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SUNRISE CREDIT UNION

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Very Virden Christmas kicks off Thursday evening shopping



At Custom Creations, Brynlee Boyd gets a rabbit ears cameo with The Grinch.



VCI singers lead carolling in front of the lit Memory Tree. The name board seen in the background will fill up as \$5 donations in memory of loved ones continue to come in until Dec. 19. The Cemetery Improvement committee welcomes ideas for the funds that will be used to beautify Virden Cemetery.



In the Station, Casey Bourne needed no guidance to get dolled up with items from the Costume Closet for her debut at Arts Mosaic's photo booth, and notice the gloves, pink and purple, the sunglasses, purse, hat, cane - a glamorous look!



At The Sweet Spot Bakery the place is filled with creative youngsters, some guided by their parents, at the cookie decorating event.

PHOTOS BY ANNE DAVISON

and Nelson Street warmed things up. And people were shopping at the open stores, taking advantage of special deals.

From seniors to children, a crowd gathered for the light-up of the Memory Tree outside the Flower Attic & Gift shop. Virden Collegiate Institute singers led caroling and afterwards Westland Insurance handed out cookies and hot chocolate.



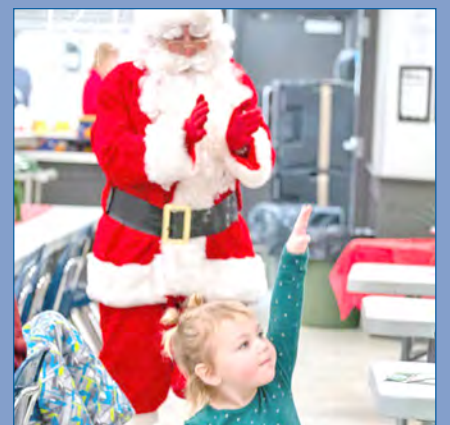
HOME GAME
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30
VS. DAUPHIN KINGS
PUCK DROPS AT 7:30PM

Inside...



BEARS FOOTBALL

P20



OAK LAKE 29TH SANTA BRUNCH

P9

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE ADVANCE

Children's activities at many locations drew families to Virden's downtown streets Thursday evening Nov. 21. For sure, the dance party with Santa and the Oil Caps, the campfire, music and smores roast, at the hub of downtown - Seventh

Don't miss the train!



PHOTO EMPIRE-ADVANCE FILE

On Dec. 7, 2018 the Holiday Train brought performers Kelly Prescott (left), Terri Clark (Hudson Bay coat and Western hat) and Sierra Noble (not pictured). Noble's fiddle music had the crowd jiggling.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Holiday Train is due to arrive at Virден on Dec. 6. In its 26th year of spreading holiday cheer and raising money, food and awareness for people struggling with food insecurity the arrival of the CP Holiday Train is always a big event. Families from town and country gather alongside the track on Fifth Avenue, across from Tundra Oil & Gas Place. The train will roll to a stop at about 10:30am. Shortly after that the Holiday Train stage will unfold and Canadian entertainers Tyler Shaw and Shawnee Kish will perform.

Shaw, a multi-Platinum-selling artist, music producer and actor has been nominated for multiple JUNO awards, including nods for 'Breakthrough

Artist of the Year,' 'Pop Album of the Year,' 'Adult Contemporary Album of the Year' and 'TikTok JUNO Fan Choice.'

Born in Coquitlam, B.C. he and his wife of six years are the parents of two children. Shaw's "Love You Still" (abcdefu Romantic Version) is a pledge that hits the heart. The song has enjoyed huge success over social media with the single certified Gold in India, Singapore and Czech Republic and Platinum in Canada and Taiwan. In 2023 "Love You Still" was nominated for a 'TikTok JUNO Fan Choice' award.

Shaw has also released a Christmas album and will be touring eastern Canada this Christmas season. But first, he's due to perform for Virден on the Holiday Train tour.

Performer Shawnee Kish is described as a powerful

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soul voice, whose concert is a one-of-a-kind experience. Shawnee's journey in music has been one that she attributes to her strength, survival, and inspiration during her struggle coming out as Two Spirit and her struggle with depression as a child.

Kish, a Mohawk singer-songwriter was a 2022 JUNO nominee for Contemporary Indigenous Artist of the Year, tied to her acclaimed self-titled debut EP. In 2023, she released her highly anticipated follow-up EP, Revolution, which landed her another Two JUNO nominations in Adult Alternative Album of the Year, and Contemporary Indigenous Artist of the Year.

Kish has worked with Kids Help Phone and in 2023, participated in an all-star recording of Serena Ryder's single, "What I Wouldn't Do" released as a charity single to benefit Kids Help Phone's Feel Out Loud campaign for youth mental health.

During the Holiday Train visit, CP presents Virден and Area Food Cupboard with a cheque each year and while there's no charge for this beautiful event, there will be opportunity to pay it forward.

To make a monetary donation to help the food cupboard stock up for winter food needs, look for Shirley Gibson and Myrna Bison at the event. The students of Virден schools are invited to each bring a can of food. Town of Virден trucks will be on hand to receive non-perishable food donations for the food cupboard.

And there will be treats. Santa will be on hand passing out candy canes. Also, in exchange for a non-perishable item Tim Hortons truck will be handing out coffee and hot chocolate to keep us warm.

Bundle up to enjoy the Holiday Train.

Light village, light contest feature in Virден

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

How kind of nature to dump a fluffy white blanket that highlights Christmas lights. Virден light competition is rolling out again with several contests for residents and businesses AND prizes to be won.

Also, a new Christmas light show - the Christmas Light Village - will provide a wonderland experience in the treed Lions Campground on Dec. 11, 12, and 13.

Virденites are once again invited to participate in the Very Virден Christmas decorating contest where over \$1,400 in local business gift cards are available to be won.

There are different categories to enter, so you need to decide which category your décor is right for. A participant may enter both the Judged Residential and the Viewer's Choice Residential, but an entry is only eligible to win in one prize category.

If you love to decorate and enjoy a yard lit up on dark winter evenings, here's your chance for a prize. Last year's winners cannot win again in the same category.

Judged Residential

The judged residential category of the Decorating Contest is open to residential properties including single-family homes, duplexes, condominiums, and apartments with balconies. Decorations should be visible from the street.

Viewer's Choice Category

The Viewer's Choice category encourages local resi-



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Virден CPR Historic Station yard adorned with lights.

dents and businesses to submit a photo of their holiday decorations for the local community to view online. You can vote for your favourite display from the comfort of your electronic device. One vote per person, per category is permitted during the voting period.

Business - Viewer's Choice

Businesses often go all out with displays in their windows and storefronts. The winning business will be awarded the "Christmas Cup" trophy.

Deck The Door

Stay warm with this twist on Christmas decorating: Deck The Door contest is open to all ages. To participate, decorate an interior door and post a photo or video of the

creation to TikTok from Nov. 21 to Dec. 8. When you post your video or photo, add in a brief description of the décor theme and include the hashtag of: #VVCdeckthedor24.

The winner will be the one that receives the most likes, comments, and shares until Dec. 15. No access to TikTok? Not a problem. Simply provide your video or photo to a Very Virден Christmas representative who will post it directly to the Very Virден Christmas TikTok account.

So, you've got your lights and décor installed, but to be included in the judging you need to complete an entry form before Dec. 8 and judging begins Dec. 9. Winners will be notified on or around Dec. 16. For more information and to enter go to: veryvirdenchristmas.ca

Traditional Christmas dinner committee announce major sponsorship

Submitted

SUNRISE CREDIT UNION

As preparations for the 39th annual Westman and Area Traditional Christmas Dinner continue, the organizing committee has some wonderful news to share. One of the main ingredients of the meal to be served is turkey. Over the years, the number of meals served at the dinner has increased to 3000! That requires well over 100 turkeys to be cooked and carved. This year's turkey budget will now be covered thanks to sponsorship by the Credit Unions in Brandon. "Sunrise Credit Union is thrilled to partner up with our fellow Brandon-based credit unions to once again make the Westman & Area Traditional Christmas Dinner a resounding success in 2024," said Heather Merckx, Marketing Manager for Sunrise Credit Union.

To make their sponsorship official, representatives from each Brandon Credit Union met at the venue where the dinner will be served. "This Dinner is a cornerstone of the community, creating a festive ambiance, a familial bond, and a delightful Christmas meal setting. We want everyone to feel the love and importance of this Christmas," said Merckx.

Since 1985 The Traditional Christmas Dinner has been offering fellowship and a meal on Christmas Day to those who may otherwise go without. "It's that one day of the year that means so much to so many. The effort our group puts forth exemplifies the true meaning of the Christmas spirit. For some that may mean opening presents. To us it means opening our hearts as we prepare for yet another Christmas Dinner," said WTCD Board Chair Glad-



FILE PHOTO

den Smith. A major part of preparations for the dinner includes finding sponsors and garnering support. "Without this kind of support from the Brandon Credit Unions we may not be able to continue this tradition, we are grateful for their support," Smith said.

Serving times for the 2024 edition of the WTCD will be from 12 p.m. until 4 p.m. in the MNP Hall

at the Keystone Centre. Meal deliveries will also run from noon until 4 p.m. however, all meal deliveries must be ordered by December 23rd at 6 p.m. To order your meal call the WTCD office at 204-728-7987. Only one meal per person please.

For more information visit our website www.traditionalchristmasdinner.ca or visit our Facebook page here.

REF MEMORIES

REF TO WRITER

GERRY NOLAN



It all began one day when the phone rang. On the other end of the line was Ted Little of Decker, MB. Ted asked me if I would officiate some minor hockey games for him in Decker. I agreed I would give it a go and thus the journey began.

I was supplied with a referee sweater, a whistle and a rule book. I didn't have time to read the rule book before the first game, but I had watched enough hockey to know the basic rules.

When I went to a referee clinic the next season as a registered official with my own rule book, I found out all kinds of rules I wasn't aware of.

After my first game they gave me \$6. Wow, getting paid was something I hadn't even thought of and so I was off and running. I do not have one single memory of that first game which is maybe a good thing.

I refereed a lot of games for Ted that winter and more the next year as well.

One day Ted asked me if I would consider going to Elkhorn to officiate some games as he had been talking to Cliff Kyle and Elkhorn was short on referees. I agreed that I would, Ted called Cliff, then Cliff called me. Little did I know what lay ahead for me.

This was going to be an introduction to someone who would change my life, really in so many ways. Cliff Kyle, Mr. Hockey in Elkhorn, would become a lifelong

friend. There were even times when Cliff would call, just to talk hockey. Cliff was involved in minor hockey, as well with the senior team, the Canadians. Some of those early games in Elkhorn I officiated names like Norman Kyle, Lloyd McCloud, Bruce Cousins, Delbert Bowles, Gary Bowles and of course Dennis Kyle.

Elkhorn, I think was a bantam age team back then and were coached by Mr. Montgomery who asked me to do some playoff games that year. I seemed to be getting noticed by other coaches who would call to see if I would come to officiate their games as well.

It wasn't long before another opportunity came my way. Wallace Henderson had seen me do some games and would soon get me involved in Intermediate hockey or as we are more familiar with Senior Hockey.

Cliff Kyle was one of the most influential

people in my hockey life. Cliff was always encouraging and was so supportive. Cliff always took the time to come and chat with me. One time he told me, "you know Ger if you don't call too many penalties on us you will probably get more games." I pondered on that for a few days, then realized he was trying to sway me. I called Cliff and told him I thought he was trying to squeeze some calls from me. Cliff just laughed and said I was wondering when you were going to phone me. Lesson learned. Cliff had my best interests at heart

helping me to become a better official. I found out, as I went along in my career, there would be a lot of those times when teams would WORK the referee. Cliff seen that coming long before I did.

Cliff passed away a number of years ago but my memories of him are as clear and special as they were the moment they happened. Cliff you made the world a better place. I miss our visits. Thanks for being such a great mentor and friend. Rest easy up there in hockey heaven my friend. Will see you later!

Greg NESBITT
MLA for Riding Mountain

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Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



Parables and fables

A parable is a succinct, didactic story, in prose or verse, that illustrates one or more instructive lessons or principles. It differs from a fable in that fables employ animals, plants, inanimate objects, or forces of nature as characters, whereas parables have human characters. Another definition added that parables were usually stories that Jesus told. When I was re-visiting stories from the grade school readers the best word to describe them is that they are parables.

There are several stories from about grade five or six that I particularly remember. I'm not certain of the stories title but I sure do recall the content. A rural couple lived in a tidy but compact home. In time there was a wee one, and as the little one became mobile, the wife was discontented with the size of their dwelling and instructed her husband to go and speak to the elder of the village. The elder listened carefully and told the man to add two chickens to their home. Obediently, the couple added the two chickens. You know the husband needed to return to the wise man, and in time a cow, and a pig were added to the now cramped and odorous home. After a period of time, in despair, the man humbly approached the sage and pled for help- the conditions of the house and the attitude of his wife were unbearable. The final instruction was to return all of the animals to their pens and stalls. With order restored, and cleanliness reigning, the woman was content and the home was at peace. Lesson? Be content with what you have, make the best of now for it could be worse!! Another one I recall is the lad discerning how the longest way round could be the shortest way home. A high rise in the land, almost a mountain, stood between the lad and his home. As the crow flies it would be much shorter to cross over the mountain. In reality walking around the base was easier on the body and in actuality took less time! Lesson? Take a closer look at possibilities. Things aren't always as they appear to be.

We had fables as well; the tortoise and the hare, for example. The rabbit, who has the ability to move very quickly, got distracted and took off in tangents while the tortoise plodded along, an even pace and no distractions. Slow and steady wins the race. The other story was about the wind and the sun wagering as to who could get a traveller to remove his cloak as he walked between towns. Despite it's best efforts, the wind saw that the traveller only drew his cloak tighter as the force of the wind increased. The sun, however, in a very short time, had the traveller removing his cloak and carrying it. Lesson? You get better results with warmth and encouragement that you get with force and mighty blasts.

More than one Aesop fable made their appearance in our curriculum, as did scripture and tales of Greek and Roman gods.

I should borrow today's school required reading material, perhaps it's comparable...

Maybe just sell Canada Post

Members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers went on strike on Nov. 15 due to unresolved issues with Canada Post. That's an interesting statement as just about everybody has unresolved issues with Canada Post. From customers to management to the striking members of CUPW, everyone has problems with Canada Post.

Canada Post has a problem with itself, not the least of which is the fact it loses half a billion dollars a year and it doesn't seem to have any idea how to fix it.

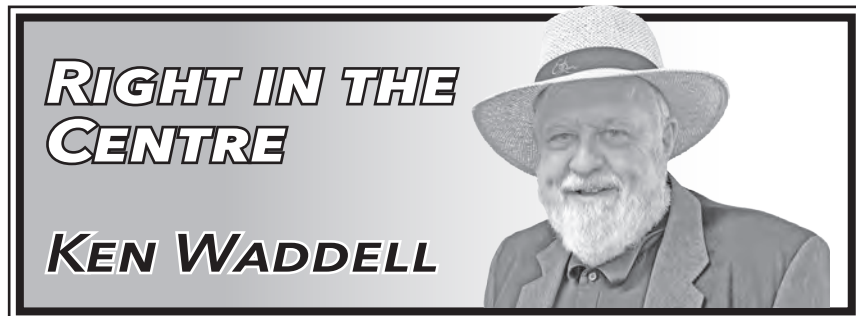
I have heard that postage stamps for letters will go up in February to \$1.25 a stamp. That will further reduce the "letter" volume and income. In 2006, at its peak, Canada Post delivered nearly 5.5 billion letters. As of 2023, that number has dwindled by more than half, with only 2.2 billion letters.

Personally, I don't think that Canada Post workers should have the right to strike, because they have a monopoly on first class mail, and in many parts of the country, they are the only way of getting letters and parcels delivered. They are an essential service and essential services should not be able to go on strike.

When Canada Post goes on strike they hold the citizens and businesses of Canada hostage. Businesses have moved away from Canada Post with e-transfers of funds to pay bills. In addition, over the phone or email credit card payments have replaced a lot of cheque in the mail traffic.

That said, many people and businesses still depend on Canada Post so I re-state, Canada Post workers should not be allowed to go on strike.

In addition to being an essential service, Canada Post workers have it pretty good. They have reasonable salaries, those that work indoors have a pretty good environment to work



The postal carriers get paid to work in outdoor conditions and yes, sometimes the weather is a bit of an issue. However the carriers get paid to get fresh air, exercise and good cardio activity. Some work early hours but they also get off early. They have health benefits, various benefits and pensions.

I have even less sympathy for the Canada Post management, all 13 of the highly overpaid vice-presidents and hundreds of management staff. The management team hasn't figured out how to make a profit with a business that has a nation-wide presence and a monopoly on first class mail.

Then there's the service. At the local level where the staff are not under CUPW, it's really good. In the larger towns where the staff are under CUPW rules, they tend to be bound to work by the rules and those rules aren't always customer friendly.

I have written many times about our trials and tribulations of trying to be supportive of local post offices with our three newspapers. It's a losing battle but not because of the local staff and here's why. If we deliver papers directly to a post office that isn't ruled by CUPW, the papers are put in the boxes within hours or even minutes. If it's a CUPW governed office, sometimes the rule checkers get trigger happy and papers can wait for up to four business days to be put in the boxes. That obviously doesn't

work for a weekly paper. We deliver mostly on Thursdays. That means if the papers don't get boxed by Friday, they can sit until Tuesday (four business days) plus the weekend.

Also, if we wanted to get the quick and willing service that local postmasters give us, we had to drive the papers to each town. Why is that? It's because if we drop the papers off at one post office, it can take up to seven days to get through the warehouse in Brandon or Winnipeg and back out to the local post offices. Not always, but often, paper deliveries within Manitoba take up to a week. Out of province delivery can be up to three weeks.

CUPW almost always goes on strike near Christmas in order to commit maximum damage on Canada Post and the customers. Small businesses depend on the mail for bills to be paid. Two weeks with no income creates huge cash flow problems.

Canada Post passes on a half billion dollar financial loss burden onto Canadian taxpayers every year and we all pay for it plus the expenses of a restricted cash flow during a strike. I say, sell Canada Post! Between private interests, emails, e-transfers and couriers, we might do just fine and with a lot less aggravation.

Selling Canada Post won't likely happen but something needs to happen to give better service to citizens and businesses.

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Both vehicle and driver need a licence

Westman RCMP Service Report for Nov. 17 – Nov. 23

Submitted
By WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 65 calls for service. Of the

65, 19 were traffic related including 5 traffic collisions. Also included in the calls for service were 2 suspicious person/vehicle/property files, 4 assault files, 2 wellbeing checks, 3 false alarms, 3 mental health act files, 1 uttering threats against a person file, and 2 information files.

Nov. 17 - During a routine traffic patrol in the town of Virden, RCMP conducted a traffic stop on a vehicle that was driving with the off-road lights illuminated. The driver stated he did not have a drivers' licence. Police checks confirmed that the vehicle driver was unlicensed and also the vehicle was unregistered. The vehicle driver was issued a traffic offence notice for driving an unregistered vehicle which carries a fine of \$298 and a traffic offence notice for driving without a valid drivers' licence, which carries a fine of \$298.

Nov. 19 - During a routine traffic patrol in Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, RCMP observed a vehicle travelling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed a speed of 88 km/hr. in a 60 km/hr. zone. A traffic stop was conducted and the driver was issued a speeding ticket which carries a fine of \$416.

Nov. 18 - RCMP were dispatched to an assault at a residence in Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Police attended and located a male youth who was arrested without incident and will attend court in March for assault with weapon. He was released to a family member.

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.

Virde n Legion Ladies Auxiliary Report

Submitted
By VIRDEN LADIES AUXILIARY

The Legion Ladies Auxiliary met on Wednesday November 6th, 2024 at 1:30pm. President Tracy Pappel welcomed everyone and declared the meeting open for the transaction of business. Financial Report, Correspondence and Committee Reports were given. Donation was made to the Mary Montgomery School Playground Redevelopment Project, also purchased two doors for the Adopt a door at the Westman Personal Care Home. Elections were held for the 2025 Executive. Next meeting will be Wednesday December 4th, 2024 at 10:30am. With conclusion of business the meeting was adjourned at 2:45pm.

Manitoba RCMP begins deployment of body-worn cameras

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Manitoba RCMP officers will soon be wearing cameras that will record their work. Throughout different parts of Canada beginning in 2021, the RCMP ran pilot projects for body-worn cameras.

Now, in a timed roll-out that began last week with Steinbach RCMP detachment, officers in Manitoba are being supplied with body-worn cameras in a handful of detachments first and ultimately throughout the province.

The use of the cameras will be complemented by a digital evidence management system to store and manage video from the body-worn cameras.

Beginning Dec. 4, the detachments in Portage la Prairie, Amaranth and Treherne will wear the body-cams. By Jan. 22, Manitoba detachments of East St. Paul, Grand Marais, Selkirk and St.-Pierre-Jolys will also be outfitted with body-cams.



PHOTO BY MANITOBA RCMP

Assistant Commissioner Scott McMurchy, Commanding Officer, Manitoba RCMP says that implementing body-worn cameras demonstrates the RCMP's commitment to improving public trust: "Communities have been asking for more accountability and transparency in policing. We are very pleased to say that the RCMP has listened and is deploying body-worn cameras throughout Manitoba."

By April, 2025, it is expected that over 490 Manitoba RCMP officers in 44 detachments will be equipped with body-worn cameras. This will include detachments that provide policing services to Ebb and Flow First Nation, Peguis First Nation, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation, Chemawawin Cree Nation, O-Pipon-Na-Piwin Cree Nation as well as a number of other First Nation communities.

All other detachments throughout Manitoba will have body-worn cameras and the digital evidence management system rolled out to them in a phased approach over the course of the next 18 months.

The video evidence collected from the body cams can provide an objective way to capture interactions between the community and police officers. Officials say it will help resolve public complaints more quickly, and improve evidence gathering.

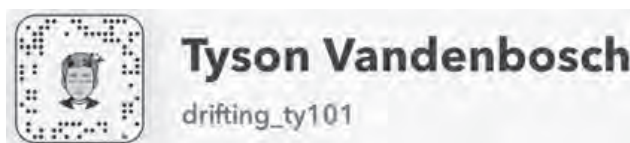
According a Nov. 21, 2024 CBC report, "Manitoba Mounties to start deploying body cams..." the introduction of body worn cameras is a federal project and comes with federal funding. CBC journalist Edzi'u Loverin reports: "The local cameras are part of a national program funded by the federal government, who committed nearly \$240 million over six years to start the national program, and will contribute around \$50 million annually in operating funding."

"In Manitoba it will cost around \$2 million each year once all 674 frontline officers are fitted with a body-worn cameras."

The report goes on to say, "The collected footage will remain on the device to then be uploaded to a maintained digital evidence management system that only the officer involved and supervisor has access to, said McMurchy."

RCMP officers will usually be wearing their body-worn cameras on their chest and the public will know it's recording when a red light is visible and flashing below the lens of the camera.

Internet Child Exploitation Unit make arrest, seek more info



Snapchat account used by Vandebosch is "drifting_ty101".

Submitted
By MB RCMP

On Aug. 24, 2024, the Manitoba RCMP Internet Child Exploitation Unit (ICE) arrested Tyson Vandebosch, 20, of Steinbach, in relation to online communication with minors for a sexual purpose.

While investigators conducted a data analysis of the data extracted from the digital devices seized in the investigation, they have located several victims that they have not been able to identify.

The Snapchat account used by Vandebosch is "drifting_ty101". The RCMP are releasing his avatar as it may assist in furthering the investigation.

Vandebosch is charged with Luring a Child x2.

Investigators are encouraging anyone with information to contact the ICE Unit at 204-984-3129.

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

Looking for a refreshing change from your usual menu? Try these rice salad recipes. You can either serve rice salad as a main dish, as it has a little bit of everything, or as a side dish. Not only are they super simple to make, but it's also gluten-free and perfect for vegetarian/vegan diets. Long grain rice is the best type of rice to use for a rice salad. This is because long grain rice (like basmati rice or Jasmine rice) cooks up perfectly fluffy, and the grains don't stick together. Preparing your rice salad ahead of time actually makes it taste better. The flavors intensify and blend together making it more delicious after several hours or the following day.

Brimming with tasty add-ins like dried cranberries, crunchy water chestnuts and snow peas make this rice salad fancy enough for holiday feasts.

Cranberry wild rice salad
 2 cups cooked wild rice
 1 cup cooked long grain rice
 1/4 cup finely sliced green onions
 2 cups snow peas, halved
 1/2 cup diced celery
 1 small or 1/2 large sweet pepper, diced
 1 can sliced water chestnuts, drained
 1 cup dried cranberries
 Dressing:
 2 Tbsp. sugar
 3 Tbsp. oil
 3 Tbsp. apple cider or red wine vinegar
 4 Tbsp. soy sauce
 2 small garlic cloves, minced
 2 tsp. minced fresh ginger
 1/2 tsp salt
 1/4 tsp. pepper
 2/3 cup toasted almonds or walnuts

In a large bowl combine the first eight ingredients. Combine the dressing ingredients and pour over the rice mixture and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use. Add the nuts when ready to serve. Enjoy.

This irresistible, zesty Mexican-style salad comes together quickly and easily. A virtual fiesta in the mouth!

Black bean and rice salad
 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
 2 cups cooked long-grain rice
 1 red bell pepper, finely chopped
 1/2 cucumber, diced
 1 tomato, seeded and chopped
 1/4 cup finely diced onions
 1 small jalapeno pepper, seeded and diced (optional)
 1/4 cup cilantro, chopped
 Dressing:
 1/4 cup oil
 1 lime, zested and juiced
 1 Tbsp. honey
 1 clove garlic, minced
 1 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. ground cumin
 1 tsp. chili powder
 1/4 tsp. black pepper

In a serving bowl, combine the black beans with the cold cooked rice, red bell pepper, cucumber, tomato, green onion, jalapeno pepper and cilantro. In a small bowl, whisk together the dressing and add to the beans and rice and stir gently to blend ingredients. Cover and refrigerate until thoroughly chilled.

Be On Time!

Advertising
deadline:

**12 Noon on
Tuesday**



Miniota News

Submitted

BY LINDA CLARK

Our community was saddened to learn of the death of Ruby Weber, a longtime resident and supporter of our Miniota community. She has been a resident at Birch Lodge this past while. Ruby and her late husband Chris worked, supported the rink, hall and United Church in all aspects, as well as raising their two sons here. Our sympathy to Wayne and Laureen and Tim and

Shayne and their families.

The Christmas Craft sale was a success this past Sunday as 20 vendors and over 120 braved the second storm of the winter to attend. The Miniota UCW served a delicious lunch.

Congratulations to Hadley Bryant, a member of the U15 Female Chiefs team for bringing home the gold from the Minnesota Rivalry Cup. This is a tournament where Canadian teams play off against one another as do the American teams; and then

those top teams go for gold. The Chiefs were successful in their quest. Randy and Michelle accompanied Hadley on this weekend bus trip for some exciting hockey.

Delbert and Pat Cole, Trent and Sandra Peel and Darcy Oliver travelled to Winnipeg where the men attended the Association of Manitoba Municipalities annual convention.

Linda Clark along with Myrtle Lane from Birtle attended Agribition in Regina to cheer on Daryl and Mel Clark in the Chore Horse Team competition.

Letter to the Editor

RE: These monuments and statues are part of our history and yet they hold an uneasy place in our current society. (Wpg. F Press, 25 Nov.)

The toppling of the statues was a shameful act of "No Respect". Seeking revenge in such a manner does not warrant such atrocities. However, I also believe the biggest atrocity was the province's lack of laying charges to those involved.

History is not there for you to like or dislike.

It is there for you to learn from.

And if it offends you, even better,

because you are less likely to repeat it.

History is not yours to change or destroy.

John Fefchak.

Viriden, MB.

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Trudeau's Environmental Record: Failed and Fake



Dan Mazier, Member of Parliament

By Dan Mazier
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

I want to let you in on a secret: Justin Trudeau and his Liberal government are fake environmentalists.

For years, the Trudeau Liberals faced little scrutiny over their environmental policies. The mainstream media anointed them as untouchable stewards of the environment who could do no wrong. Anyone who disagreed with their policies was quickly labelled a "climate change denier" who didn't give a damn about the environment. But all it takes is a scratch of the surface to quickly reveal the truth about the Trudeau government's environmental record.

There is an old saying that "only when the tide goes out do you discover who's been swimming naked," and with multiple reports being published this month,

it's clear the Liberals have been swimming naked in the waters of environmentalism for years.

In November, Canada's independent and non-partisan Environment Commissioner released a damning audit that revealed the Liberals will NOT meet their own emissions reduction targets despite forcing Canadians to comply with their costly policies.

Included in the array of so-called environmental policies the Liberals promised would catapult Canada to success, was their plan to quadruple the carbon tax, ban gas-powered vehicles, stop funding the construction of new roads, and restrict fertilizer use for farmers.

Not only have these policies inflicted immense economic harm on Canadians, but they have also done nothing to achieve the environmental outcomes the

Liberals promised.

In fact, not only did the Environment Commissioner reveal the Liberals will not meet their own targets, but he also revealed that Canada has the worst record in emissions reductions of any G7 country under the Liberals.

You wouldn't recognize this from the actions of the Prime Minister, though. Trudeau and his ministers have been jetting around the world to promote their failed environmental policies like the carbon tax, while criticizing working-class people for fueling up their cars and heating their homes. In their eyes, it's you - the average Canadian trying to make a living - who is the problem, not them.

I call this high-carbon hypocrisy.

Take a look at the Prime Minister's own actions. Between June 1 and September 12 of 2024, Trudeau logged 92,104 kilometres of jet travel across 58 different trips. That's nearly 300,000 litres of fuel burned this summer according to estimates. It's one thing for the Prime Minister to lecture you on your actions, but to be completely hypocritical and contradict the actions he's demanding from everyone else, is absurd.

The work of the Prime Minister requires travel - but so does the work of Canadians.

While Trudeau's environment minister, Steven Guilbeault, jetted across the world to attend the COP29 Climate Change Conference in Azerbaijan, his government's failed environmental performance was once again exposed.

According to the 2025 Climate Change Performance Index that was released at the conference, under Trudeau, Canada now ranks 62 out of 67 countries in environmental performance. This is four rankings lower than two years ago despite multiple carbon tax hikes on Canadians.

In fact, dozens of countries around the world that do not punish their people with a costly carbon tax are significantly outperforming Canada on this environmental index.

Most notable is the United States - Canada's largest trading partner and closest ally. The United States does not impose a federal carbon tax on its citizens, yet they outperform Canada on nearly every environmental metric.

The Americans' refusal to copy the failed environmental policies of the Trudeau government has also protected their citizens from the accompanying economic harm.

According to Trevor Tombe, a professor of economics at the University of Calgary, last year, real GDP per capita in the United States was 43% higher than in Canada. He estimates the gap will increase to nearly 50% this year. That's why I asked the independent Environment Commissioner if Canada could achieve its targets without a carbon tax. He said yes.

For 9 years, the Liberals claimed that the carbon tax was the ONLY way to meet their environmental targets. The tide is sure going out fast.

I regret not directly challenging the Liberals sooner on their en-

vironmental record. As a lifelong farmer, I have an understanding of the environment that few, if any, in the Trudeau government have.

It is the same understanding of the natural landscape that every farmer, rancher, hunter, and angler share across Canada. No one cares more about the environment than those who live and work off the land.

Not only should we reject the failed "environmental" policies of the Trudeau Liberals - we should quit allowing ourselves to be lectured by the fake environmentalists in Ottawa.

MONEY MATTERS
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Tanner Lewis
Financial Advisor
Keystone Wealth | Aviso Wealth

HOW TO BUDGET FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

The festive season is a time of joy, celebration, and giving, but it can also bring financial stress due to increased spending on gifts, decorations, food, and travel. Planning and budgeting are essential to enjoy the holidays without facing financial strain. Here are some practical tips to help you budget effectively for the festive season.

Determine a holiday spending limit based on income and savings. Allocate budget categories like gifts, food, decorations, and travel for effective planning.

Make a list of gift recipients and holiday expenses, prioritizing immediate family and close friends to avoid impulse buys and ensure no one important is overlooked.

Start holiday shopping early for Black Friday and Cyber Monday deals to save money and have more options, avoiding overspending and limited choices from last-minute shopping.

Paying with cash or a debit card for holiday shopping can aid in budget management and debt prevention. Cash provides a clear spending limit, while a debit card linked to a checking account avoids credit card interest charges.

To save money, utilize deals, coupons, and cashback offers especially during holidays. Websites like Honey, Rakuten, and RetailMeNot can help find discounts automatically, leading to significant savings when used consistently.

Create homemade gifts and decorations for holidays to save money and add a personal touch. They can be more meaningful than store-bought items.

To save on costs for holiday meals, plan ahead, create a shopping list, take advantage of ingredient sales, buy in bulk, and consider potluck-style gatherings where guests contribute dishes for variety and cost-sharing.

To save on holiday travel costs, limit non-essential trips, book in advance for discounts, and celebrate locally or virtually with distant loved ones.

During the holidays, monitor spending against your budget. Adjust if overspending in one category by reducing expenses in another. Regularly reviewing and adjusting the budget helps stay on track.

To enjoy the festive season without financial stress, set a spending limit, shop wisely, use cash or debit, seek deals, make DIY gifts, plan meals carefully, and limit travel. This ensures a joyful celebration and a financially sound start to the new year.

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Proposed lawsuit settlement by Manitoba and provinces with Big Tobacco has major flaws that must be fixed

Submitted Daniel Paquette

PUBLIC RELATIONS, STOP BIG TOBACCO CAMPAIGN

The country's #1 most quoted big tobacco critic Rob Cunningham (lawyer and Senior Policy Analyst for the Canadian Cancer Society)

can give your audience an update (new information, what's at stake for Manitoba & Canada and a summary) on the closed-door lawsuit settlement with the tobacco industry worth over \$32 billion.

The Manitoba Government has publicly expressed support for the proposed settlement. Despite this, the Manitoba Government (specifically Health Minister Uzoma Asagwara and Minister of Justice and A.G. Matt Wiebe) can still support changes to the settlement.

While the lawsuits were the biggest in Canadian history, seeking more than \$500 billion, the proposed settlement at \$32.5 billion is not the largest. The residential schools settlement is larger. All of the major health charities are in agreement that important changes need to be made NOW before it's too late. Only 2 months time remains for the provincial governments to make changes that actually involve initiatives to reduce tobacco use.

A few weeks ago, a proposed tobacco lawsuit settlement between provinces, class actions and tobacco companies was announced. The total payments of \$32.5 billion made headlines. But the Canadian Cancer Society remains fundamentally concerned that there is nothing in the settlement to actually reduce smoking.

The Canadian Cancer Society is calling for important changes to be made before the proposed settlement receives final approval.

While the settlement includes \$1.0 billion in long-term funding to set up a Foundation, the mandate of the Foundation is extremely narrow, and is limited to research on the diagnosis and treatment of tobacco-related diseases. The Society wants the mandate of the Foundation expanded to include research and initiatives to reduce tobacco use.

Moreover, the Society is seeking to have a ban on all remaining tobacco promotion, as well as public disclosure of 8 million pages of secret, internal tobacco industry documents.

In Manitoba \$196 million is the Tobacco health care costs per year. Tobacco is the leading preventable cause of disease and death in Canada, causing 1,500 deaths in Manitoba and 46,000 in Canada each year. Current smoking prevalence in Canada is 11.4% (age 18+, 2023)

More detailed info on this campaign at www.stopbigtobacco.ca (including details of each provincial lawsuit, etc)

The steps ahead include:

- Dec. 12, 2024 -- meeting of creditors to vote on the proposed settlement. The creditors are principally the provinces, territories, and representatives of class actions and other individual victims.

- Jan. 29-31, 2025 - should the meeting of creditors vote to approve the proposed settlement, which is expected, then the Ontario Superior Court will consider whether to approve the proposed settlement at a court hearing likely to be held Jan. 29-31, 2025. At that stage, the proposed settlement would be able to be changed through direction of the Court, which is presided over by Ontario Superior Court Chief Justice Geoffrey Morawetz. The parties, such as provincial governments, can indicate support for changes, such as including measures to reduce tobacco use as part of the settlement.

The proposed settlement would provide:

- \$24.7 billion over time to provinces and territories, including \$6.3 billion up front, and the remainder paid out as a percentage of tobacco company profits, including 85% of net after-tax profits in the first five years, and then 80% declining to 70% in subsequent years, until the \$24.7 billion is paid;
- \$4.1 billion to the Quebec class action plaintiffs;
- \$2.5 billion to individual victims across Canada beyond the Quebec class action plaintiffs;
- \$1.0 to a Foundation to fund research for the diagnosis

and treatment of tobacco-related disease.

In the U.S., state governments filed lawsuits for health care costs against tobacco companies, lawsuits similar to those filed by provinces in Canada. The U.S. settlement established a foundation to reduce tobacco use that continues to this day; restricted tobacco industry marketing; and made public millions of pages of internal tobacco industry documents. However, none of these measures are in the Canadian settlement.

Background facts

- The tobacco industry has a long history of engaging in wrongful actions, including marketing to underage teenagers; advertising to women with themes of slimness and fashion; denying that smoking caused cancer and other diseases; concealing internal research and knowledge in a decades long cover-up; failing to warn consumers adequately; using misleading advertising, including for so-called "light" and "mild" cigarettes; and lobbying aggressively against stronger tobacco control laws. The tobacco industry has addicted children and caused debilitating disease and death on a vast scale.

- The provincial government lawsuits for health care costs

are the largest in Canadian history, collectively seeking more than \$500 billion in damages.

- In March 2019, the Quebec Court of Appeal awarded \$13.5 billion against the tobacco industry in the Quebec class action. This prompted tobacco companies to seek creditor protection in Ontario Superior Court, and the commencement of the negotiations process.

- The negotiations for a settlement have been going on for five and a half years.

- The three major tobacco companies in Canada are: Imperial Tobacco Canada Ltd. (owned by British American Tobacco); Rothmans, Benson & Hedges Inc. (owned by Philip Morris International); and JTI-Macdonald Corp. (owned by Japan Tobacco).

About the Canadian Cancer Society The Canadian Cancer Society works tirelessly to save and improve lives. We raise funds to fuel the brightest minds in cancer research. We provide a compassionate support system for all those affected by cancer, across Canada and for all types of cancer. Together with patients, supporters, donors and volunteers, we work to create a healthier future for everyone. Because to take on cancer, it takes all of us. It takes a society.

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

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

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

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


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

CONDITIONAL USE ORDER APPLICATION

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

VARIANCE ORDER APPLICATION

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



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

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

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

If you have any questions, please call at 1-888-919-1740 or email devofficer@midwestplanning.ca

Lisa Hamilton, DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, MID-WEST PLANNING DISTRICT

Stocking up on some favourite holiday moments

Oak Lake Santa Brunch

By Jessica Coulter
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Around 600 sausages, 600 pancakes, 60 dozen eggs scrambled, and 20 kg of hash browns were made into casseroles at the 29th annual Santa Brunch in Oak Lake at the Oak Lake Community Hall.

Santa Brunch is over, and the Oak Lake Museum Board and the Oak Lake PAC are pleased with the outcome. The numbers were down a bit from last year but considering the road conditions there are no complaints.

Guests of the Santa Brunch enjoyed a fantastic meal, a silent auction, games with their kids



Family and friends enjoyed a wonderful Christmas brunch with Santa.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

and pictures with Santa. Sandra Harris ran

the Santa Store for the children. Kids were able to buy a \$2 present to wrap and give to their parents on Christmas Day. "We were sad to say goodbye to our long-time wrapper extraordinaire, Nora Gompf, who decided to retire this year. She dedicated many years to serving our community in this way and we are very grateful to her. We were blessed with many donations from our generous community members: Maureen and Clarence Bailey, Esther Finlay, Kendra Stothers, Dave and Barb Smith, Alayna

Bailey, Judy Podobni, Candice Morris, Nora Gompf (on behalf of an unnamed donor), Ceri Johnson, Mary Cairns, and Wendy Taylor.

Sandra Harris, Santa Brunch organizer said, "We could not have managed without our dedicated helpers. Leah Lees and Lyvonne Stuart were our hard-working all-day wrappers, and Brenda Masson brought some of her grades 7 and 8 students to work in shifts. Their cheerful attitudes and willingness to pitch in were very much appreciated. Hopefully these young people will come

back next year to help. Elyaas Saban, Reinhardt Winters, Alex Branum, Bijou Brunette, and Sofi Harvey did a great job! They even brought some friends along to help pack up at the end of the day, but I didn't catch their names. They were appreciated anyway! As always, our "men with trucks", Greg Baker and Clarence Bailey, did the heavy lifting for us and our backs thank you. The little shop sold 164 gifts at \$2 each."

If I missed any names of donors or helpers I apologize profusely, and I thank you," noted Harris.

Pet Photos with Santa helps local family

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Pet family members are highly photogenic, as is Santa and Virden Animal Hospital is hosting their annual Pet Photos with Santa on Sunday, Dec. 1. This has become a yearly tradition at the animal hospital and an opportunity to support a family whose child is affected by health issues.

There's a cost of \$25 per photo pose with a package deal is also available; 100 per cent of the money will go to the Berg /Perrin Family for their son William, who requires special medical care.

William's mom, Esther Berg says "We are ever so grateful to have the Virden animal clinic support William. It's been a tough road since William got diagnosed."

William's story began on July 10, 2022 when he was born at 32 weeks, about seven weeks early, and spent two months in Brandon and Winnipeg NICU (neonatal intensive care unit).

Then, just one month before William's first birthday he experienced life-threatening seizures while at the babysitter's home.

Berg says, "We are very thankful for the quick actions of William's caregiver, who got William to the Virden hospital very fast. It was the scariest time of our lives while William was fighting to stay alive. He was life flighted and taken to the PICU (pediatric intensive care unit) at Health Science Center."

Diagnosed with cerebral palsy and with smooth brain, also known as lis-

sencephaly, William has a rare brain disorder that causes the brain's surface to appear abnormally smooth instead of having normal bumps and folds.

"It was a lot to take in and understand what this meant for us," says Berg. "William has had a tough road and continues to fight hard and overcome his hurdles."

He has spent many days in hospital receiving surgeries to improve his quality of life. Last year before Christmas, the little boy began to aspirate his food and was fitted with a permanent feeding tube.

Last summer a crisis arose for the two-year-old. "William needed a simple surgery to get his tonsils removed but they were wanting to do it when he turned three, as it is less of risk for complications." However, the situation became an emergency as his swollen tonsils began to restrict breathing.

"He was unable to gain weight and was consistently aspirating this caused us to run to the ER frequently and in the summer I'm so glad we finally got them to do the surgery as the day we brought him in he was struggling to breathe... and was turning blue..."

Spending weeks in the Winnipeg PICU William "recovered better than expected" and "is doing well now."

However, William still has to travel for appoint-



PHOTO BY VAH FACEBOOK

VAH provides a beautiful setting for a Christmas pet portrait.

ments and as expenses continue to mount up, the family is grateful for the fundraiser by VAH.

Berg says, "We still haven't gotten any government funding or disability for him so this will be such a blessing and help out so much. I don't have any coverage so his meds are very expensive." The family received approval to receive a wheelchair that they hope will arrive by spring as William approaches his third birthday and they're saving up to purchase a wheelchair accessible van.

Berg describes William as a sweet child and says, "He continues to surprise us on how quickly he can bounce back into that bubbly little boy that we all know so well. He has the biggest smile and loves his five other siblings very much."

Pet Photos with Santa are between 9am and 3pm on Sunday, and those simply wishing to donate may also do so through VAH.

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Resilient Ag Landscape Program (RALP) now open

By Shawn Cabak
 MANITOBA AGRICULTURE

The Manitoba government Producers can now apply for funding under two Beneficial Management Practises (BMPs) to make improvements on their farm. The objective of RALP is to increase the environmental resilience of agricultural landscapes by accelerating the adoption of beneficial on-farm land use and management practices that increase carbon sequestration. The two BMP's available for funding are for Agroforestry and for Grasslands and Grazing Management

In the Grasslands and Grazing Management BMP funding covers rota-

tional grazing infrastructure including permanent and temporary cross fencing and offsite watering, the conversion of marginal and high-risk annual cropland to permanent grasslands and increasing the composition of alfalfa or other legumes in hay or pasture.

Eligible applicants can be reimbursed for up to 75 per cent of total approved eligible costs, to a maximum of \$15,000 per project. For more details go to <https://www.manitoba.ca/scap/climatechange/carbon-sequestration.html>

For more information contact the Manitoba Agriculture office in Portage at 204-239-3353 or shawn.cabak@gov.mb.ca

Manitoba freezes 2025 Agricultural crown land lease rates

By Shawn Cabak
 MANITOBA AGRICULTURE

The Manitoba government is freezing the scheduled rental rate for agricultural Crown land (ACL) forage leases for the 2025 growing season to ensure ACL leases remain affordable for Manitoba cattle producers.

Freezing the 2025 forage lease and permit rates to match the 2024 rate will provide support to Manitoba producers. The timeline for producers will be extended to submit an appraisal report and apply for improvement costs to leased land for leases expiring this year.

In 2024, the province effectively froze ACL forage lease and permit rental rates. For 2025, the annual rent will be set at the same

rate as 2024 for ACL forage leases and permits, which means producers won't see an increase to the rate on their invoice for 2025.

Manitoba's agricultural Crown lands are parcels of land leased to producers for agricultural use including grazing, haying or annual cropping. Agricultural Crownlands are important public assets economically, environmentally and socially, and essential to supporting and growing the livestock industry in Manitoba and providing mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

StockTalk

Webinar on Dec. 12

Manitoba Agriculture is offering a series of livestock and forage webinars led by various presenters aimed to help Manitoba beef pro-

ducers best manage their cattle operations. Find out the latest news on research and production for beef and forage management by participating in these virtual sessions. The first session in November covered Backgrounding Tips and Rations and Smart Mineral and Vitamin Nutrition for Stronger Beef Herds. You can participate by watching on your computer, smartphone or tablet. All sessions are recorded so they can be watched at a later date.

Register for the StockTalk webinar by going to Manitoba Agriculture's homepage and clicking on the AgTalk Webcasts and videos link on the right hand side of the page.

The next webinar will look at Beef Cattle Cost of Production and Beef Cattle Nutrition for the Cow Herd.

Manitoba Agriculture has recently updated the cost of production for cow/calf, backgrounding, feedlot, hay and silage production. These can be found on Manitoba Agriculture's website or at your nearest MASC service center.

Other StockTalk presentations and topics will cover Cattle Marketing, MASC Forage & Livestock Insurance, Ask the Vet Calving Tips, Range and Pasture Health, Native Pasture Management, Forages to Improve Soil Health, Manitoba Agriculture Crown Lands Update, Western Canadian Cow/calf Survey & more.

For more information visit: www.manitoba.ca/agriculture/online-resources/stock-talk.html



It was definitely the horses that inspired me to want to take over and be more involved with the farm and the breeding program that my dad, grandfather, and great-grandfather worked on."

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Complete your MASC Harvested Production Report online

By Shawn Cabak
MANITOBA AGRICULTURE

Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation (MASC) offers a convenient method to submit your Harvested Production Report (HPR) online through myMASC. If you already have a myMASC account, get started by visiting www.masc.mb.ca. If you haven't yet signed up for a myMASC account, contact your MASC Service Centre for assistance. HPRs can also be filed by email, fax, or visiting a MASC Service Centre. HPRs for the 2024 crop year must be submitted to MASC by December 2, 2024,* to avoid a \$500 late filing fee. Several resources are available to help you file your HPR at www.masc.mb.ca/producer_packages. Dec. 2 is not only the deadline to file your Harvested Production Report but is also the deadline to:

- File your post-harvest claims;
- File your Declaration of Overwinter Colonies Report for Overwinter Bee Mortality Insurance;
- File to make changes to your 2025 Excess Moisture Insurance selections, including the Reduced Deductible Option and

- Higher Dollar Value Option;
- Full coverage seeding deadline for saskatoon plants (fall planting);
- File a late claim for your Select Hay Insurance, Basic Hay Insurance, Harvest Flood Option, Enhanced Quality Option, or Green-feed (subject to late fees).

For more information contact the Manitoba Agriculture office in Portage at 204-239-3353 or shawn.cabak@gov.mb.ca

Canadian cattle markets move higher

By Shawn Cabak
MANITOBA AGRICULTURE

Canfax reported for the week ending Nov. 22 - over the past three months, the fed market has been stuck in a five-dollar trading range (\$240-245/cwt). After moving sideways, the market has finally broken to the upside, hitting the highest point since mid-August. Dressed sales were reported from \$405-408/cwt delivered, cattle that traded were being scheduled for the first half of December delivery. Buying interest was noted from three different US packers with light to moderate volumes of Western Canadian fed cattle being marketed South.

Alberta auction volumes were 54,198 head, the first time in four weeks it has fallen below the five-year average. As the fall run wraps up, auction volumes are expected to further decline into December. Calves and stockers traded \$1-17/cwt stronger with only 8-900 lb steers trading \$3.43/cwt softer than last week. The fall run made a low in the third week of September, with the low touching last year's peak. Over the past decade, only 2014 and 2020 recorded price rallies this late into the year. Calves weighing 5-600 lbs saw the biggest rally last week, trading \$12.44-17.28/cwt higher than the previous week,

setting new annual highs at \$455/cwt for steers and \$416/cwt for heifers. The only other year in the last decade to see an annual high this late in the season was 2014. Higher feeder cattle futures contracts, a lower cost of gain and a declining Canadian dollar are factors adding strength to calf prices. Cattle marketed through auction marts last week in Manitoba

totalled 11,165 head. Year to date 284 000 head have been sold which is up one percent over last year. Prices on the week were higher on almost all classes of steer and heifer calves with 400-500 lb heifers seeing the biggest jump of \$0.18/lb. Compared to 2023, prices on heifer and steer calves are \$0.33- 1.02/lb higher depending on the weight.

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SPORTS

VCI JV GIRLS EARN SILVER AT HOME



SUBMITTED PHOTO

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Collegiate Institute junior varsity girls volleyball team earned the provincial silver medals at home. The Golden Bears only dropped one game while hosting the Provincial AAA JV Girls Volleyball Championship on Nov. 21-23. The lone black mark on VCI's record during

the exciting weekend of action was a finals loss to Linden Christian School of Winnipeg.

"They played a simple game, made quality serves, they have excellent ball control and work extremely well as a team," said VCI head coach Curtis Plett of what allowed the VCI team to be successful. He also noted, "They work hard in practice and understand that defence and digging is just as important offence and spiking. They are a tight group who love to have fun but understand when they need to focus on the task at hand."

VCI's strong squad earned a trio of all-star nods. Abby Murray, Michelle Waters, and Cassidy Hoemsen all were selected

as tournament all-stars.

In the championship match, an older Linden Christian team prevailed 25-19 and 25-19.

"Linden Christian played an outstanding game in the finals and our youth maybe showed a little with nerves," said Plett, who coached the team with Aevry Hayward.

The head coach said the final game was "electric."

"The stands were packed with friends and family from the community banging on drums and other noise makers," Plett said. "The opponents' parents also had several pails to bang on and a trumpet so there was a lot of back and forth. One of the coolest experiences I've had here at VCI."

In pool play, VCI compiled a 3-0 record. It defeated Léo-Rémillard, 25-23, 27-25; Stonewall, 25-13, 25-13; and Linden Christian, 25-23, 19-25, 15-8. In the quarterfinals, the Golden Bears beat Winnipeg's Faith Academy, 25-13 and 25-10. In a rematch versus Léo-Rémillard, VCI won its semifinal contest, 25-11 and 25-11.

Plett said the organizers received positive feedback about the weekend.

"The varsity girls hosted a banquet at Tundra Oil and Gas place for them Thursday night which was a success," he said. "They had a pink theme and it was neat seeing all the girls reactions when they entered the hall."

The Golden Bears were a young team this season. Four of its seven starters (six plus the libero) were in Grade 9. Only four of the 11 players were in Grade 10. Captain Ella McAdam led the young crew. Plett said, "she is the rock that keeps everything together on the court."

The young JV team won its home tournament this season and finished second in two others. Plett said:

"Enjoyed how these girls listened in practice, dedicated to working hard at it and applied it in games. That way we can move onto higher level type volleyball rather than revisiting mistakes. It was such a fun group with great personalities yet still had the competitive drive."

Members of the VCI JV girls team included: Michelle Watters, Libby Verran, Hanna Paton, Abby Murray, Ella McAdam, Mya Irvine, Kasidy Hoemson, Skylar Higginbotham, Mackenzie Hayden, Aiden Gonty, and Sadie Brown

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SPORTS

FAMILY HELPS REMPEL WIN MOTOCROSS TITLE

By Robin Wark
RIVERS BANNER

Family support and a little sibling rivalry helped propel Kenton's Gavin Rempel to a provincial motocross championship.

The 15-year-old son of Ben and Jen Rempel won the 2024 two stroke open junior title in the Grassroots Motocross series, which was formerly the Manitoba Motocross Association. Gavin, who turns 16 in December, was 66 points ahead of the closest competitors.

"It made me feel awesome because all the work I've put in finally paid off," he said of winning the championship.

In addition, Gavin finished third overall in the 250cc junior class. He said he was able to place well because, "I didn't give up, I gave it my all, even with back-to-back motos."

His older brothers - 17-year-old twins Keegan and Sheldon - also compete in the same classes as Gavin. In the two stroke open junior class, Sheldon placed fourth and Keegan ninth. Sheldon was 12th in the 250cc junior class.

"I enjoy riding in the same classes as my brothers because sometimes there are gnarly battles between us," Gavin said.

All Lepp is a fellow motocross rider and a friend. He said, "Gavin is the younger brother of two very fast brothers,

Sheldon and Keegan. I'm sure they have pushed him hard, especially the last couple years."

The Rempel siblings have been racing for three seasons now. Ben said:

"It's incredible watching the boys fall in love with this sport and you can tell in the way they race that they just have so much fun out on the track. They've overcome challenges and continue to push themselves and each other. The boys have developed an amazing network of friends that has become family at the track. Relationships that will last a lifetime. When they're not on the track racing, they're found at the gate encouraging younger racers or cheering on their friends."

In 2022, the brothers raced in both the 85cc 12-16 class and the supermini class. In the 85cc class, Keegan was fifth, Gavin sixth, and Sheldon seventh. In supermini that year, Keegan was sixth, Sheldon eighth, and Gavin 13th. The next season, in the 85cc class, Sheldon placed second, Gavin fourth, and Keegan fifth. As well, Sheldon finished fourth in the supermini class. Of racing, Gavin said, "I love to have fun and throw some whips with the fellas."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Gavin Rempel is catching some air.

Lepp praised the Remples' parents for their role in their offspring's success on the provincial motocross circuit.

"The commitment from his parents, Ben and Jenn Rempel, to keep three competitive bikes running and travel to a full season of eight races across the province is a huge commitment," he said.

Gavin appreciates his parents' support. He said they have done so much for him and his brothers in motocross.

"They always meet me at the gate for that last sip of water before the gate drops," he said. "My dad always has the bikes ready for a weekend of racing and my mom cooks the best meals at the track. I'm so thankful for both of them because I wouldn't race without them."

Virден Ag Society builds big new barn

Submitted

By BRENDA HUNTER

The landscape is a'changin', literally, at the Virден agricultural grounds as two smaller barns were demolished this fall and have since been replaced with one larger building, thanks largely in part, to a \$100,000 donation by Federated Coop.

The grant announcement and presentation were made at the Valleyview Coop AGM to the Virден Ag Society (VAS) directors Everett More and Darcy Strain, back in June of this year. With a full slate of summer events scheduled to be held at the ag grounds, plans to begin the project were deferred until fall.

In late September, demolition began on Barn 4 and 5. Since the entire roof of Barn 4 and the tin from Barn 5 was still in satisfactory condition, it was repurposed. Barn 4's roof was moved in two sections to Kings Crossing arena located just outside of Virден, and the tin went to another local resident. Clean up of the site was done within a week and preparations were made to begin construction of the new 124' x 42' x 14' build, just slightly larger

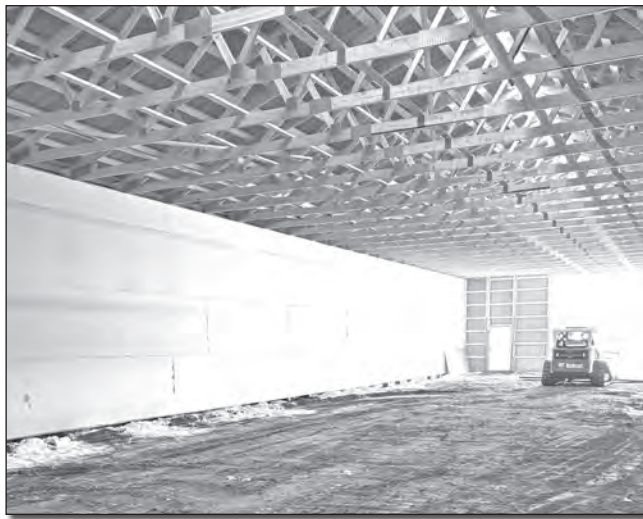


PHOTO BY BRENDA HUNTER

Interior view of Virден Ag Society new barn

than the existing Barn 6 at 100' x 54' x 14'.

According to VAS director, Everett More, it took only a few days from start to finish for Unrau Building Supply to erect the new shell with the first post tamped on Wednesday, Nov. 13 and the final sheet of Gyproc lining one of the inside walls (to satisfy fire regulations) placed on Nov. 21 with a weekend and a winter storm in between. The new build is already in use, filled with boats and RVs tucked away for winter storage.

Plans for spring include lining the inside of the new building with 6' of plywood, and outfitting it with portable 10' box stalls which

will make it more suitable for animal use. There is also some floor work to be completed. They were able to utilize the existing concrete pads from both the previous barns.

It is estimated that the project will require an additional \$100,000+ to complete. Fundraising efforts are underway to secure extra finances and sponsors. Winter storage rental will offset some of the immediate expenses, and the committee hopes to promote the new building as a means to accommodate the regular user groups and appeal to some new ones to attract a variety of events to the area.



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SPORTS

TEAM BROWN WINS U18 SPIEL

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

A young, talented, local curling rink recently won its first bonspiel

as a team. Team Brown earned the U18 Carman Spiel championship. Based out of the Virden Curling Club, the rink is skipped by 14-year-old Tiffany Brown of Miniota. Her twin sister, Lexi Brown, is the lead. Virden's Joelle Barkley plays third with Hannah Low of Maryfield, Sask., at second. Both are 15 years old.

"This was their first bonspiel win as a team and we hope it helps us as we get deeper into the season as we continue to work and improve," said Cory Barkley, the rink's coach.

The local team faced Steinbach's Giesbrecht rink in the championship game.

"The girls controlled the scoreboard the whole game and ended up having a tough little hit and roll to make to win the game coming home which we made to win the gold and end with a 5-1 record," said Coach Barkley.

The bonspiel was run by Curl Manitoba and hosted by the Carman Curling Club. It featured curlers ranging from age 14 to 17. The event had a six-team round robin format. Team Brown went 4-1 to earn its spot in the finals.

"The girls lost their first game of the six-team round robin handily but rebounded well," Coach Barkley said. "I think our recent time put in practicing on the ice and



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Skip Tiffany Brown, third Joelle Barkley, second Hannah Low and lead Lexi Brown recently won their first bonspiel together

starting our season at a couple of Manitoba U21 junior curling events prepared us well for this U18 bonspiel and the girls managed the ice well and seemed to pick up a bit of steam as the weekend went along as we gained some confidence."

The Team Brown members met through the Man-Sask Sliding Stars Junior Curling program. They played together "a little bit" in 2022 and "a little bit more" in 2023, including in the Virden ladies club league, Coach Barkley said. However, he said, "this would be their first year going on to the junior tour and starting their journey as a 'competitive' team on the Manitoba junior circuit. The girls will compete in the Manitoba U18 Women's Provincials in January 2025 at the Morden Curling Club and in the Manitoba U21 Women's Provincials in February at the Brandon Curling Club."

OIL KINGS LEARN LESSONS IN LOSSES

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden Oil Kings suffered their first losses of the season last week.

They fell to the visiting Minnedosa Bombers, 5-3, on Nov. 21. The Oil Kings lost 8-2 to the Hartney Blues on Nov. 24. As of Nov. 25, the Oil Kings led the THHL Western Division with a 4-2-0-0 record.

"The last two games we have come up short against good teams," Oil Kings coach and general manager Ryan Mathieson said. "We had some stretches of good hockey in both games but also learned some lesson on what it takes to beat the top teams in this league. This is a good time to be learning those lessons with a good chunk of the season left before playoffs. The group has confidence in their ability. We just need some time to play together and develop chemistry. We still sit atop the west and are in a spot where our outcomes decide if we stay there."

The Oil Kings were to host the Killarney Shamrocks on Thursday, after the Empire-Advance deadline. The team is off until Dec. 14 when it plays in Melita.

On Nov. 21, the Bombers and Oil Kings were knotted at 1-1 after the opening period. Virden went up 2-1 early in the second session, but Minnedosa scored twice to hold a 3-2 lead at the second intermission.

The Oil Kings tied things up at 3-3 less than two and a half minutes into the third period on a Jason Bowles marker. Matt Saler scored two third period goals. The first came on a powerplay and the final one was into an empty net, as the Bombers won 5-3.



PHOTO BY DALE DAVISON

Heavy traffic in front of the Minnedosa net left no room for Virden's high-scoring forwards, last Thursday at TOGP.

Besides Bowles, scoring for Virden were Jeremy Johnson and Tanner Koroscil. Bowles and Koroscil each had two points. Oil Kings goalie Eric Reid made 37 saves.

For Minnedosa, Devon Fordyce stopped 41 shots. In addition to Saler's goals, the Bombers received markers from Cayle Hutlet and Dallas Drysdal.

On Nov. 24, the host Blues jumped out to a 3-0 first period lead. Ty Lewis scored on a powerplay in the final 20 seconds of the opening period to get the Oil Kings on the board.

Hartney outscored Virden 4-1 in the second to hold a 7-2 lead. With the man advantage, Devon LeBlanc delivered Virden's second goal of the night. Hartney added a goal in the third.

LeBlanc and Bowles each had two points for Virden. Eric Reid stopped 25 shots.

The Blues' Mark Delargo netted a hattrick. Jesse Liner produced a pair of goals. Also scoring for Hartney were Zack McMillan, Nick Cowan, and Del Cowan. Justin Holder had 36 saves.

SPORTS

DRAPER HELPS OIL CAPS GET PAST BLUES

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Oak Lake Beach's Tyson Draper recorded two points last Friday night to help the Virден Oil Capitals extend their winning streak to three games.

The Oil Caps beat the visiting Winnipeg Blues, 3-1, on Nov. 22. The win improved Virден's record to 10-12-0-0. Against the Blues, Virден head coach Tyson Ramsey was most pleased with his team's ability to stick to its game plan and grind it out.

"The game certainly didn't start the way we wanted it to and so we had to reset after the first period, and I thought we were a little better in the second," he said. "Then in the third we just had to get real simple, I thought our third and fourth line guys were leaders in that department and we were able to grind out the win."

After a scoreless first period, Luke Robson scored his sixth goal of the season. The powerplay marker gave the Oil Capitals a 1-0 lead. With less than four minutes gone by in the third, the Blues' Adam Matar tied the contest, 1-1, on shorthanded marker.

Carson Wright scored the game winner for Virден at the 13:57 mark. Draper assisted on that marker and scored a goal of his own, unassisted, in the final minute.

"We started off a bit slow Friday night but picked it up as the night went on," Draper said. "We battled hard down low and won puck battles to get the win."

Virден goalie Nik Trakakis made 16 saves on 17 shots. Connor Graham had 27 saves for the Blues. Micky Gross of the U18AAA Southwest Cougars backed up Trakakis.

This was due to the Red Deer Rebels of the Western Hockey League recalling Oil Caps netminder Peyton Shore on Nov. 21. Ramsey said the team was working to have a goalie join the team by midweek.

In seven games with Virден, Shore had a 2.13 goals against average, a shutout, and a .920 save percentage. In a media release on the Rebels' website, owner, president and general manager Brent Sutter said:

"We want to thank head coach and general manager Tyson Ramsey and the Oil Capitals coaching staff for their understanding and helping Peyton's development. We're grateful for the opportunity to work with them through the Western Canadian Development Model."

The Oil Capitals were supposed to play in Selkirk on Nov. 19, but bad weather postponed that contest. The team was slated to visit the Winnipeg Freeze on Nov. 27, after the Empire-Advance deadline.

On Nov. 29, the team is in Dauphin to tangle with the Kings. The next night the squads play again in Virден. As of Nov. 24, Dauphin led the MJHL MGEU West Division



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

with a 16-6-1-0 record.

"Dauphin has a very balanced team," Ramsey said. "They can score, their defence is mobile and their goaltending is some of the best in the league. We will need to be sharp and fast and manage the puck well against them this weekend."

The Kings feature the league's top goalscorer in Cayden Glover. He had 19 goals through 23 games, as of Nov. 24. Naaman Hofer paced the MJHL with 22 assists. As of Nov. 24, Noel Englot led the Oil Caps with nine goals and 18 points in 22 games.

KINNAIRD RINK HEADED TO CURLING CLUB PROVINCIALS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On home ice, the Jay Kinnaird rink earned a berth last weekend into the Seagram's Whisky Curling Club Provincial Championship.

At the Seagram's Whisky Curling Club West 2 regional qualifier at the Virден Curling Club, Nov. 23-24, the Kinnaird rink won the B event. It defeated Kelly Marnoch of Carberry, 7-2, in the B final. The rink was made up of Kinnaird, Jimmy Hay, Kris Kinnaird, Tyler Strachan and Kevin Barkley. Kinnaird was 3-1 on the weekend.

"We had a slow start in our first game, but the team improved as the weekend went on," Kinnaird said.

Riverview's Mark Anderson rink won the A event to earn the other provincial berth. On the women's side, only one spot was up for grabs. The Stacey Irwin rink of Brandon won. The provincial championships will be held in April at the St. Vital Curling Club in Winnipeg.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The VCC's Brooks Freeman rink also competed at the regional qualifier. Kinnaird praised the local curling club's staff and volunteers for handling the ice, kitchen and more during the qualifier.

"This Curling Club level competition is meant to give an opportunity for league level curlers to compete to represent their province at a national championship," Kinnaird said. "Basically, giving regular league curlers who don't have the time to practice and travel the tour circuit (like the upper echelon teams who strive for the Brier or Scotties) a chance to compete to represent their province at a national championship."

The Manitoba provincial winner moves on to play at the Everest Club

Championships. Recently Team Zachary Wasylik of the Pembina Curling Club finished second at the men's nationals. Team Deb McCreanor of the La Salle Curling Club won the bronze medals on the women's side.

Lowes Qualified for Master Men's

The VCC's Barry Lowes rink won a provincial berth last weekend at the Manitoba Credit Unions Master Men's West 2 regional qualifier at the Brandon Curling Club.

The rink came from behind to defeat Jim Renwick of Brandon, 11-10, to earn its berth. The rink includes Brent Duncan, Randy O'Greysik and Darrell Elliott. It will compete Feb. 11-16 in Gimli at the provincial championship.

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SPORTS

EXPERIENCED OIL CAPS FORWARD PERSEVERED THROUGH INJURY

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Experience, perseverance and, in a way, David Ortiz have played a part in Daniel Tokariwski making important contributions this season for the Virden Oil Capitals.

The 19-year-old forward from Winnipeg is in his second junior hockey campaign after playing last season for the Estevan Bruins. Tokariwski had two goals and six points, as of Nov. 25, in 22 games of Manitoba Junior Hockey League action.

“Danny works extremely hard and has been one of our most consistent guys,” Virden head coach Tyson Ramsey said of the 6-foot-1, 188-pounder. “He manages the puck well and is reliable five-on-five and on the penalty kill. His junior experience has helped him understand how he needs to play and the role he fits into on our team. He is getting better everyday.”

Last winter Tokariwski suited up for the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League’s Bruins. He learned a lot about the junior level.

“Estevan really showed me what Junior A hockey in Canada is all about,” Tokariwski said. “It’s a whole different level, and it takes serious dedication and commitment to get better every single day. There are no shortcuts and no easy ways out. You can’t afford to take days off. Playing this game is a privilege, and the best way to show respect for it is by giving everything you’ve got, every day.”

Last season injuries limited Tokariwski to just 21 games. He had a goal and an assist in those contests. Tokariwski persevered to prepare himself for this season.

“Last year, the injury bug hit me harder than ever before,” he said. “I ended up missing about half the season, and it was the toughest adversity I’ve faced to this day. It was frustrating—every time I felt like my game was coming around, I’d get injured again. But I used that as a motivation to hit the gym harder than I ever have before this past summer, putting in the work to make sure I’m fully prepared for this season.”

In 2020-2022, Tokariwski played for the U18 AAA Winnipeg Thrashers. During his final season there, he saw three games of MJHL action as an affiliated player for the Portage Terriers. For the next season, Tokariwski headed south to study and play at Kimball Union Academy. The prestigious boarding school is located in Meriden, New Hampshire.

“It’s not every day you get the chance to move to a foreign country to pursue your dreams at 17 years old and I was fortunate enough that Coach (Tim) Whitehead believed in me and gave me that opportunity,” Tokariwski said.

During his season at Kimball Union Academy, Tokariwski and the team had the opportunity to play a contest at the famed Fenway Park baseball stadium. The outdoor event was held in conjunction with the 2023 NHL Winter Classic, which featured the Boston Bruins and Pittsburgh Penguins.

“It was an unforgettable experience,” Tokariwski said. “We were treated like pros and the whole event was top notch. We were the home team and got the privilege of dressing in the Red Sox clubhouse before the remodeling was done and I sat in David Ortiz’s stall, which was an absolute thrill. It is something I will never forget.”

Tokariwski is happy that hockey has led him to Virden.



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

He said he is very fortunate to be billeting with Lynnette and Dave Jordan. The people are what Tokariwski said he has enjoyed the most so far about his time in Virden.

“From day one, the organization has been incredible, and the community has made it so easy to settle in here,” he said. “The fans are amazing—they show up game after game, filling the arena and creating an atmosphere that’s unreal. It’s been such a great experience all around.”

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Obituary

IN LOVING MEMORY MINETTA BERYL REID



Minetta Beryl Reid (nee Traill) passed away peacefully Friday, October 11, 2024 surrounded by her family. Beryl was born in Sinclair, Manitoba October 2, 1937, to Stewart and Ada Traill, who instilled in her the values of compassion and community spirit. Beryl married her lifelong partner, James Douglas Reid, November 10, 1955.

Together, they raised 4 children, Brent, Ivan (Velia), Dean (Hilary), and Betty (Darwin Gray), spending much of their married life farming near Pipestone.

Beryl is survived by her 4 children, her 12 cherished grandchildren, and 18 precious great-grandchildren. Beryl's legacy of kindness and strength lives on in each of them. She is also survived by her brother Clark (Joyce) Traill, brother-in-law Jim Hillis, sister-in-law Gail Kellough, and many nieces and nephews.

Beryl was predeceased by her husband Jim Reid, parents Stewart and Ada Traill, parents-in-law Percy and Betty Reid, sisters Aveline Page and Donna Hillis, brothers-in-law Donald and Neville Reid, Bud Page and Bryan Kellough.

Beryl will be remembered for her gentle spirit, her strong faith, and her dedication to her family. Her memory will be forever etched in the hearts of those who knew and loved her.

A service to celebrate Beryl's life will be held at Pipestone Community Hall, Friday, November 29, 2024 at 2:30 p.m. At that time, family and friends will gather to honor and remember Beryl, who touched so many lives. For those who wish, the family has suggested a donation in memory of Beryl be made to Pipestone Cemetery.

Her family extends their deepest gratitude for the love and support during this difficult time. Rest in peace, Beryl. Your love and light will continue to guide us.



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IN LOVING MEMORY LLOYD CHARLES ROY READ



Lloyd was the second child of Roy and Madeleine Read born in Virden on September 19, 1949.

He was predeceased by his parents and older sister Rita Daniels.

From the time Lloyd was a young boy, he enjoyed grain and cattle farming with his dad on the family farm East of Virden.

Unfortunately he had to step down due to allergies.

That's when he started his job with the Department of Natural Resources, which soon became a passion for him and he enjoyed many years with them.

Lloyd's hobbies included hunting, getting up to the family cabin at Clear Lake and fishing with his parents.

Lloyd was also a very proud supporter of rodeo, horse showing and loved watching his daughter, Karen, followed by his granddaughter, Cassidy, when they competed.

Lloyd is survived by Pat Read, daughter Karen Gardiner and granddaughter Cassidy Gardiner, who was his absolute pride and joy, as well as many nieces and nephews.

Lloyd passed away at the Virden Health Centre on November 6, 2024 with his family by his side.

"Truly the best Papa anyone could have had"

Rural housing needs attention

RM of Wallace-Woodworth Nov. 21 council meeting brief

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Western Caucus is a group of 23 municipalities that meet several times a year to discuss issues they have in common and share ideas for dealing with them. One of the biggest challenges facing rural municipalities these days is a serious shortage of rural housing and the chilling effect this has on growth and development in the region. Wallace-Woodworth councillors recently attended a Western Caucus meeting where representatives of Manitoba Housing presented an update on the housing situation in rural municipalities.

The Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation (MHRC) operates 15,000 units in 195 communities and has a mandate to improve the affordability and accessibility of adequate housing for Manitobans, particularly those of low to moderate incomes or those with specialized needs. They also maintain and improve the condition of exist-

ing housing stock and stimulate activity in the housing market.

MHRC is a crown corporation responsible for delivering social housing in the province. When people apply for subsidized housing, they are added to a list and a regional office in Brandon or Portage offers them accommodation when it is available. Reeve Clayton Canart said that sometimes these dwellings require extensive repairs and others are reaching the end of their useful life. MHRC is beginning to demolish some of these buildings, and Coun Mark Humphries said, "Yes they are selling some of them and yes they are bulldozing some that aren't fit but they're not actually trying to rebuild or increase that so actually year by year the housing availability is reducing and there's no plans to actually increase it."

Canart added, "The government's goal is to get Manitoba Housing out of the housing business and have more non-profits take over those buildings. It's go-

ing to be hard for them (non-profits) with the cost of building new properties and the rent that gets paid on those properties."

According to Canart, some communities are frustrated because Manitoba Housing doesn't use local contractors when they're doing construction or maintenance. To be considered for these jobs contractors must be on a list. This requires paperwork that is difficult to manage for smaller operators, so MHRC is working with local firms to help them get the paperwork done to get on the central procurement list. Last year they added 42 new contractors to that list.

OTHER BUSINESS
Trans Canada West Planning District reported that year to date there has been building construction value of \$19.8 million with permit fees of \$112,000. October's construction was \$7,198,132 with permit fees of \$42,478.

Joint council meetings with the Town of Virden will be held March 24, June 23,

Sept. 22 and Nov. 17 in 2025.

The Westman Emergency Group functional emergency operations centre exercise will be held in Virden on Jan. 11 and Jan. 18. The functional exercise will focus on testing and evaluating the emergency capability of the organization in a simulated real time environment.

Municipal councillors will meet with provincial government ministers at AMM fall convention and plan to discuss the possibility of erecting an early warning road closed sign for the Trans Canada Highway at Moosomin.

The Elkhorn RTM childcare facility project is nearing completion and council approved payment to JQ Built of \$380,370.42 for the work completed up to Sept. 30, and of \$289,145.51 for the work completed up to Oct. 31. They also approved release of the hold back payment of \$402,367.43.

Ducks Unlimited Canada filed notice that they intend to file a caveat and a no break,

no drain conservation agreement for the land at SE 33-11-24, NE 34-11-24, SE 34-11-24

Council has established a schedule for budget meetings in 2025 that will begin the process earlier than previous years and Reeve Canart said, "I've been advocating that we get started early before so I'm looking forward to seeing the difference it makes in being done early."

COUNCILLOR REPORTS

Coun. Humphries reported on the library repairs saying, "We're waiting now to go out to tender for that project. Hopefully that will happen before Christmas."

Coun. Caldwell attended the Prairie Gateway Tourism meeting and reported they will hire someone to continue a social media presence over the winter. Alicia McDonald will do some winter photo shoots at Lenore and Kenton bonspiels to promote winter activities in the region. Jessica Schultz will be running the social media page from December until April.

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Town Office: 204-748-2440

Waste Disposal Grounds: 204-748-6033

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Viriden Christmas Cheer

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

Water Meter Reminder

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

Upcoming Council Meetings: December 3 & 17

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

LiveBarn

Now available at Tundra Oil and Gas Place.

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

Visit livebarn.com for more information.

Viriden & 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).

New water well coming online



PHOTO BY DALE DAVISON

This fall work continues on the new well to supply water to the RM of Wallace-Woodworth's public water system. At their Nov. 14 meeting council announced that work is now complete, and the well will be brought on stream for testing.

By Dale Davison EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The R.M. of Wallace-Woodworth public water system provides potable water to residents in the municipality. At the council meeting on Nov. 14, Reeve Clayton Canart announced that the new third well to supply water to the system is ready. Canart said, "By the first week of December, we should be mechanized and operational." He added, "We're going to run that well for a while and test it before we do any of the work to well number one."

TRANSPORTATION

Council authorized payment of \$9,428.74 to Southland Repair for work done on the CAT D6H, and \$6,188.49 to Sparks Sand & Gravel for the hauling of two-inch minus gravel delivered to the RM yard.

Payment of \$979.44 to Universal Doors for the replacement of a door panel in the Ward 2 shop was approved.

UTILITY

Repair of the water line serving Marvin Elder was determined to be part of the main line connection so the invoice for \$4,222.70 charged to the ratepayer was cancelled.

The invoice received from Bob McLeod of \$42,735 for the supply of 14,800 yards of shale for the new well access road was approved.

BY-LAWS

A bylaw to allow the RM to cancel taxes at their discretion and a bylaw to approve a rate increase for the Wallace-Woodworth water and waste utility both passed first reading.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Council approved the addition of the Elkhorn daycare facility to the Association of Manitoba Municipalities group insurance program and accepted the quote received from LRB Electric of \$6,960.47 for the Elkhorn daycare building inspection for one year.

Payment of \$4,306.90 was approved to Elkhorn Resort Spa and Conference, Riding Mountain National Park (RMNP) for the meeting space, 80 rental accommodations, food and beverages for the facilitated strategic planning session on Nov. 1-2

A development permit was requested for a building in Kenton to be used to operate a scrapbooking retreat location that could accommodate eight guests. The permit was approved on the condition that the dwelling is brought into conformance with Manitoba building fire codes and will receive a fire safety inspection every 36 months.

Community participation in municipal elections is important, community involvement in local government decision-making is essential to a healthy democratic system and community understanding of municipal government operations and the service it provides is important to participation at local level. Council proclaimed the week of Nov. 24-30 as Local Government Awareness Week.

Two Creeks Community Centre is creating a cairn to recognize the existence of the Ross Consolidated School. The building was

destroyed by fire a few years ago. The community committee will be responsible for all costs involved.

Under the Manitoba GRO program municipalities can apply for funding for capital projects involving public safety, disaster prevention, fire stations and major equipment, roads, bridges and solid waste management. The RM will apply for funding for the Woodworth fire truck replacement and the new Kola rink project.

RFNow Inc. installed a fibre internet line on the wrong side of Foxford Avenue in Elkhorn. As this location could interfere with the installation of water lines in the future RFNow will install the internet line in the correct location.

REPORTS

Coun. Humphries attended a library meeting and reported that repairs are on hold awaiting

Coun. Kinnaird reported the Virden airport has engaged Air Andrew as the new maintenance supervisor since the current manager, John Stowe, is retiring.

Coun. Lachapelle attended a handi-van meeting where the committee reviewed grants that had not yet been received. They would like to install more seats but the current limit is for nine seats including the driver with two seats required for each wheelchair space.

Coun. Caldwell attended Kenton Remembrance Day service where Gary and Holly Draper made a moving presentation describing Canada's contribution during the two World

Wars. The Drapers made a journey to Europe and captured powerful images that added context to the story they told. Caldwell said, "This was the most impactful Remembrance Day presentation that I have been to for a very long time." She noted that there were no representatives from either the provincial or federal government present and suggested those governments should contact a local person to represent them in the future.

Reeve Canart attended a fire board meeting and said that since recent donations from area businesses for the fire truck began there has been broad public interest in further donations.

The fire department has engaged in public educa-

tion events like a simulated tank fire exercise and a station tour. Fire chief Tyson Van Eaton went to VCI to explain to high school students what his job was about. He also delivered some certificates to businesses who donated money towards public education materials for schools.

Canart attended the Virden business lunch where he saw a presentation from the RCMP on cybercrime. He said that internet scammers are "actually going to people's houses and will drive them to the cash machine to get the cash out." He added, "Now, on the dark web there's templates of Manitoba's driver's licenses and templates of passports." A picture can be placed on one of these templates creating a false ID.

Canart congratulated Coun. Humphries for playing at the Elkhorn Remembrance service, and

said, "It's far more moving hearing the trumpet live than it is to have it playing on the speakers."

Coun. MacDonald attended the Woodworth fire board meeting and said the department held an open house where there were stations for kids to put out a fire with a fire extinguisher and watch the Jaws of Life at work. Firefighters had a training day where they did a house burn.

Coun. Stambuski attended a meeting of the committee planning a new community facility in Elkhorn. She said the committee is looking for "some engagement from specific user groups... for a list of all the things that the building needs to provide (like) the size of the hall, accessibility, shared spaces and efficient activity rooms." The committee is going to tour other facilities in the area and are starting a fundraising committee.

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

BEARS FOOTBALL TROPHY A FIRST SINCE 2015



PHOTO BY DALE DAVISON

Fola Fashola #14 with VCI Golden Bears football team cuts around the Neepawa Tigers defence in the B-side semi final. He scored the most touchdowns in the Rural Manitoba Football League and is Viriden Golden Bears' nominee for most outstanding offensive player

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

On Nov. 3, the VCI Bears football team finished their season on a strong note taking the 2024 consolation championship and the Murray Black Cup.

Coach Mark Wakely has made noises about stepping down as coach, but that's not for sure. Viriden Collegiate Institute's principal, Mark Keown is hoping he'll change his mind. Keown said, "Mr. Wakely has been a dedicated and very professional educator at VCI teacher for my entire time here at VCI (12 years). On top of that he has always been committed to supporting our extra-curricular activities coaching multiple sports during his time at VCI - golf, hockey or football. Mark always puts in the extra effort making sure things are organized and always provides a positive role model for our students to play for and look up to."

In an email interview, Wakely admitted he has his eye on retiring from teaching. As for coaching Bears football? "Not sure whether or not I will still coach next year," he said. A veteran coach with the VCI Golden Bears ever since 2008 Wakely said, "I definitely enjoy the sport... you get to know the players at a different level than when you just teach them." He added, "I will see what the new year brings."

Following the Bears' win, Marc Talbot, also a Bears coach for the past two years, gave a run down of the season. He pointed out that conditioning is an important component. "Something that most people probably don't realize is that the football season starts well before school starts," said Talbot. "While most students are enjoying the last couple weeks of summer, the football team is out on the field, in the 30-degree weather, practicing three times a week. The Golden

Bears football season officially started Aug 19... when the coaches start organizing the practices. The seniors of the team were able to get some dedicated teammates to come out three times a week during the summer heat and get some training in."

FASHOLA MOST TOUCHDOWNS

The Bears up and down season finished with a 3W-4L regular season record putting them in fifth spot. "The three games we won, the opponents fought hard but their young rosters were no match for our

team. The four games that we lost, were hard fought battles. The boys worked really hard, but came up short of a victory."

The Bears were in top spot in the B-side Championship and would host the semi final match against Neepawa. "We had a good week of practice, and it showed on game day with a 77-0 win."

The Bears then hosted the consolation final against Park West where Viriden played hard to a 78-0 win for their first Murray Black Cup since 2015.

Talbot noted the team's challenges included some injuries. "Most noticeable, was to our starting quarterback Xander Penner, who injured his throwing wrist in week four. Deegan Flannery did a good job stepping in and keeping our team competitive. It also gave him experience that will come in handy next season."

But he said the team's biggest challenge was their roster - only 26 players - so some players were on the field a lot and fatigue became a factor in the later parts of the game especially during the fall's hot weather.

Talbot is enthused about next year and says, "We have some great football talent here in Viriden. I look forward to continuing our work here building a football culture."

Final stats of top players:

Fola Fashola - 67 carries for 1296 rushing yards and 20 touchdowns. Most rushing yards and touchdowns in the league.

James Flannery - 75 carries for 572 yards and 7 touchdowns. The 572 yards was good for 4th in the league.

Preston Talbot - 83 tackles, 18 tackle assists. Most in the league.

Mitch Draper - 67 tackles, 24 tackle assists. Second most in the league.

"Overall, I'm really proud of the players. They have come a long way in the past couple years..." Talbot adds, "I look forward to meeting new players to join us and help us defend our title."

Remembering his own football days, Coach Wakely said he would like to see the Bears again win the Doug Steeves Championship. "It would have been nice to have won the main trophy which Viriden has not done since I was in grade 12 back in 1986. We actually won it back-to-back in 85 and 86."

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Please bring your own bingo markers.

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

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Alice Kingdon

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