply for infrastructure projects on a 50/50 basis to be completed in 3 years. Council has it in their 5-year plan to replace the MFD (Miniota Fire Department) wildland truck; and Council has it in their Bridge Maintenance plan to replace Site 13; THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

that Council apply for funding through the Manitoba GRO program with priority 1 - the replacement of a wildland fire truck where municipal funding portion comes from Fire Reserve; AND that priority 2 be Site 13 where municipal funding portion come from Bridge Reserve. CARRIED

Motion: FoodCyclers, Moved by Delbert Cole, Seconded by Trent Peel; BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council approves the administrative staff to order the next round of FoodCyclers.

Birtle Water and Sewer Renewals Update

NEW BUSINESS

Request from Miniota Parent Council committee - tabled;

STARS - no motion;

RCL Birtle Branch #55 - no motion

Motion: Regional Health Meeting motion by Darcy Oliver, Seconded by Linda Clark - WHEREAS rural Manitoba health care facilities are facing reduced services or closures due to doctor and staffing shortages; and rural Manitoba residents are forced to travel long distances to receive medical attention; and each community health care facility, on its own, struggles to attract and retain staff for local services; and a regional plan would provide health care services at each community facility, improving local services and

reducing travel time for rural residents; THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED Council agrees to participate in a regional plan to provide local health care services to each participating community. CARRIED

No motion: 35' Extension Ladder; Ridged Roto Rooter; Statement of Assets and Interests

Motion: Accounts were listed for Approval; Robert Bonchuk; Seconded by Delbert Cole BE IT RESOLVED THAT the following accounts issued in the month of October 2024 totalling \$921,231.44 be hereby approved. CARRIED

Motion: Procedure Bylaw

and Organizational Bylaw - Moved by Michael Fulcher, seconded by Trent Peel BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council give By-Law #2024-05 being a by-law which governs the organization of Prairie View Municipality and the Committees thereof first reading. CARRIED

COUNCIL REPORTS

Reeve Wilson - RMW, Fiber Coop; Coun. Clark - MWPD (Mid West Planning

District), Lions, Health Foundation; Coun. Cole - MMS, MWPD; Coun. Peel - Vet Clinic; Coun. Butler - EMO (Emergency Measures Org.); Coun. Oliver - Water Line, MWPD

General correspondence: WCB; and Manitoba Transportation and Infrastructure

IN CAMERA & ADJOURNMENT

The council meeting adjourned shortly after 1pm.

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Water Meter Reminder
If you received a notice and have not yet had your water meter changed, please call **Skulmoski Plumbing at 204-851-8157** to schedule your appointment.

Upcoming Council Meetings: December 3 & 17
Please Note: Town of Virden Council meetings begin at 7:00 PM

Virden & Area Food Cupboard
Non-perishable food donations now being accepted at the Town Office.

Noon Hour Shinny
Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 12:00-1:00 PM at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.
Seasonal passes at the Town Office: \$125 + GST or \$5 for drop-in (paid at the rink).

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

LiveBarn
Now available at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.
Use code **togp-live** for 10% off.
Visit livebarn.com for more information.

Elkhorn remembers with Sgt. Rob Nederlof

Submitted
By MARGARET JAMES

Elkhorn Branch #58 of the Royal Canadian Legion were very pleased

to have Sgt. Rob Nederlof and his wife, Marina, as their guests at the recent Remembrance Day ceremony.

Sgt. Nederlof turned his cycling skills into a fundraiser for Wounded Warriors Canada and for the last four summers, from Aug 11 - Aug 19, he has completed journeys of 1000 kms (or more) mainly through the prairies. His goal was to draw attention to mental health issues of veterans and EMS workers while raising funds to help support the service dog program. Sgt. Nederlof was guest speaker at Elkhorn Remembrance Day service where he shared pictures he took while on duty in Afghanistan. He spoke of the importance of honouring those who served our nation during the First World War, Second World War and Korea; and to honour those who serve today.

Nederlof is originally from Calgary. He met Marina in Edmonton about 32 years ago and they have been married for 30 years. They have two adult children - their daughter is in the air force and their son is still at home.

Sgt Nederlof has served for 25 years in the forces, joining in 1999. He's currently posted at CFB Shilo and works in Base Maintenance. He served one tour in Bosnia and two tours of duty in Afghanistan. Last year he was deployed domestically for 10 weeks in the Arctic supporting military training.



PHOTO BY MARGARET JAMES

Garth Mitchell, President of Elkhorn Legion Branch #58, Sgt. Rob Nederlof and his wife, Marina. The Nederlofs were guests of the Elkhorn Legion for the Remembrance Day ceremony.

In his spare time, he enjoys cycling, baking bread and when possible, enjoys a round of golf.

Nederlof turned his cycling skills into a fundraiser for Wounded Warriors Canada and over the last four summers from Aug. 11 - Aug. 19, he has completed journeys of 1000 kms (or more) mainly through the

prairies. The goal was to draw attention to mental health issues of veterans and EMS workers while raising funds to help support the service dog program.

Last year Elkhorn Branch was honoured to host Rob and Marina for supper; it was a fundraiser for the Wounded Warriors Canada service dog program.

Virден Oilmen's donation to Virден Health Centre



SUBMITTED PHOTO


Scott Wilson, representing the Virден Oilmen's Golf Tournament, makes a presentation of \$2000 to Thelma Quinn and Gwen Clarke of the Virден & District Health Auxiliary. This donation will be put toward providing more TV channels to the patients of the Virден Health Centre.

60 year service award
























PHOTO BY DIANNE HANSON

Sargent-at-Arms Marc Savy presented Major Ken Corbett with his 60 year service award



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Keystone Wealth Management moving to busy corner

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Harley McCormick and the team at Keystone Wealth Management will soon greet clients in their own office building at the corner of Seventh Ave. and Nelson St. in Virden.

Keystone Wealth Management (KWM) is a home-grown financial planning and investment business owned by McCormick and Tona-Lee Rhodes.

The business began at the same time as the Guild Insurance Group office. Two years ago, KWM moved to the Masson & Associates office at 512 Seventh Ave. where they continue to rent space until their new building, the former ScotiaBank at 190 Nelson St. W. and Seventh Ave. is renovated and ready for business sometime in February 2025.

The business is in growth mode having increased their customer base by 35 per cent in the past year, keeping McCormick, Rhodes, Tanner Lewis, also a financial advisor, and accountant Helene Nolan busy.

This prime location means there's room for growth. McCormick says, "If we have to find more office space... we can fit 10 or 12 [staff] in here very easily."

The company took ownership on Oct. 18. A walk through in early November was the first opportunity for staff to see inside the building.

The former bank was well maintained and a great space for a new financial management business to take over.

"It just needs some freshening," says McCormick. "It'll mainly be cosmetic renovations required."

He says in their former locations, no one knew who Keystone was. Keystone Wealth Management signage, created by NRG Signs, will replace the ScotiaBank signs.

This downtown Virden building comes with a century of history. In fact, the purchase was held up briefly,

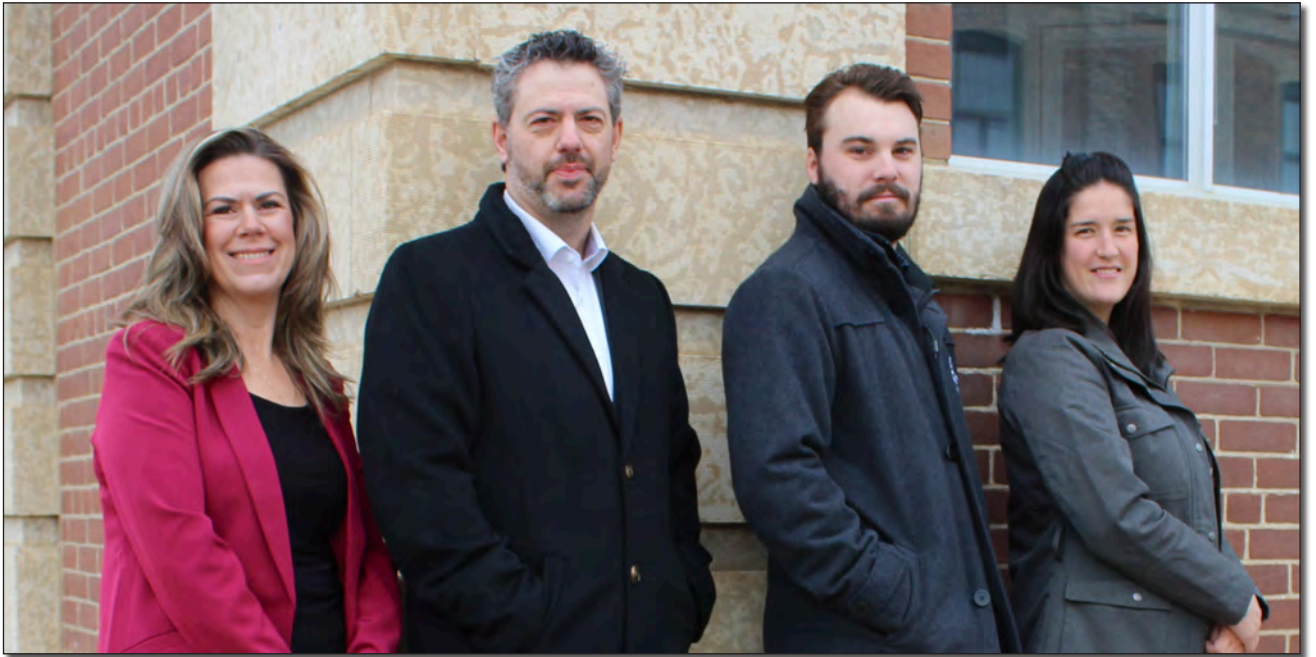


PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

The Keystone Wealth Management team at the cornerstone of the building that will become their office: (l-r) Tona-Lee Rhodes and Harley McCormick, Tanner Lewis and Helene Nolan.

because of an old document.

"Yeah. It was supposed to be October 1st, but there was an old paper title found. And so, it was delayed."

The former ownership knew nothing about that ancient document either. McCormick reasoned, "So that's what happens when you buy a 125-year-old building."

According to information on the Manitoba Historical Society website, the "two-storey brick and stone building at the corner of Nelson Street West and Seventh Avenue South in Virden was built in 1912 as a branch of the Union Bank of Canada to replace a previous branch

next door. In 1925, when the bank merged with the Royal Bank of Canada, it continued as a branch of the new company until closing in 1933.

"The building became the law offices of Brayford, Buckingham and Doak. In 1951, it was occupied by the Bank of Nova Scotia which, in 1987, purchase the original building next door and renovated it to become part of the same structure." (mmhs.ca)

It was March of 2024 when ScotiaBank in Virden closed its doors. Within a year's time it's due to re-open, and to continue as a financial business establishment.

PC Caucus pushing NDP on issues that matter

By Greg Nesbitt
MLA OF RIDING MOUNTAIN

A new Legislative session is now underway after the Speech from the Throne was read on Tuesday, November 19, and I am looking forward to following up on the success that our Progressive Conservative caucus has had in addressing issues that matter to Manitobans.

During the previous session that wrapped up on November 7, our PC team brought important attention to the need for a lower breast cancer screening age for Manitoba women.

A bill introduced by Roblin MLA Kathleen Cook, would reduce the breast cancer screening age from 50 to 40, set a hard deadline for doing so and ensure annual public reporting on it. Though the NDP government has blocked this bill from passing, our efforts have brought awareness to this critical health issue, and we will continue to push for this change in law, in the months ahead.

At the same time, we are proud to have passed another health-related bill that is important to Manitobans. The Men's Mental Health Awareness Week Act, introduced by Dawson Trail PC MLA Bob Lagasse, designates the week immediately preceding Father's Day as a time to promote mental well-being for men. Recognized officially at the federal level and in several other provinces, this issue is about workplace stress, relationship difficulties, and various other life challenges that are too often dangerously overlooked.

Our opposition caucus congratulates MLA Lagasse for getting his bill passed by the legislature and, in doing so, for bringing men's mental health concerns to widespread attention in our province for years to come.

Health care has been an increasingly pressing issue for our caucus this fall as we push the NDP to do more for Manitobans.

An urgent need for a magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner in the Portage la Prairie area is another

focus for us, and we have stepped up our calls for the government to invest in such a diagnostic machine for the planned Portage Regional Health Centre currently under construction. Despite MRI wait times in Manitoba increasing to as much as 49 weeks at HSC Winnipeg and nearly 24,000 people across the province waiting for MRI scans this past summer, an MRI machine is not planned for the new Portage hospital scheduled to open by early 2026.

Doctors have said an MRI machine there would perform about 8,000 scans per year, significantly easing that backlog in Winnipeg and province-wide. Our MLA for Portage la Prairie, Jeff Bereza, is listening to the doctors and area residents, and has played a leading role in urging the NDP to include an MRI scanner at the hospital. Following a petition on which nearly 4,000 people had added their names to the request for an MRI machine in Portage, MLA Bereza organized a town hall event that brought hundreds of people together on October 22 to discuss this matter and how to move it forward.

He has also discussed the MRI issue with Indigenous communities in Portage's surrounding areas, to determine their needs for improved diagnostic resources. As residents of the Portage la Prairie area raise their collective voice for MRI scanning at the new hospital, we will keep pressing the NDP to do this for them.

Outside of the Legislature, I am excited about the leadership race underway within the PC Party of Manitoba. More than 200 supporters attended a forum on October 30 in Winnipeg, to hear from leadership candidates Wally Daudrich and Obby Khan, about their ideas and vision for the party's future, including a question-and-answer session with the audience.

The successful candidate next spring will begin leading our united caucus in holding the NDP accountable to people across the province and, I believe, will become the next premier of Manitoba.

Residents of Westman and province-wide need and



deserve a government that is more focused on outcomes than optics. We will continue to advocate for policies that protect families, reduce taxes, ensure accountability and put the well-being of all Manitobans ahead of politics.

As this new legislative session gets underway, I am working with our PC team to keep the NDP's attention on what is best for Manitoba's people and its future.

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