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MAY 22, 2026 | EMPIRE: VOL 121 NO 40 / ADVANCE: VOL 140 NO 42 | PUBLISHING FRIDAYS



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Virден Area Foundation, Inc. Keeps on Giving



Virден Area Foundation Directors, Staff, Grant Recipients and Volunteers join together for community betterment.

PHOTO NANCY JO MOLLER

By Nancy Jo Moller
EMPIRE ADVANCE

Local community members braved the wind to attend the Virден Area Foundation, Inc. Grant night, Thursday, May 14 at the Sacred Heart Parish Centre. This foundation was created by the generosity of Jean Thomas. Jean and her husband Murray had purchased the Virден Pontiac Buick dealership in early 1950. Unfortunately, Murray passed away in 1974 and Jean in 1988. As they did not have any children, Jean had spoken in length with a lawyer on how the estate should be dealt with upon her passing. It was stated that the estate valued at approximately \$600,000 was to be bequeathed to the Town of Virден. The stipulation was that funds were to be used for a community project of lasting nature. The council at that time set infrastructure in place for the present-day Virден Area Foundation, Inc (VAF) to be created. In 1993 the first grants were awarded based on local applications. The initial start up fund is never spent, interest and yearly donations from local residents and businesses fund the annual awards. The VAF also applies to the Thomas Sill Foundation for additional funds that can be awarded. These funds enable VAF to select organizations that don't qualify for

their rigid funding requirements to receive Thomas Sill Funds. This year slightly over \$115,000 is being granted through the generosity of both foundations.

With Brad Hayward as the Master of Ceremonies for the night, we were reminded how human all of us are in life. The evening program started with entertainment from Kennedy Routledge. The strings of her violin came to life as she entertained us. A video of previous funded projects was shown to help envision how important and far reaching these grants have been to our local communities.

The Legacy of Linda Hayward was discussed, she had bequeathed \$18,000 to be invested with a scholarship given to a graduate of Virден Collegiate Institute who is planning to attend post secondary studies in Nursing.

The Legacy of Lara Densmore was discussed in a speech written by her daughters Haley Plett and Ashton Densmore. Because of the emotion of this legacy, Brad Hayward was asked to read the speech written by her daughters. Lara's name was synonymous with Funshine Day Care Centre for many years. Her impact there cannot be measured. A scholarship is awarded each year to a student entering education for childcare or teaching.

Recipients from Virден Area Foundation, Inc. this year are:

- River Valley Historical Society \$5,000
- Royal Canadian Legion Elkhorn Branch \$5,000
- Virден Minor Ball – Pitching Mound Project \$6,700
- Wellview Golf Course \$7,000
- Miniota Community Centre – Facility Enhancement Project – Phase III \$7,000
- Virден Band Program Revitalization \$8,000
- Virден Pickle Ball Club \$10,000
- Accessible Playground Redevelopment – Mary Montgomery School - Phase II \$25,000

Recipients of The Thomas Sill Foundation grants are:

- Virден Minor Ball \$2,500
- Westman Nursing Home \$2,000
- The Sherwood Home \$2,000
- Elkwood Manor \$2,000
- Virден Handi Van \$4,500
- Virден & District Swimming Pool \$4,500
- Border Regional Library – After School Programming \$4,764

After the presentations, refreshments and delicious kabobs were enjoyed by the crowd. Great to see how a community business function can turn into an informal visit.

Inside...



HERB AND ZELDA ADVENTURES CONTINUE P8-9



FIRESIDE FOLLIES - DON'T MISS THE SHOW P7

Goulter students earn trophy, entertain seniors



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Mrs. Simpson's Gr. 3-4 class went to Princess Lodge on May 14 to entertain the seniors with their festival speech art. Residents chuckled as the students performed their dramatic adaptation of "Stephanie's Ponytail," a Robert Munsch classic. Their performance won the Town of Virden Shield at Virden Music & Arts Festival.



Mrs. Simpson's Gr. 3-4 class stopped in to the CP Historic Train Station after performing at Princess Lodge, to see their trophy which is on display upstairs. They are pictured with the Town of Virden Shield.

Hidden Treasures Donations



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Hidden Treasures in Reston, Judy Lochhead (L), presenting a donation to Reston Rec Plex, accepted by Andrea Guthrie (R) on March 11, 2026 at the Annual General Meeting. The \$2,000 will go towards a floor washer.

A cheque was also sent to STARS for \$5000.

Music for Arts' sake raises \$1400



Music for Art concert in the AUD Theatre and Westman Jazz Orchestra's debut concert of which Teagan Verner (Front R) is baritone saxophonist.

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

When the arts require funds, as they often do, what better way to fundraise than to provide fun for the arts community and the public through a concert?

Four bands took to the AUD stage Tuesday, May 12 for a concert featuring Brandon Community Band, Melita Jazzers, Vincent Massey Senior Jazz Band and the Westman Jazz Orchestra.

It was a significant event, not only for the money raised for student bands and for Arts Mosaic, but also because it provided a beautiful venue for the bands to perform in.

The fundraiser was the brainchild of Teagan Verner, an Arts Mosaic board member, visual artist and saxophone player.

A champion for young musicians Verner says performances by the Brandon Community Band and Westman Jazz Orchestra demonstrate that music can remain a life-long passion and activity beyond school band programs.

Verner also emphasized the value young musicians gain from live performance experience, particularly

high school students. "A lot of the time you spend a few months with your tunes, only to get to perform them once, maybe twice," she said, noting there are few concert opportunities during the school year.


With this successful fundraiser behind her she breathed a sigh of relief.

"I was a woman of many hats for this concert!" And she was. The door prize or more accurately, the seat prize (advance ticket holders were in the draw), was Verner's large canvass painting featuring her baritone sax, won by Della Lee. A

great reward for coming to support the Brandon Community Band.

"I'm so grateful for everyone's collaboration for this concert, and so glad all of the bands got this opportunity," says Verner.

In all, about \$1,400 was raised after expenses were paid. That mean \$700 for Arts Mosaic and \$350 for each school band program. Of note, the Crocus Plains Neelin band program (represented by Brandon Community Band) declined their portion in favour of it being donated to another band or to Arts Mosaic.



50th Anniversary

JOIN US!

50th Anniversary Tea
Wednesday June 3rd
Starting at 1:30 pm

2:00 pm Speeches
2:30 pm Cake and Refreshments

We would like to invite everyone to join us and have a tour of our library!

Reston District Library
220 4th Street, Reston • 204-877-3673



MANITOBA TRUCKING AND CAREER EXPO
Presented by Manitoba Trucking Association

SATURDAY, MAY 30 • 9:00 AM TO 4:00 PM
Red River Exhibition Park (3977 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg)

FREE TO ATTEND

CAREER FAIR • TRADE SHOW • SHOW AND SHINE

THE MANITOBA PROFESSIONAL TRUCK DRIVING CHAMPIONSHIP

Tenant sought for former church building

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Virde's former Baptist Church building has sat empty for over two years. It's

waiting for the right major tenant.

Mayor Tina Williams reported to council on the meeting she attended at the Baptist Church. It was in October of 2023 when the Baptist Church community in the Virde area decided they were too few to continue and their building at 403 Nelson St. S.E. was closed.

On April 16, about 40 people from community groups along with two representatives from Canadian Baptists of Western Canada Foundation, the owners of the property, met to discuss the future of 403 Nelson.

Building inspector Cory Nixon and Virde's economic development manager Erica Darvill also attended the meeting.

Mayor Williams said a wide variety of interested people, "from the dance club to people who were homeschoolers" and a seniors group were "trying to come up with some ideas to do with [the church building]."

Christine Reid, Vice President of Operations for CBWC attended the meeting. In a recent interview she confirmed the plan for the building to become a multi-use hub that would be available to the community.

"It doesn't sound like there is an appetite for anybody at this point to buy it. It's a pretty significantly large building," Reid said, explaining that the assessed value of the church building is over \$480K.

"I think what we heard when we were out there was there are a bunch of people that would be interested in renting space in the building for various community events, so I think we're proceeding down that path."

She continued, "There might be a church that meets on Sunday and then there might be a community group. We have spoken with SAIL.... They might have community dinners in there and so, basically it would be a multi-purpose building."

Reid listed other possible uses such as daycare, choir practices, theatre practices, dance classes and counselling offices.

"A church home group could meet there so that, you know, people aren't moving all their stuff around all the time."

"Obviously it takes a little bit more thinking through, having kind of a multi-purpose building, but it's just that's what we heard and that's what we came away with."

The church organization hopes to find a local tenant / manager for the building.

Mayor Williams told council, "I don't know if anything concrete has come out of that (meeting) yet, but we will continue to follow up with them because they're trying to find a purpose, maybe a shared purpose," she said.

Virde unveils \$14.38M budget for 2026

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

For 2026 the Town of Virde expects to operate on a \$14.382 Million budget which

includes a capital expenditure plan of \$7.201M. About 30 projects will service necessities like the fire department, water treatment, garbage services, airport and land development as well as many recreation upgrades.

With mayor and council present on May 7, Chair of Planning and Finance Marc Savy introduced the presentation. He said the budget and tax bylaw would be heard on May 12 to provide an opportunity for the public to hear the budget plan and for any changes that were needed.

The next week, at a Special Meeting on May 12, the Financial Plan was approved and the tax bylaw received first reading on that date, further readings to follow.

Three members of the public were present at the public hearing where Chief Financial Officer Anna Macksymchuk presented the Financial Plan with a PowerPoint display. A 13-page guide was available for the public as well as the line by line 14-page financial document.

Chief Administrative Officer Neil Smith was away at a planning conference on the evening of the budget presentation. However, he had created a colourful presentation telling where Virde's finances come from and how they are being spent and what the plans are for the future. That piece of informative artwork you can find on the Town of Virde Facebook page.

This simplified FB reel tells that Virde's revenue is "beautifully balanced" with taxes accounting for 39% of total revenue. Transfers from Accumulated Surpluses and Reserves provide 31% and 30% is from Other Revenue.

The Town has debt debentures to cover water and sewer extensions, treatment plant upgrades in two phases, the new well and pipeline, as well as street paving and it appears to be well within the budget's capacity to handle. Debit issued and authorized as of Jan. 1 is \$8.769M.

The overall 2026 budget is lower than the 2025 budget. Infrastructure repair and expansion is planned for with the 2026 transportation services budget is almost \$94K over that of last year.

The picture is positive. Although assessments (at large) are up by 0.9%, mill rates (at large) are up only slightly, from 22.020 in 2025, to 22.056. So, home taxation will be up slightly.

Financial documents for 2026 budget are available online and at the Town Office.

VCI artists show talent, training

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

ArtsMosaic's Train Station is an exciting place to visit with unique handmade items for sale in the market, and gallery walls are covered with students' imaginative talent until the end of May.

In their year-end display, artists of Virde Collegiate Institute have many forms of visual art in the gallery including a few sculptures, colourful pieces, pencil and charcoal works as well.

Cody McPhee teaches art and global issues classes. His art, particularly sports figures, is well known.

The work from VCI classes, Gr. 9-12 not only shows students' talent and tastes, but includes dimensional drawings showing perspective studies.

Until the end of May, there's still time to drop in and take a look at VCI students' work.



PHOTO BY ANNE DAVISON

Exciting art by VCI students: The archer (artist not named), the raven by Shaelyn Asselstine (Gr. 9) and bottom piece is by Julia Dik (Gr. 11).

VIRDEN LEGION FISH FRY
IN THE LEGION HALL

Sunday, May 24, 2026 ~ 4:30-6:30pm
For a good feed of fish the cost is \$20
It'll be a good supper!
Tickets at the Legion May 22nd
And likely at the door on May 24th
Room for only 150 guests.

Legion **100**
1926 · 2026

SOUTHWEST ASSINIBOINE CHAPTER OF RETIRED TEACHERS (RTAM) ~ JUNE DAY TRIP

June 4th 2026 Sign up by May 27th 2026
Bus Tour leaves Virde Legion 8am
Brandon Smitty's, Shilo Base, Royal Canadian Artillery Museum, Shady Lane Tea House, Doll Museum, Commonwealth Air Plan Museum
Back to Virde 6-7pm

RTAM members - \$100.00
Non-members - \$160.00
Brandon - \$135.00
Call Beth: 204.748.7570

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ENBRIDGE

Public Notice is hereby given that Enbridge Pipelines Inc. (Enbridge) intends to conduct the following Pesticide Program from June 1, 2026 – November 15, 2026, to control noxious weeds on Enbridge ROW's, temporary workspaces, stations, and various facilities along the Enbridge Mainline and Bakken corridors. The herbicide active ingredients to be used include:

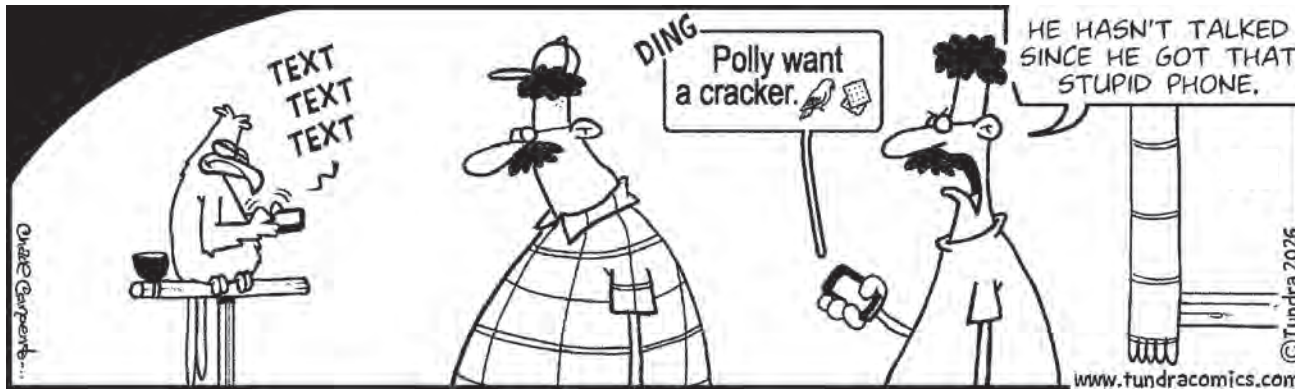
- MCPA Ester
- Saflufenacil
- Carfentrazone-ethyl
- Pyraflufen-ethyl
- Bromoxynil
- Clopyralid
- Glyphosate
- Dicamba
- 2, 4-D
- 2, 4-DB
- Aminopyralid
- Propyzamide
- Indaziflam
- Chlorsulfuron
- Fluroxypyr
- Aminocyclopyrachlor
- Aminopyralid
- Diflufenopyr
- Metsulfuron-methyl
- Picloram
- Mecoprop-P
- Adjuvant

Any person may, within 15 days after the notice is published, send a written/email submission to the department below, regarding the control program or register with the department their written objection to the use of pesticide next to their property.

**Environment and Climate Change
Environmental Approvals Branch
14 Fultz Boulevard (Box 35)
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3Y 0L6
pesticideusepermit@gov.mb.ca**

Tundra

By Chad Carpenter



And that was the May Long...

Okay, by the time one reaches the age of 80 there are a goodly number of May long weekends in the memory bank. And some are remembered. I want to say that this year, because May started on a Friday, the long weekend came a bit earlier than some other years. Oh, it's always the third weekend, however often it will be the twenty something not the teens. Those few days would have made a difference in the temperature. Right?

Way back when I was in high school it was traditional to have the divisional track and field meet the Friday before Victoria Day. The Graysville Consolidated School did not have a gymnasium. We did have a basement room that was an auditorium until it was needed for classroom space, and another room that allowed for a table tennis set up, but no gym where one could actually get fit. The good thing was that we were a bunch of farm kids and life provided us with plenty of exercise— for fitness and stamina. There were some years when the weather before the girls day had not been gentle enough for us to truly hone our athletic abilities, and we still did pretty darn good in the competition against other schools. And then there were years when the temperature had been high enough that practice was not a delightful time. Track and field days were highlights for me, a touchpoint for memories, so I can quite accurately recall the highs and the lows.

When the May long weekend began to feature in camping trips there was another memory maker. One anticipated getting out in nature, surrounded by sky and water, trees and wind, bonfires and weiner roasts. Some years you got that in plenty and other years it was a stint in survival mode. A co worker, back in the 90's, had been enticed to co camping with her partner. Their sleeping accommodation was the old cab over truck camper. The lovely tin box perched on the half ton. Telling us about her trials on Tuesday morning, Brenda maintained that as she shivered and shook, breath frosting the morning air, she was convinced that hell had, indeed, frozen over! I think some campers this past extended weekend may have felt the same... God bless and protect the tent dwellers!

The past weekend was filled with family and chosen family. Two family members planned and orchestrated a gathering— the excuse being that I am now 80. (I did not want loved ones to feel obliged to travel back in the cold of February— rather like Christmas in July for some families!) We ate far too much, played games for lovely long hours, swapped stories— some of which I had never heard before— and refreshed family ties. Six of the grandchildren and six of the great grands joined a gaggle of nieces and nephews and their children. So much love and fun... and none of us remembered to take pictures!

Another May long weekend is now in the books. Every one different, not all significant. Rather like every day in that aspect. But each one a gift.

Weigh the decisions carefully

Election time is coming and this column is about our communities' future.

Our three papers covers every town and municipality from West-Lake-Gladstone on the east to RM of Wallace-Woodworth the west. They also cover RM of Ste. Rose to the north all the way to the RM of Pipestone, Carberry and Elton on the south end including the City of Brandon.

The next general municipal election is Wednesday, October 28, 2026. Voters need to be planning ahead as I have been told, and I sense, many councillors, reeves and mayors will not be seeking re-election.

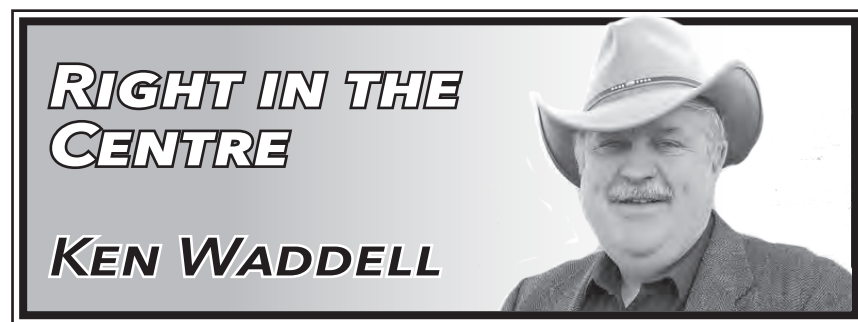
Here are some of the common election issues we have observed and heard about.

The most commonly expressed concern is the condition of the roads. Some are good or at least OK but many are bad, really bad. Like, I mean dangerously bad with potholes and rough areas that are big enough to swallow the front end of a car or light truck. It costs a lot of money to build and maintain roads but it also takes a lot of foresight and planning.

In areas faced with paved roads, the problems are even more expensive to fix.

Around the year 2000, when I was first in the mayor's chair at Neepawa, I attended a national conference. At the conference was a trade show where a pavement repair machine was demonstrated that had a large spray boom on the front that would blow the water and loose gravel out of the cavity, spray in sticky oil and gravel and pack it down. Great idea, it works well. It's not cheap, but it works well. I, among others, brought that idea back to our councils but it took over 20 years to adopt usage of the machine.

The machine is seeing some local use now. The big advantage is that



local staff can run the equipment, potholes can be filled any time during the non-winter season and municipalities aren't squeezed into months long and even years long waits for the scarce paving companies.

These machines are costly, but roads are important, so how long do taxpayers need to wait to see a solution to what is arguably one of the most important problems facing them? These machines cost less than a new farm combine, so I think it's high time to have towns look at this solution. Maybe two or three towns could buy a machine jointly and then, God forbid, they could cooperate on fixing a common problem.

Around our papers' coverage area are problems that are locally specific. Virden has a huge and long term problem with water supply and quality. No doubt it will get solved, but at whose cost? The issue is being contested in court right now. The RM of Rosedale is in the midst of a huge controversy about the proposed wind farm that will take years to iron out. The RM of Pipestone is also involved in an energy controversy over a carbon capture project and both projects are promising huge financial costs and returns. Personally, I am skeptical on the returns part.

Recreation is always an issue. RM of Rosedale has an uncompleted skating rink at Kelwood. Neepawa's Yellow-head Centre is one of the oldest in our

coverage area and quite frankly, one of the poorest of condition facilities. The YHC is not municipally owned and one of the main reasons it's so far behind other towns is that it does not have anywhere near sufficient support from the Town of Neepawa and the surrounding RMs.

There are parts, if not all, of our coverage area that need more housing and more daycare spaces.

So, across our coverage area there are both unique and common problems. If communities are to grow or even survive, they need good councils and staff. One of the obstacles to getting good councils and staff is all the abuse that is shoved their way. Here's a few clues to change that. Be nice, discuss and criticize ideas not people.

And remember, to put it all in context, pick up your local history book and check out all the towns and villages that have died or are on their last legs. Many times a community's demise could have been prevented. It's up to us folks. Think local, live local, shop local. When your mind strays to other centres, just ask yourself how many times Costco, Amazon or Facebook has sponsored your kid's ball team or 4-H Club. And don't forget the price of gas!

More than ever before, we need to think and act locally. That's the key, think and act!

Disclaimer: The views expressed in this column are the writer's personal views and

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Let No One Be Alone - Rx for Connection

Submitted

By KRISTA PEDERSON

May 3-9 was Let No One Be Alone week. This initiative reminds us to reach out to others who may be feeling lonely. Manitoba Association of Senior Communities, MASc, sent out prescription cards for a fun way to engage.

Across our SAIL communities, Elkhorn, Oak Lake, and Virden, many participated, and more than a dozen were entered into a draw for a \$100 gift card.

The challenges were as easy as checking in on someone who may be feeling alone, inviting someone in for coffee or a visit, attending a local community activity, or going for a walk with a neighbour or a friend.

Sometimes we're the ones feeling alone, and that can encourage us to reach out to others.

There were a few community activities to attend that I hope many took advantage of!

Our special meal at Princess Lodge on Wednesday was a Mother's Day brunch. The "entertainment" was

the Let No One Be Alone challenge. Lots of people stayed afterwards to visit, some went to play cards at New Horizon's Centre. Lil Wadham was the winner of our door prize.

It's BBQ season, so hopefully the wind did not keep folks away from St. Paul's on Friday. Continue to keep your eyes open for opportunities to reach out. And one welcome side effect of taking this prescription... you are less alone yourself, and can feel the benefits of community and connectedness.

Town Office: 204-748-2440

Virden Landfill: 204-748-6033

Tundra Oil & Gas Place: 204-748-2736



Animal Control: 204-851-5881

Facility Bookings: 204-748-2440

Emergency After Hours: 204-851-5540

Upcoming Council Meetings ~ June 2 & 18 ~ Council Meetings start at 7:00 PM

Summer Day Camp registration open 2026 Swimming lesson registration open

Email Tara Davies should you have any questions at: events.program@virden.ca

Tax Prepayment Discounts

The Town of Virden offers tax prepayment discounts as outlined below to taxpayers wishing to pay an installment or installments on their 2026 property taxes.

Those wishing to prepay may pay an amount or a series of amounts that in total does not exceed the amount of their 2025 property taxes. The discount rate is equivalent to an effective annual interest rate of 3%.

Month of Payment	Discount Rate	Savings on \$1000.00
May	1.25%	\$ 12.50
June	1.00%	\$ 10.00
July	0.75%	\$ 7.50

Tax prepayments made in the months of August, September or October will be accepted at par and can be made via Online Banking, Telephone Banking, E-Transfer, or through our Drop Box located at the main doors of our office at 236 Wellington Street West.

Notice of Registration of Prospective Candidate for General Municipal Elections

Town of Virden

Please be advised that a general municipal election will be held on October 28, 2026.

Prospective municipal election candidates must register with the Senior Election Official (SEO) during the registration period before they may begin to accept contributions, incur expenses, fundraise or borrow money for their campaign.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I will be receiving candidate registrations:

For the office of head of council: Between May 1, 2026 and September 22, 2026
For the office of councillor: Between June 30, 2026 and September 22, 2026

at the Town of Virden office, 236 Wellington Street West, Virden, MB, during the regular hours of business.

To obtain a registration form contact the SEO at the email or telephone number listed below.

Registration forms are available for pickup at the Town of Virden office.

Rhonda Stewart, SEO

Phone: 204-851-0769

Email: rlstewart64@outlook.com

Dated at Town of Virden, Virden, MB on April 14, 2025

Planter Soil Available

Starting on May 15, Soil will be available for public use next to the Farmer's Market building. Please bring your own containers.

Please note: this soil is intended for small pots and planters – it is not intended for larger landscaping projects.

Soil will be available for public pickup for approximately two weeks, starting on Friday, May 15.

Employment Opportunity

Manager of Utilities

The Town of Virden is accepting applications for the full-time position of Manager of Utilities.

Under the general direction of the Operations and Facilities Manager, the position oversees and manages the full spectrum of utility services (water and wastewater) and supervises Operations staff with certifications in any of the four water and wastewater operator disciplines. They will assist the Operations and Facilities Manager with the direction and work planning for Utilities. They will be expected to communicate professionally with both residents and contractors. The position will provide administrative support and assistance to the Operations and Facilities Manager in this area.

Full job description is available on the Town of Virden website.

Please forward resume with cover letter to:

Neil Smith, Chief Administrative Officer

Town of Virden

Box 310, Virden, MB, R0M 2C0

Email: cao@virden.ca

Municipal Clerk/RCMP Detachment

The Town of Virden is accepting applications for a full-time, permanent position for a Municipal Clerk at the Westman RCMP Detachment, Virden.

The successful applicant will report to the Staff Sergeant. The applicant will be required to perform all clerical duties as well as learn all aspects of the computer systems utilized by policing.

Detailed Job descriptions are available at the Virden Town office or the Westman RCMP Detachment.

The hiring panel will accept and review applications as received, and interview as early as June 15, 2026, with applications continuing to be accepted until the right candidate is found.

Detailed resumes marked "Municipal Clerk/RCMP" will be accepted by:

Faye Pope, Office Manager

Town of Virden

236 Wellington Street West

Box 310, Virden, Manitoba, R0M 2C0

Ph: (204)748-2440 Fax: (204)748-2501

Email: office.manager@virden.ca

HELEN DRYSDALE

OUT OF HELEN'S KITCHEN

The Neepawa Legion Ladies Auxiliary

Chicken and rice casserole

Winnie North

1 small chicken-about 3 lbs.	1 cup rice, long grain
2 cups water	1 tin mushroom soup
1 pkg. onion soup mix	1/2 tsp. salt
Pepper to taste	1 can celery soup (optional)

Cut up chicken into serving pieces. Mix rice, water, soups and seasonings together in the bottom of a small roaster. Place chicken pieces on top and roast for 2 1/2 hours at 350°F oven.

Cashew crunch cookies

Elsie Hockin

2 1/4 cup flour	1/2 tsp. soda
1/2 tsp. cream of tartar	3/4 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup white sugar	1 cup butter
1 egg	1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 cup cashews	

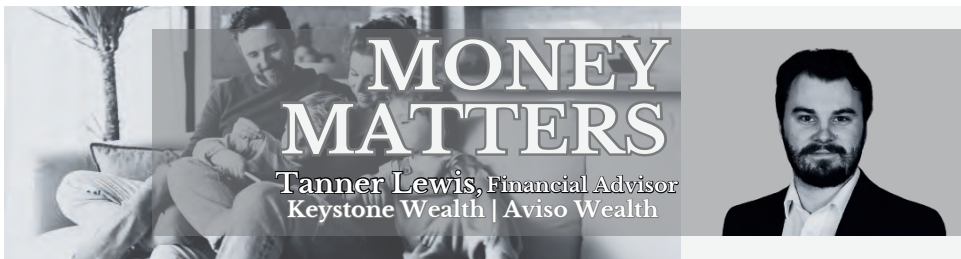
Mix all ingredients except nuts. Add nuts. Drop by spoonfuls on greased sheets. Bake at 350°F 12-15 minutes.

Pecan pie

Margaret Harvey

1 -9-inch unbaked pie shell	3 eggs, lightly beaten
1 cup syrup	1 cup sugar
1/2 cup margarine	1 tsp. vanilla
1/8 tsp. salt	1 cup pecans, added last

Bake at 400°F for 15 minutes, then at 350°F for 30-35 minutes.



ESTATE PLANNING... WHY IT MATTERS AND HOW TO START

Estate planning isn't just for the wealthy—it's for anyone who wants to protect their loved ones and ensure their wishes are honored. Yet, many Canadians avoid the conversation because it feels uncomfortable or unnecessary. The truth? A clear estate plan can prevent family stress, reduce legal complications, and give you peace of mind. Let's normalize the conversation and break down the essentials: wills, powers of attorney, beneficiary designations—and how to choose an executor.

Why Estate Planning Matters - Without a plan, provincial laws decide who gets your assets—and it might not align with your wishes. More importantly, loved ones could face delays, legal costs, and unnecessary conflict. Estate planning isn't about money; it's about clarity, control, and care for the people who matter most.

1. Wills: The Foundation of Your Plan - A will is a legal document that outlines how your assets should be distributed after your death. It can also name guardians for minor children. Why it's important:

- Prevents disputes among family members.
- Speeds up the probate process.
- Ensures your property goes where you want it to.

2. Powers of Attorney: Planning for the Unexpected - A power of attorney (POA) gives someone you trust the authority to make decisions if you become incapacitated. There are two main types:

- Financial POA: Handles money and property.
- Health Care POA: Makes medical decisions on your behalf.

Without a POA, your family may need to go to court to manage your affairs—an expensive and stressful process.

3. Beneficiary Designations: Simple but Critical - Keep beneficiary designations on accounts like RRSPs, TFSAs, pensions, and life insurance accurate and up to date, since they often override your will. This ensures assets transfer quickly, tax-efficiently, and without confusion or delays..

4. How to Choose an Executor: Choose an executor who is trustworthy, organized, and available for a long-term commitment. They should be able to handle financial responsibilities, manage paperwork and deadlines, and ideally live nearby to simplify legal processes. If family relationships are complicated, consider selecting a neutral third party or professional.

Estate planning doesn't have to feel uncomfortable—think of it as a way to care for your family's future. Start with simple steps like creating a will, setting up power of attorney, reviewing beneficiaries, and choosing an executor. These actions reduce stress, time, and costs for loved ones.

Ultimately, estate planning is for everyone, and getting guidance from a professional can help you make informed decisions and avoid mistakes.

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



Police Report

Westman RCMP Service Report for May 10 to 16

Submitted

BY WESTMAN RCMP

During this week, Westman RCMP received a total of 82 calls for service. Some of these calls for service include 23 traffic offences, 10 False Alarms, 6 Assaults, 2 Wellbeing Checks, 2 Mental Health, 2 Suspicious Person/Vehicle/Property, and 4 Fire Prevention.

On May 10, during a routine traffic patrol on Highway 1 in the RM of Sifton, RCMP observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the driving speed of 162 km/hr in a 110 km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$731. The driver was also issued a Serious Offence Notice for license suspension.

On May 11, RCMP and EMS were notified of an Assault that had occurred in Sioux Valley Dakota Nation. Police attended and learned that a male, who had visible injuries, had been assaulted and kicked in the ribs by another male who was still in the residence. EMS attended to the male's injuries, while police conducted their investigation. A 36-year-old male received a charge of Assault Causing Bodily Harm and will appear in court in July.

On May 13, RCMP received a report from the Sioux Valley Petro Canada station on Highway 1, that a vehicle had driven off without paying for their fuel. Police checks determined the vehicle to be stolen out of Winnipeg. RCMP located the vehicle and while attempting to conduct a traffic stop, the vehicle fled. Police later located the vehicle abandoned in a farmyard. With the assistance of RPAS and police dog services, two suspects were located hiding in the bush. A 27-year-old female has been charged with Possession of Property Obtained by Crime over \$5000; Flight from Police Officer; Dangerous Operation of Motor Vehicle; Failure to Comply with Release Order Condition; Other Theft Under \$5000; and Drive Without Holding a Valid Driver's License. A 30-year-old male has been charged with Possession of Property Obtained by Crime over \$5000; Flight from Police Officer; and Other Theft Under \$5000. Both suspects remain in custody and will appear in court this week.

On May 13, during a routine traffic patrol on Highway 1 in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, RCMP observed a vehicle traveling at a high rate of speed. Radar confirmed the driving speed of 160 km/hr in a 110 km/hr zone. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Speeding, which carries a fine of \$705. The driver was also issued a Serious Offence Notice for license suspension.

On May 13, RCMP received a report of a break and enter in progress within the Town of Virden. The homeowner advised that her ex-partner broke into the residence through the back door and then fled. He then returned a short time later, armed himself with a knife from the kitchen and then fled after confronting the homeowner. A 32-year-old male has been charged with Harassing Communications; Break, Entering & Committing;

Possession of a Weapon for Dangerous Purpose; and four counts of Failing to Comply with Release Order Condition. A warrant has been issued for his arrest.

On May 16, while conducting a traffic stop with emergency lights activated, on Highway 1 in the RM of Wallace-Woodworth, police observed a vehicle failing to slow down to the required speed of 60 km/hr when passing emergency vehicles. The member was outside of his vehicle when the offender sped by. A traffic stop was conducted, and the driver was issued a Traffic Offence Notice for Failing to Comply with Speed Requirements when approaching or passing emergency or designated vehicle stopped or engaged in prescribed activity and using emergency lamp or other required equipment, which carries a fine of \$298.

On May 16, RCMP received a report of a dangerous driver in the RM of Pipestone, who had driven through a farm fence and almost got into two head-on collisions on Highway 83. Police attended and located the suspect in the ditch, in the box of a damaged truck. The driver displayed immediate signs of impairment and was placed under arrest. A Breath Test was conducted with results of 280mg% and 290mg%. A 36-year-old male has been charged with Operation While Impaired (alcohol) of Motor Vehicle; Operation while Equal to or Exceeds 80mg% (alcohol) of a Motor Vehicle; two counts of Resist/Obstruct Peace Officer; Dangerous Operation of a Motor Vehicle; Driving While Disqualified; and Possess Fewer than 25 Units of Unmarked Tobacco. He will appear in court in July.

On May 16, RCMP were made aware of an elaborate fraud that occurred within the Town of Virden. A woman received a call from a No Caller ID number. The caller was claiming to work for Telus and advised the woman that there was a fraudulent purchase of an Apple iPhone that was purchased under her account, and that an unauthorized email address was added to her account. The caller knew the woman's name, as well as her husband's name and both of their phone numbers, without asking for this information. The caller emailed the woman a password reset link. When she clicked on the link, she was taken to a Telus Webpage where the caller provided the woman with a password to enter. The caller then redirected to the woman's husband's phone, advising that a password change was required on his device as well to continue to be able to access their shared Telus account. Within 45 minutes of the password changes, both parties lost phone service. They contacted Telus, who confirmed that her cell phone's SIM number was swapped and ported to a new device. Through gaining phone access, the scammer was then able to gain access to their bank accounts, where large purchases and transfers had been made, resulting in losses of \$20,000. Police would like to caution the public to be aware of any suspicious activity on your accounts and to contact service providers directly regarding suspicious activity.

Fireside Follies promises laughs for fire department

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Carol Burnett style humour will entertain in Virden while supporting an important cause.

Virden's most recent amateur theatre group, Theatrick Players will present Fireside Follies, May 29 and 30, as a fundraising event for Wallace District Fire Department.

Three of the troupe, Krista Pederson, Luke and Kate Munchinsky will also provide musical silliness. And what will that be like?

"I don't want to give too much away," says Pederson coyly, adding, "It will be very enjoyable."

Burnett's Fireside Girls was an original spoof on Girl Guides/Scouts. Theatrick Players went ahead and purchased the rights

to stage some of these skits that were on television in the 1970s, '80s and '90s television.

Canadians grew up watching this American comedy - Carol Burnett playing opposite the likes of Harvey Corman, Vicki Lawrence and Lyle Waggoner. Even Robin Williams made an appearance on an episode.

You may remember "Old Folks," "Bonnie and Clod," "Alice Portnoy" (of the Fireside Girls) to name just a few.

For the younger set, this will be a fun introduction to one of the first female entertainment stars of Hollywood fame.

At the show in the Legion Hall, "the firefighters will be helping make the evening go smoothly," says Pederson. They'll be

auctioned off as the Bucket Brigade with snacks in those buckets. "Just part of the fun."

The cast of 12 are Theatrick Players veterans along with some new recruits—all acting under the direction of Goulter music teacher, Jill Radwanski, with Beth Collier as producer.

Step back in time. Get in the spirit of the era and be part of the fun by dressing in 70s' clothes.

There will be a Photo Booth for you to capture your great 70's look.

Ticket sales, a 50-50 draw, bucket brigade and pub sales, are all part of the evening's fundraiser.

Also, pizza by the slice will be available for purchase.

It's a pub night, so it's for 18+, hosted at the Legion Hall at 540, 8th Ave S.

Tickets are \$30 each,



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Anyone remember this old-style telephone? Rehearsals are underway for Fireside Follies - skits to bring Carol Burnett craziness to Virden's Legion Hall.

available now at Farley Kempthorne LLP on Seventh Ave. in Virden.

With two shows, and seating for an audience of 200 each evening, Theatrick

Players' fundraiser will help with the fire department's ongoing expenses.

3 fire departments fight 2-day fire

By Anne Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

"This is what we had to deal with today along with many other fire departments in our area." Those were the words of Miniota Fire Department Chief Nick Young, posted along side an array of photos showing the atmosphere thick with smoke and with dust on Wednesday and Thursday, last week.

East of Miniota and north of PTH #24, what began as a tractor fire, ignited the field.

Flames swept the dry landscape west of Road #264 between Crandall and Decker around the yards of the Wade, Ted and Greg Little families.

The first call was at 2:30pm Wednesday. Young said they were called back at 1:30pm Thursday and did not "clear the scene" until 21:30 or 9:30pm on that very windy Thursday.

Fire guarding, tilling up the ground, helped stop this mammoth fire. Young said, "That was just as important as applying water in order to stop the rapid spread. You had to get ahead of it, in hope it wouldn't keep jumping fire guards."

Looking back

As a follow-up, Fire Chief Young said, "Now that the dust has settled, literally, I have a chance to sit and express our gratitude to all who came together during our two-day fire. In 34 years doing this and I've never found myself having to try and protect five different farmyard sites from going up in flames within minutes of each other from the same incident and then another fire is reported a few miles away to add to the mayhem."

Cooperation brought success. He said, "Because of the tremendous efforts of our members, Hamiota Fire Department, Birtle Fire D, the 'tillage people,' water tankers and well maintained yard sites, there wasn't one structure lost.

"The wind and dust made efforts extremely difficult and yet so many FFs and others worked tirelessly to protect property and contain the rapid spread.

"Natural fire breaks like roads and any amount of water were no match for 80-90km wind driven flames fuelled by wheat stubble. Getting ahead of the advancing fire line with tillage equipment was the only way to stop it and all of the operators did an outstanding job. We have a lot of people to thank."

Along with the attending fire departments he listed:

Tillage - Bryce, Travis, Jamie E., Murray, Stuart, and Greg. Water tankers - Decker Colony, Murray S., Duncan M., Blair, Jamie B., and the Cowlings.

He said it was hard to keep track of the helpers in this intense situation but acknowledgements included support



PHOTOS FROM FACEBOOK

Firefighters work in poor visibility on the fire at the east side of Prairie View Municipality.

people and "the thoughtful group of women who made a delicious supper for everyone and the delivery guys."

Comments on the fire department's Face book page came from a grateful community to volunteers who drop what they are doing to defend their community.

On May 15, Christine Little said, "A huge THANK YOU to the Miniota Fire Department, Hamiota Fire Department, Birtle Fire Department, the Decker Colony, and all our neighbours/friends who battled the fire to protect our homes/animals! It was a terrifying experience and all of us Littles are so grateful for you all."

Last week, fire departments across Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro were very busy and the 911 communication centre was overwhelmed with calls Young noted.

Assiniboine Valley fire

Young alluded to another fire just a few miles away.

In rugged country North of Miniota in St. Lazare's Assiniboine Valley, Wednesday, May 13, St. Lazare Fire Department reported on FaceBook:

"After a half-day training exercise with Manitoba Hydro, McAuley FD, the RM of Ellice-Archie, and responders from Nutrien ERT, our firefighters went straight into a long, exhausting evening fighting a fire in the valley with very limited access.

We definitely had our hands full and could not have done it without our mutual aid partners, Birtle Fire Dept, as well as Prairie Dusters (aerial spraying company), who helped cover a large area we could not safely access otherwise.

A huge thank you to everyone involved. Your dedication, teamwork, and commitment are what make these events possible and incidents manageable

Miniota News

Submitted

BY LINDA CLARK

Hats off to our Miniota Fire Department, along with surrounding fire departments, who fought fires hard this past week in the very dry and windy conditions! The winds reminded me of my father's stories about the winds of the Dirty '30s and trying to farm in that dryness. Our community people and farm families are extremely grateful to all for their assistance.

Her Village hosted a wonderful Victorian Day Tea at the Arrow River Hall for their May evening. Wonderful decorations, good company, delicious food, a chance to wear our hats, and wonderful smiling service from the four tea maids — Loree, Tracy, Charlene and Abby — made for a great evening.

Congratulations to Jaxon Sheane and Mason Poppel, members of the U13 Yellowhead Jr. Chiefs, on bringing home the gold once again to complete their year. A great weekend of hockey at the Gordie Howe Memorial Tournament in Saskatoon!

We have a very proud grandma in town. Sheila Kokorudz, along with many Manitobans, has been cheering on the Niverville Nighthawks in their quest for the Centennial Cup. Sheila's grandson, Ryken Aaron of Calgary, is a member of the team. Proud to say the Niverville Nighthawks brought home the Centennial Cup, making them our national champions. Sheila was busy cheering Ryken on from Calgary, where she attended the Grade

12 graduation of her grandson Yusef. Congratulations, Ryken and Yusef!

Our Miniota Rink Enhancement Committee is most appreciative of the support from surrounding communities. Traci McKean attended the Elkhorn Foundation evening, accepting a donation of \$5,000, and Delbert Cole attended the Virden Foundation evening to accept a cheque in the amount of \$7,000. Thank you to our neighbours for your support of our project.

Congratulations to Randy and Michelle Bryant on the occasion of their 25th wedding anniversary!

Certainly, our Miniota sports grounds is the place to be these days. This weekend will see our parents and volunteers host a two-day minor sports weekend, so head on down for some baseball and a hotdog.

While many wished for a warm and beautiful May long weekend, we were faced with coolness, snow and rain. However, on the upside, we certainly welcomed the much-needed moisture!

"Life is a story of friendship. Friends create the world anew each day. Without their kindness, courage would not be enough to keep hearts strong for life." — Helen Keller

Isabella News

Hazel Wall accompanied Kelvin and Becki Wall to Airdrie, Alta., for a visit with Kris and Jen Wall and family and, while there, they attended the Grade 12 graduation of Hazel's grandson, Riley.

Herb and Zelda "Adventures in Camping"

What will they try next

By Nancy Jo Moller
RIVERS BANNER

"Fictional names Herb and Zelda have been used to protect the innocent from laughter"

As seniors, things Herb and Zelda have tried didn't always go smoothly, but they remembered keep trying, keep making those memories. Favourite stories are what family will talk and laugh about for years to come.

Bike riding, how hard can it be? They both had ridden bikes before, but thinking it was likely over 40 or was it 50 years ago, Herb and Zelda were both up for the challenge. Beware of balancing and picking up speed going downhill, because riding bikes in the Whiteshell proved the challenge might win against prairie raised flatlanders. Whew, going downhill and trying to control the speed was one thing but going up the other side. Slow, slower and finally Zelda gave up and said, "I'm walking back to the cabin." Yes, you heard right, they rented a gorgeous log cabin for the week that was fully furnished.

Canoeing, since Zelda had never canoed, she was careful to follow all of Herb's directions. He



Home sweet home for the week.

PHOTOS BY NANCY JO MOLLER

said don't turn around and overbalance, wait for me to get in and when I'll say okay, start paddling. Zelda kept eyes focused ahead, reviewing in her mind how Herb had said to paddle. She felt the boat sway and Herb said Okay. She started to paddle and felt canoe overturn. Luckily, they were only in 2 feet of water, all they could do was look at each other and laugh. Herb had

said OKAY when he stepped in, not when he sat down. First thing to remember, follow your own instructions. Next thing to remember is never canoe in western boots. Always have not only proper footwear but extra footwear available that can easily be purchased at local outdoor stores or shoe stores. Rubber-soled shoes provide not only a good grip but cushion for those aching

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- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>1. Activities You Enjoy (or Want to Try)
Check any that apply.</p> <p>Indoor / Sport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ice (hockey, figure skating, curling) <input type="checkbox"/> Court (basketball, pickleball, badminton) <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness centre / gym <input type="checkbox"/> Self led (walking tracks, stretching, yoga) <p>Outdoor / Active</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Soccer <input type="checkbox"/> Baseball / Softball <input type="checkbox"/> Track & field <input type="checkbox"/> Golf <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming <p>Creative & Skill Based</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Arts & crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Woodworking / automotive <input type="checkbox"/> Lifestyle / home skills <input type="checkbox"/> Technology / science activities <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Motorized (boat, dirtbike, quad) <input type="checkbox"/> Clubs / Groups (4H, sport team, Ideas for Recreation: _____) | <p>2. Program Types You're Interested In</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing classes <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal programs <input type="checkbox"/> One time workshops <input type="checkbox"/> Drop in sessions <input type="checkbox"/> Family friendly events <p>3. Preferred Age Categories
Check all that apply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Toddler <input type="checkbox"/> Kids <input type="checkbox"/> Youth <input type="checkbox"/> Teen <input type="checkbox"/> Adult <input type="checkbox"/> Senior <p>4. Preferred Locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Elkhorn <input type="checkbox"/> Kenton <input type="checkbox"/> Kola <input type="checkbox"/> Willing to travel anywhere <p>5. When Are You Most Available?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Weekdays - Daytime <input type="checkbox"/> Weekdays - Evenings <input type="checkbox"/> Weekends <p>How often would you participate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly <input type="checkbox"/> Occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonally | <p>6. Cost & Barriers
What cost range works for you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Free only <input type="checkbox"/> \$1-\$20 <input type="checkbox"/> \$20-\$50 <input type="checkbox"/> \$50+ <p>What affects your decision to participate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Cost <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation / distance <input type="checkbox"/> Weather / driving conditions <p>7. How Should We Share Program Info?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Facebook <input type="checkbox"/> RM Website <input type="checkbox"/> Email newsletter <input type="checkbox"/> Community posters <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth <p>Optional email for updates: _____</p> <p>8. Volunteer / Instructor Interest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Help at events or programs <input type="checkbox"/> Host or lead an activity <input type="checkbox"/> Take coaching or leadership training <input type="checkbox"/> Not at this time <p>Optional Contact (if you want to discuss ideas) -
Name / Email / Phone: _____</p> |
|---|---|---|



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feet. As they discussed the day, tired but still smiling, it was decided that when they got home planning would start for their next adventure. Maybe it would be time to price out electric bikes that could/might make excursions easier.

Hiking – well Herb’s boots were still wet the next morning after the eventful canoe ride, so they went for a drive instead of hiking. Will revisit that thought again tomorrow.

Global Positioning System (GPS), aka ‘Susie’, provided directions to their destination, but ensure both members know where they are headed and the proper destination is typed into the GPS. Nothing worse than driver Herb, knowing where he is headed, but Zelda put in a destination she thought was right. Oops, you know where this is going. As they approached the intersection to turn, GPS Susie and Zelda were saying go straight, don’t turn. Herb tried to reason with both of them, finally he threw ‘Susie’ in the back seat, frowned and followed Zelda’s directions. Of course, they ended up in the wrong area on one-way streets with Zelda calmly saying, “Isn’t this where we were going?” Herb could only shake his head, was this what travelling with Zelda was going to be like! Time to head back to the cabin and relax. They had left the fifth wheel at home this weekend and were staying in a log cabin rental that provided all the comforts of home. No extra camper packing, just carry suitcase in, head out on daily expeditions and then return to relax and barbeque on the provided grill. Ah, how restful. But in the end, they decided to keep the camper for those vacations at friends’ places and anywhere off the beaten path where Zelda

suggested that maybe the accommodation was unsuitable for a variety of reasons. Now this is the best of both worlds with versatility and comfort. Okay, Herb and Zelda have retired life figured out.

The only part of travel that will never go smoothly is hand signals. Useful while biking, backing in or general living, signals can be a challenge. Both partners must remember that they grew up in different families, and each family has their own system. Sometimes you have to create a new one between the family members that can clearly be understood. In Herb and Zelda’s case, communication of the new signal involved Herb drawing a line across his throat and then pointing his thumb over his shoulder. Zelda quickly learned that meant ‘You need to go away and let Herb figure the problem out himself.’ Once he realized she was indispensable, he would come in and ask for help again.



Zelda’s exhausted and can’t pedal anymore.

And the number ONE RULE of retirement and life in general is: laugh when you can, talk all the time and travel anytime because life can throw curveballs that change everything.

See you next year when Herb and Zelda hit the road again. Hope you have a great summer!



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SPORTS

SPORTS NOTES: OILERS AT HOME MAY 22, OIL CAPS COMMIT TO UNIVERSITIES

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

After having their first scheduled contest of the season postponed on May 14, the Virden Oilers are excited to play some baseball.

The South West Baseball League squad was slated to play in Brandon against the Young Guns on May 19, after the Empire-Advance deadline. The team hosts the Reston Rockets on May 22. A makeup date for the postponed contest against the Hamiota Red Sox has not yet been announced.

The contest against Virden will be the Rockets' first of the season. On May 24, they play in Wawanesa.

Hoilett Signs with Bisons

London Hoilett, the Virden Oil Capitals' leading goal scorer last winter, has signed to play for the University of Manitoba men's hockey team, which competes at the U Sports level. His late father, Trevor, suited up in both football and basketball for the Bisons.

Hoilett joined the Oil Caps of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League after three Western Hockey League campaigns. He posted more than a point per game last season with 58 in 57 contests, including 32 goals.

"London is a hard-working two-way forward who brings a strong compete level, plenty of energy and a physical presence to our lineup," Bisons head coach Gordon Burnett said in a U of M media release.

In that release, Hoilett said, "I am beyond excited to pursue my education at the University of Manitoba. I'm looking forward to working alongside the players, coaches and staff on the Bisons men's hockey team. I can't wait to be a part of The Herd!"

Schroeder Heads to Augsburg

Oil Caps defenceman Oliver Schroeder is headed closer to home. He has committed to Augsburg University. The Minneapolis school team plays at the NCAA Division III level. Schroeder plans to study business management.

"With Augsburg being a smaller school, I'm looking forward to having smaller class sizes, where I'm able to build strong relationships with my peers and teachers, while also having great opportunities for a successful career path being right in Minneapolis," he said. "Also, Augsburg is a storied program with past champions, trying to bring

the trophy back will be the most fun."

Schroeder, who joined Virden at the January trade deadline, is from Hudson, Wis.

"Augsburg is only 35 minutes from my house," he said. "So, my friends and family will all be able to come watch some great hockey, and that was ultimately one of my deciding factors to go to Augsburg."

Osiowy Commits to Alvernia

Austin Osiowy, who the Oil Capitals added at the 2026 trade deadline, has opted to continue his hockey career at Alvernia University in Reading, Pa. It was not just the opportunity to play NCAA Division III hockey that drew the defenceman, who plans to study mechanical engineering.

"Alvernia academics, location, hockey program and class sizes all fit what I was looking for out of school," Osiowy said. "Alvernia basically checked every box for me, and when I went down to visit I knew I wanted to go there."

Nighthawks Win Centennial Cup

The Niverville Nighthawks beat the host Summerside (P.E.I.) Western Capitals 4-1 to win the Centennial Cup Canadian national Junior A championship. The Nighthawks defeated the Oil Capitals in the MJHL championship series. The Niverville squad includes former Oil Caps Thomas Phillips and Parker Rolston.

Oak Lake's Chase Cochrane competed for the Thunder Bay North Stars at the event. Former Oil Capital Acoyen Fehr was also part of that team.

Chastko Wins WHL Title

Former Oil Capitals forward Nolan Chastko helped the Everett Silvertips win their first Western Hockey League championship. The Washington state team beat Prince Albert to claim the Ed Chynoweth Cup. The Silvertips advanced to the Memorial Cup major junior national championship. It will be held in Kelowna May 22-31.

Chastko scored in Everett's 7-2 game five victory. In 18 playoff contests, he had two goals and nine points.

Local Boxing Results

At the Spring Showdown in Brandon earlier this month, Oak Lake 16-year-old Lucas Branum won his first boxing match by TKO. Jesse Kreutzer of Oak Lake had a strong performance but fell in his bout. In addition, Oak Lake's Ken Kreutzer sparred on the card.



PHOTO BY VIRDEN OIL CAPITALS

London Hoilett is one of the Virden Oil Capitals who has committed to play at the post-secondary level next season.

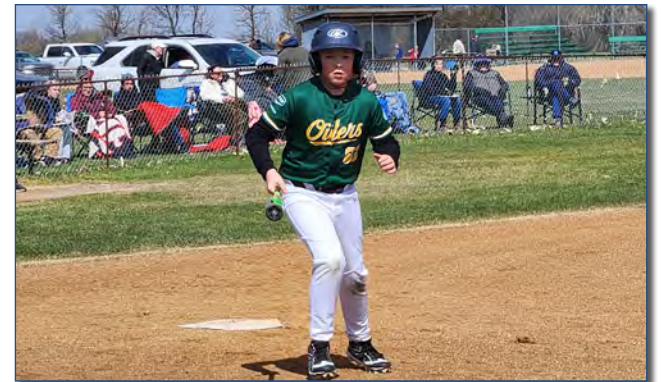


PHOTO BY NANCY JO MOLLER

On May 16, the Virden Oilers took on the Reston Rockets at Minor Ball Day in Reston.

Oil Caps Signings

The Oil Capitals recently announced the signings of forward Peyton Getzlaff and defenceman Niko Lemoine. Getzlaff, a 2008-born athlete, played last season for Bottineau/Rugby (N.D.) in high school hockey and Team North Dakota. The Bottineau product had 11 goals and 34 points in 24 high school games last winter.

The 2009-born Lemoine hails from Ste. Agathe. He had three goals and 26 points in 47 games for the U18 AAA Eastman Selects last season.

OLD SAYINGS

REF TO
WRITER

GERRY
NOLAN



They don't make sayings like they used to. These old sayings are timeless really. They are brimming with character, wisdom and a certain homespun charm you don't often hear in modern slang. Some examples of these would be, That is the pot calling the kettle black. When someone criticizes another person for a fault they also have, it is the pot calling the kettle black. The phrase points out the hypocrisy especially when the accuser isn't exactly innocent themselves. It is a timeless

check on self awareness and fairness.

Burning the midnight oil. If you are one who stays up late working, studying or partying, you are burning the midnight oil. Before electricity, oil lamps lit the way for those pulling the late night shifts. The phrase captures the sense of long hours put in after the rest of the world has gone to sleep!

Close but no cigar. This means you almost won but not quite. It is used to acknowledge a good effort that in the end still came up short.

Let sleeping dogs lie. This advice means it's better not to stir up old conflicts or bring up past issues. The image is clear, do not wake up a peaceful sleeping dog, or you may regret the consequences. It is better to let things be, especially until the tension has cooled down.

They are not out of the woods yet. The phrase means that a difficult, dangerous or problematic situation has not yet been resolved. An example in health would be a patient might be breathing on their own and showing signs of recovery but are still in the hospital, maybe in intensive care. The phrase they are not out of the woods yet would apply here.

There are so many more old time phrases out there yet. I may just continue with a few more, later!

NHL PLAYOFFS

REF TO
WRITER

GERRY
NOLAN



The second round of the National Hockey League Playoffs has been completed. I had picked Carolina, Colorado, Vegas and Buffalo to win their respective series. This may well be the first time that all conference teams champions have advanced to the third round.

Colorado defeated Minnesota in five games and I really do not see anyone beating the Avalanche. They will face Vegas in the Western final and after Vegas has had all sorts of trouble

with Gary Bettman and the NHL, they probably will not be getting any breaks from the officials as well.

Vegas defeated the Anaheim Ducks in six games. Anaheim came a long way this season and the future looks bright for the Ducks!

Carolina swept the Philadelphia Flyers in 4 straight games and now have had 12 days off, will that be too long and will they have lost their momentum.

What a madhouse in Montreal. The Habs

support has been unreal and the Hab fans are coming out of the closet for this one. Game 7 between the Habs and Buffalo and overtime is just starting. Buffalo has all the momentum going into overtime. The winner Montreal! The semi finals begin on Wednesday. I will pick Colorado and Carolina to play for the cup. See you in a couple of weeks!

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Civic signs for safety, census

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The RM of Wallace-Woodworth is upgrading their civic address signs for rural properties. These little blue signs show a series of numbers that may not make much sense at first glance, but they contain vital information that helps guide emergency responders to the location.

Council plans to add a second fin to existing signs to include the road number beneath the primary address to allow those unfamiliar with the area to more easily locate an address.

Several councillors stressed that road intersection signs are even more important than civic address markers.

Coun. Lyle Kinnaird asked if the project would include adding road intersection signs where they were needed. Kinnaird said, "If the goal is to reduce the risk of emergency services not finding a location, that sign (at the intersection) is more important than the one at the end (of the lane)." Kinnaird stated that if emergency responders arrive at an unsigned intersection, the civic address signs farther down the road become far less useful.

The municipality has already budgeted for the civic addressing project, and much of the preparation has already been completed. CAO Iris Vercaigne explained that the existing budget could also allow an intersection sign program to begin, and added, "We've already done a count on how many estimated road corners we might not have signs for, and it was pretty high, so I think a multi-year project would be (preferable)."

Administration accepted the quote from Barricades and Signs for the purchase of civic addressing signs and mounting hardware in the amount of \$17,969.

They also agreed to accept a bid from White Knight Janitorial for installation of 900 signs at a cost of \$15,120.

Signage problems for census

After approving the civic sign project council discussed how missing road signs affect census workers and visitors unfamiliar with rural roads. Coun. Denis Lachapelle noted that a census takes place every five years and that census workers often struggle navigating rural municipalities because many physical road signs are missing. Lachapelle described the process as extremely difficult. He said, "You put on a lot of miles to find the roads that you need, to find the civic address and some of them are knocked down. It's important that we get them all back on."

Census workers receive only limited training and are dependent on maps that can be inaccurate or incomplete. Workers are often forced to cross-reference Google Maps with the provided census maps to locate addresses. Many newer developments still lack blue civic address signs altogether.

In rural Manitoba some roads that no longer exist are still shown as active roads although they may be only passable for farm machinery. Because census routes are calculated very specifically around these mapped roads, inaccuracies can lead to confusion and missed households.

Census data directly affects municipal, provincial and federal funding allocations and community programming. Many people do not understand the connection between census participation and local services, and some may dismiss the process without understanding its importance.

Although the 2026 census uses May 12 as the date that applies to census questions, that is not the final date to complete the questionnaire. Some people have requested a paper census form rather than using the online option. In following weeks census workers will be contacting people who have not responded to give them assistance with the process.

Councillors agreed that municipalities should take a stronger role in educating residents about the census before the collection period begins, and that municipal information should be focused on the connection between census participation and government funding.

Woodworth firefighters get new rescue truck

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Woodworth Fire Department

Coun. Diana MacDonald attended a Woodworth Fire Department meeting and reported to the May 12 RM of Wallace-Woodworth council meeting that a recent fundraiser generated approximately \$17,000. The department has faced an elevated risk of grass fires and wildfire and have already been extremely busy responding to fires.

Council approved a resolution authorizing payment of \$63,343 to Woodworth Chrysler Dodge for a new 2026 Ram 5500 rescue truck for the Department. The purchase will be funded by a \$45,000 contribution from the fire department with the balance coming from the RM's fire department reserve. The existing rescue body and equipment will be transferred onto the new truck.

Rural EMS training

Council considered a resolution from the RM of Deloraine-Winchester regarding rural EMS staffing and Primary Care Paramedic training.

Reeve Canart recalled that provincial planners had a goal of ensuring every resident, regardless of location, would receive responders with equivalent qualifications and capabilities.

Coun. Val Caldwell said, "Considering some people maybe transported an hour to a hospital, you need someone on that rig (ambulance) that can keep them alive until they get to the hospital." Advanced medical training can make the difference between life and death during transport. Council agreed to support the resolution.

Healthcare

From the Hamiota District Health Centre committee meeting MacDonald reported that Assiniboine Community College is launching a Licensed Practical Nurse upgrading program in Hamiota. Staffing shortages remain in laboratory, x-ray and nursing departments. There is only one lab and x-ray technician, meaning emergency room closures are still a problem due to staff shortages. The Hamiota hospital expects to be down three registered nurses by July due to resignations and employees on leave while two LPNs have already left for positions elsewhere.

2026 road gravel program

Council approved payment

of an invoice from Ranchers Livestock for gravel crushing services in Ward 2 West. The resolution authorized payment of \$123,375 for the supply of 10,000 cubic yards of three-quarter-inch crushed gravel. The supplier's test results indicated 98 per cent fractured material. Reeve Clayton Canart said this fractured material is an important factor in quality gravel as the surfaces of fractured rock interlock to stabilize roads, while rounded gravel tends to roll loose.

Road bans

Provincial road bans usually end by May 29 but according to the Manitoba Trucking Association's Facebook page, road bans could be lifted by May 19. Council members agreed that municipal roads are softer than the previous week, and that roads are beginning to deteriorate. Reeve Clayton Canart stated that once provincial restrictions are removed, municipalities often face pressure to follow suit. Canart said, "They assume because highways (restrictions) are off that everyone can go."

Tile drainage

Council discussed a request for approval of a tile drainage program from Jason Hodson of Rosebank Farms. The request was approved on the condition that all costs would remain the responsibility of the applicant. The project must receive approval from Manitoba Conservation and Water Stewardship, and the applicant must comply with the RM's tile drainage policy. The tile drainage agreement states that all present and future owners would be responsible for any costs or impacts to municipal infrastructure resulting from the project.

Grants approved

Council approved special events grant funding for two community organizations. The River Valley Museum received approval for \$2,500, while the Lenore Curling Club was approved for \$5,000.

Temporary Foreign Worker program

RM of Pipestone is preparing a resolution concerning the Temporary Foreign Worker program. The resolution states that recent federal restrictions and pauses in parts of the program are negatively affecting busi-

nesses that already struggle to find workers, particularly restaurants, gas stations, and some agricultural operations. Council agreed that abruptly ending the program without an alternative workforce strategy would create significant problems for rural employers and supported the resolution.

Elkhorn news

Reeve Canart reported that Elkhorn and Area Foundation (EAF) has grown since its early years. At the time of its first grant distribution, the foundation had only about \$12,000 raised and issued a first grant of \$190. Today, the fund has grown to more than \$2 million and distributed over \$100,000 in grants this year alone.

(See story in May 15 issue of Virden Empire-Advance at empireadvance.ca)

Elkhorn's Antique Automobile Museum committee filled its manager position, with the successful applicant expected to begin ahead of a June 1 opening. The committee also confirmed one Green Team student position and additional summer staffing positions will be funded with federal programming.



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SPORTS

CHARLES HELPS WILDCATS REACH NJCAA WORLD SERIES

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Viriden's Kendall Charles has enjoyed contributing to a successful softball squad during her first college season.

The daughter of Dori and Joel Charles has helped the North Dakota State College of Science women's softball team earn a berth in the National Junior College Athletic Association Division III World Series. The event runs May 20-23 in Dewitt, New York.

"I've really enjoyed being part of a close team and competing at the college level," Charles said. "Everyone has been supportive, and it's been fun building relationships with my teammates while improving as a player."

The Wildcats are the defending national champions. They won their sixth-straight Region XIII title and third-straight Mon-Dak Conference regular-season championship.

Charles has fit in well with the Wahpeton, N.D., team. She usually plays left field and also has been utilized in centre field and as a designated player. As of May 15, Charles had driven in seven runs, drawn 11 walks, and stolen two bases in 28 games.

"She is a gritty player who can do multiple things on the field," Wildcats head coach Michael Oehlke said. "She is a great student and works hard."

Charles developed her game on various teams in Viriden and western Manitoba, including the Triple Crown Bulldogs. She said moving up to the college level required some adjustments.

"College softball is faster and more competitive," Charles said. "The practices are more intense, and there's a bigger focus on preparation, teamwork, and balancing athletics with school."

She is enrolled in NDSCS's liberal arts education transfer program.

"I've enjoyed how the instructors are helpful and want students to succeed," Charles said. "The smaller class sizes also make it easier to ask questions and stay involved."

She also has appreciated living in Wahpeton. The city in southeastern North Dakota had a population of 8,007 in the 2020 Census.

"I've enjoyed the community atmosphere in Wahpeton. It's a welcoming town, and being close to campus and teammates has made it feel like home quickly."

Speaking of home, Charles continues to receive encouragement and support from her family.

"My family's support has meant a lot during my freshman year," she said. "They've encouraged me through the challenges of balancing school and softball, and knowing they're behind me has helped me stay motivated. They have travelled to



PHOTO BY NDSCS ATHLETICS

Kendall Charles has had a successful season with the North Dakota State College of Science women's softball team.

a lot of our games this season, and if they can't make it, I know that they are watching GameChanger at home."

LOCAL SKATERS HONOURED AT SKATE MANITOBA AWARDS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

At the Skate Manitoba awards, Skate Viriden's Mia du Plessis was pleasantly surprised.

The daughter of Jaco and Annemie du Plessis received an award for being the Juvenile U14 Women provincial champion and recognition for competing in the Manitoba Winter Games, where she won bronze, and being part of Team Toba. In addition, du Plessis received the Grassroots Founder Award (Reta Barber Award). She explained it was for scoring the highest points in the juvenile free skate at provincials.

"It was a total surprise to receive the award. It meant a lot to me to receive it because it just showed me that if you work hard you get good results," the Viriden resident said. "Hard work pays off."

It certainly did for du Plessis. Regarding her season, she said, "I enjoyed having the opportunity to go to Manitoba Games and to compete against my friends while making new friends."

Du Plessis was one of a number of Skate Viriden athletes recognized at the Skate Manitoba Awards. The club was also recognized for hosting the Junior and Senior Sectionals & Fall Open.

Kaylee Malcolm, competing for the Elkhorn Skating Club, received awards for being part of Team Toba and for competing in the Winter Games. Elizabeth Soroka won the Star 5 U10 Women provincial championship. Evie McAdam was recognized for competing in the Winter Games.

Nate Greenbank received multiple awards: Pre-Novice Men provincial champion, Training Bursary Award, Trophy-Pre-Novice, Team Manitoba member, and



PHOTO BY SKATE VIRDEN

Skate Viriden's Mia du Plessis received the Grassroots Founder Award from Skate Manitoba.

for competing in the Winter Games. His brother, Luke Greenbank, was recognized as Juvenile U12 Men provincial champion, a member of Team Toba, and competing in the Winter Games.

Ainslee McGregor, who competes for the Waskada Figure Skating Club, received awards for being the Artistic 7 provincial champion, a Team Manitoba member, and a Winter Games participant. Fellow Waskada Figure Skating Club member Norah Whetter was recognized for being part of Team Toba.

On its Facebook page, Skate Viriden posted "a special congratulations as well to our local judge and friend, Linda Little" who received the 2026 National Volunteer Award. At the awards ceremony, it was stated, in part, "Linda is a volunteer that always goes above and beyond. This year, Linda officiated at all of our Manitoba competitions. She even showed up to be an extra set of hands for the competition she was not officiating at. She took on the Lead tech rep role and was one of the main organizers of the Figure Skating portion

of the Manitoba Games in Thompson. ... Linda is extremely dedicated to her sport. She is always willing to help new officials, answer questions for coaches and willing to explain any detail that needs explaining. Linda always has a smile on her face and stickers to share."

Synchro Camp

Three synchro enthusiasts connected with Skate Viriden — Aliyah Bouchie, Amanda Scott, and Meghan McKinnon — attended the OneTeamMVMT Synchro Camp in Warman. McKinnon explained, "The camp exposed us to various aspects of synchro, including both on and off-ice skills ... The camp strengthened our knowledge and confidence as both synchro skaters and as coaches and helped to build community amongst the participants."

Bouchie was the youngest participant at the camp. She received the Most Synchro Spirit Award.

"Camp organizers noted that she embodied the spirit of the OneTeamMVMT by tackling new challenges with determination and positivity," McKinnon said. "She was an excellent choice for this award, as she persisted throughout the camp, making notable progress in her skating and synchro skills. Aliyah was open to receiving guidance and building friendships with fellow campers and camp leaders — showing the characteristics of a great synchro skater."

This past season, Bouchie was a member of the Viriden Velocity Star 4 Synchro Team (Skate Viriden). Scott skated for the Wheat City ConnXion Adult 1 Synchronized Skating Team (Skate Brandon) and was support coach to the Viriden Velocity Synchro Team (Skate Viriden). McKinnon was the coach of the Viriden Velocity Star 4 and Adult 2 Synchro Teams (Skate Viriden).

Time for Manitoba to buy local advertising

By Paul Deegan, President and CEO
NEWS MEDIA CANADA

Manitoba's 2024 Speech from the Throne stated, "One of our society's most important freedoms is freedom of the press. It holds the powerful to account including government. In an age of so much misinformation and polarization, we can't afford to let journalism disappear. At the same time, we can't allow this issue to become politicized. So, we are establishing an all-party committee to explore the future of local journalism including rural and cultural media such as Filipino, Punjabi and Chinese language publications."

On July 2nd, 2025, I was back in my hometown of Winnipeg to appear before the all-party committee, chaired by Robert Loiselle, MLA for St. Boniface. Across party lines, there was universal agreement that Manitoba should ensure a minimum of 25 per cent of government advertising, including Crown corporations and agencies, goes to local journalism.

Advertising with local news sources is a highly effective way for the Government of Manitoba to get important information across to Manitobans.

A 2025 study by Stagwell found that it is safe for brands to advertise adjacent to quality news content, regardless of topic; ads placed adjacent to stories covering politics or crime perform as effectively as ads placed next to a positive business story and sports and entertainment; and there are no brand safety issues among key demographic groups for advertisers, including Gen Z, moms, high earners and university-educated Canadians.

A 2024 study by Plus Company on the effects of trust on advertising effectiveness in Canada concluded there is a clear and measurable lift in brand affinity when advertising is placed within trusted news environments. This "Trust Premium" is a powerful force that can be leveraged by advertisers to enhance brand perception and build stronger connections with consumers. As trust becomes increasingly important in today's media landscape, partnering with reputable news publishers is a valuable opportunity for brands to benefit from the halo effect and establish greater credibility with their target audiences."

In 2024, the Government of Ontario directed that 25 per cent government advertising spending would be set aside for news publications.

The also directed Crown corporations like the LCBO, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation, and Metrolinx to also invest 25% of their advertising spend to Ontario-based news businesses. This has made an immediate and meaningful difference to many news titles.

The U.S.-based not-for-profit Rebuild Local News found that advertising set asides have a number of benefits. First, they can provide substantial revenue to local news organizations and help community journalism thrive. Second, it is money the government is already spending—not new money—so it does not require enlarging state or local budgets or raising taxes. Third, government messages should reach a full range of residents, including those that may not be using larger media. Fourth, as advertising, it is payment for a service rendered, not a subsidy per se. Finally, advertising in community news helps government be more effective by reaching audiences through community and ethnic publications that are more trusted in their communities.

Recently, the Connecticut Senate unanimously approved legislation requiring the state to disclose how it spends its advertising dollars – including how much goes to Connecticut media vs. social media and out of state. Manitoba should provide similar transparency.

News publishers can help the Province – and municipal governments – reach engaged audiences better than anyone. Credible journalism strengthens trust, while delivering real business results in a brand safe environment. There is absolutely no reason Manitoba shouldn't use trusted Canadian news brands to reach Manitobans.

Let's invest provincial advertising dollars in local Manitoba papers instead of sending them to Mountain View (Google) or Menlo Park (Meta), California.

Paul Deegan is president and chief executive officer of News Media Canada

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Life in the slow lane

By Gerry Nolan
 RIVERS BANNER

The windstorm on last Thursday brought back a couple of storm memories from my young days. The first was a snowstorm in 1956 I believe. The other storm was around the same time of year in the late fifties.

There was a bad snowstorm that took place and our farm was located on the old 21 highway. The wind was howling and it was snowing heavily. We were hunkered down at home when there was a knock at the door. The public health nurse in our community had gotten stuck in the middle of the road going up the hill by Wally Gray's farm. She had seen our yard light

when she drove by so she had walked back to our lane and walked up the hill to our house. I was too young to remember all the details but I do remember her.

The next day Dad and my brothers Lynn and Garth took the team of horses up the road toward Wally Gray's as they knew the plow would be coming as we lived on the then 21 highway. When they approached where they thought the car would be, all that they could see was the aerial from the car sticking up. That was how much snow had filled up around and over the car. If the public health nurse had stayed in the car she would have perished for sure. Thankfully she was safe. It took a lot of work

to get the car shovelled out and pulled out. If the plow had come along the plow operator would never have seen the car if my family had not been there to dig her out.

The other storm I refer to is a hailstorm that hit our home. I just remember Mom getting us to hold pillows up against the windows until the storm blew over. While it did not last long, it was loud. No windows were broken so the pillows worked. I can remember the ground being covered with hailstones.

Not so many years ago a plow wind went through our area on Harding fair day and tore a lot of trees up in our ravine. Sorta glad I missed that one!

Correction: May 15 issue, Page 15 in the story about Jayden Leslie, photo was listed as submitted. Credit for the photo should have gone to hksxmedia.

Correction: May 15 issue, Page 7 in the story about Old friends, the spelling of the name of Zach Whitecloud was spelt incorrectly as Zack.

Correction: May 15 issue, Page 6 in the story Police Report, the community of Sioux Valley Dakota Nation is listed as a settlement. Please note, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation is not a settlement.

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SPORTS

CLUB WEST 16U PLACE THIRD AT PROVINCIALS

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

The Virden-based Club West 16U volleyball team earned bronze at the Volleyball Manitoba U16 Girls Provincial Championship.

Thirty-two teams competed in the event, which was held in Winnipeg and Niverville. The tournament wrapped up a successful season for the strong squad.

"The 16U is a strong group of young ladies who have been together for four years," coach Stephen Densmore said. "They are strong defensively while running a fast offense. Overall, our balance and ability to attack from any position helps incredibly."

Kasidy Hoemsen was named a provincial all-star. Densmore said he considers her the best player in the province.

"She does all facets of the game well and can attack from any position, which makes her a threat at all times," he said.

13U

The Club West 13U team capped its season by winning the Bison Tournament in Winnipeg.

"The girls put it all on the court at the Bison tournament," coach Hayley Densmore said. "They played hard and never gave up."

She enjoyed working with this group of young athletes.

"This was a great group of girls," Hayley said. "They worked hard and always wanted to learn so they can improve. The improvement from the first practice to the last game was amazing. It's been a long time since I have coached tripleball (13U), but I am lucky to have had such a great group of girls to do it with."

Tripleball is a modified volleyball format used by Volleyball Manitoba at younger levels with a goal of



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Club West 16U volleyball team finished third at the provincial tournament.

promoting "better skill development, participation, meaningful competition, and fun," its website states. Games use a sequence of three rallies with the first starting with a serve and the other two beginning with a toss. Players are not allowed to switch positions during a rally.

14U

The 14U Club West team competed at the Volleyball Canada Youth National Championships in Edmonton.

"The girls weren't intimidated by playing at a large venue with the added pressure of it being nationals," Hayley said. "I was extremely impressed with how they adjusted to having me as a coach for nationals due

to their coach not being able to go. It can be hard to adjust to a different coaching style, especially at a large tournament. The girls played hard all weekend and I am proud of them."

Regarding the team, Hayley said, "You can see how much these girls love the sport and want to keep improving. They are a fun group of girls to watch and even more fun to coach. I look forward to seeing them play in the fall with their schools."

Earlier this season, Club West's 18U team won bronze in a Regina tournament. In January, the 17U squad placed second at the Wolfpack Tournament in Hepburn, Sask.

POOLE CAPS COLLEGE CAREER WITH NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

By Robin Wark
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Darbi Poole capped her university hockey career in spectacular fashion.

The daughter of Dana and Robin Poole played a key role as Midland University won the American Collegiate Hockey Association Women's Division I National Tournament. At the event in the St. Louis suburb of Maryland Heights, Mo., Poole lit the lamp in the championship game and her team's semifinal tilt.

"Winning a national championship in my senior year was extra special," she said. "After four years of early morning practices, workouts, and long road trips, it felt even more rewarding. It meant a lot to be able to finish college on a high note."

Poole was especially pleased to have her parents cheering her on at the national tournament.

"My family has been very important in my hockey career," she said. "From driving me to practices and games throughout the years and supporting me from afar, they have always been there for me. It was special to have my parents in St. Louis to celebrate."

In the ACHA championship game, the Fremont, Neb.-based and No. 2-seeded Warriors defeated Virginia's Liberty University, the top seed, 4-3 in a contest that lasted three overtime sessions. Midland University co-captain Taylor Bell scored the game winner after 117 minutes of play. What kept the Warriors motivated through the lengthy overtime battle?

"We were all pretty exhausted by the overtime, but it was everyone's first time playing in the final at nationals, so I think knowing how close we were to being the first team to win is what helped us keep playing," Poole said. "Personally, I knew this was my

last game playing for Midland, and there was nothing to save it for."

In Midland University's 4-3 overtime win in the semifinal against St. Louis-based Maryville University, Poole scored on a penalty shot.

"We were tied 2-2, and I knew we needed a goal before going into the third period," she said. "I had a move in mind before I went, and then the goalie gave me the top corner, and I was able to capitalize."

Poole started her post-secondary hockey career in 2022-23 at Aquinas College in Michigan. She transferred to Midland University in time to play for the Warriors in the second semester of that school year. Poole immediately established herself as a contributor for Midland University. In 2023, "Darbi scored one of our biggest goals in program history when we won our first (Women's Midwest College Hockey) against Liberty. She had the game winner and we went on to win the game 2-1," Warriors head coach Jason White said.

Each year, Poole was part of a successful Midland University squad. This past season, she scored 15 goals, recorded 14 assists and finished with 29 points in 34 games, according to achahockey.org.

"She is the perfect student-athlete that any coach would want," White said. "She is a great human being and a wonderful teammate and tops it off with being such a strong student in the classroom. Darbi played a huge role in our program's success over the last four years and also played a crucial role in the national tournament."

Poole graduated in May with a degree in agribusiness and a minor in biology. She received the school's Outstanding Student in Agribusiness award and was recognized as one of the players with the highest grade point average on her team. Poole said she is



PHOTO BY MIDLAND UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S HOCKEY

Darbi Poole, centre, poses with her parents Robin and Dana at the Midland University women's hockey team's Senior Night.

exploring her career options and plans to continue playing hockey.

She leaves Midland University with plenty of memories of games and goals, but it is more than that.

"I will remember the friendships I made at Midland the most," she said. "I have met a lot of great people at Midland. I will also miss being around the team every day."

MHSRA SEASON TOTALS FOR LOCAL MEMBERS



PHOTO BY NANCY JO MOLLER

Spencer Gompf and Denver Gompf, skilled competitors in High School Team Roping on May 16 at Oak Lake.

By Jessica Coulter
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Manitoba High School Rodeo Association (MHSRA) regular season finishes up May 23-24 weekend, in Oak Lake.

The next scheduled rodeo is set for May 23 and

24 in Oak Lake, the last chance to increase point totals before the finals. Finals for Junior High (JH) riders will be May 29 – 31 in Gilbert Plains. High School (HS) finals are scheduled for June 12 – 14 in Virden.

All details are from the MHSRA website.

Ducks and water

By Dale Davison
EMPIRE-ADVANCE

Ducks Unlimited proposals

Scott Henowitch and Jane Haylund from Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) attended the May 12 RM of Wallace-Woodworth council meeting seeking approval for two projects they are planning. The first proposal would see DUC purchase a half section of land from Ronald and Diana Nykoliation. The property is primarily pastureland with approximately 60 cultivated acres. DUC plans to purchase the land, through their revolving land program. Henowitch explained, “We’ll restore any developed habitat on it, and then we’ll put it up for sale with the conservation agreement in place.”

Council also heard a proposal by Haylund for a conservation easement involving landowner Brian Eilers, who has requested these easements on three quarter sections. The agreement would preserve the land in its current state by preventing drainage, filling, or clearing of wetlands and bush areas.

The municipality indicated it had no objection to the proposals and agreed to provide letters confirming that position.

RM concerns

Coun. Mark Humphries expressed a concern with some DUC projects and policies. Humphries stated, “You’ve got projects now that are going on 35, 40 years, and obviously the topography’s changed, the climate’s changed, and now there’s no break, no drain. It’s actually leaching into neighbouring fields so it’s destroying the neighbouring farm because of sour water going in there... They are obviously wanting to drain that away so they can carry on farming, but we’ve heard that your organization has basically said flatly no”

DUC representatives said they were unaware of those specific complaints.

Wildfire risk

Humphries continued with concerns about the recent increase in wildfire emergencies. He stated that cultivation to create firebreaks is used in these situations and wondered if DUC would allow that to take place under conservation agreements.

Henowitch responded that conservation easements still allow some flexibility through a work consent process. He explained that activities such as clearing fence lines, maintaining fire guards, or constructing

dugouts can be approved through work consent forms, but that regular cultivation to maintain firebreaks would not be allowed. He added that in a true emergency involving threats to lives or property, they would not object to emergency firebreaks being created to protect homes or contain fires.

Humphries replied that in a conversation with a fire chief had been told access would not be permitted on certain DUC lands.

Councillors said that changing topography and climate conditions have altered drainage patterns over time. They are concerned that infrastructure or maintenance liabilities eventually become municipal responsibilities despite not originally being municipal projects.

Reeve Canart summed up the Wallace-Woodworth position by stating that the RM wants assurances that future councils and administrations will always have the authority to protect municipal roads, drainage systems, and other infrastructure if conditions change decades later.

Council members emphasized they wanted explicit language guaranteeing that municipal infrastructure protection rights would supersede conservation easement restrictions when necessary.

DUC staff acknowledged the concern and agreed the issue likely required discussion at a higher organizational level. They offered to bring the RM’s concerns forward to management.

Assiniboine River Valley flooding

Water management is always a sensitive issue as river levels rise in the spring and flooding often occurs. Flood relief from the province is not available if the event is deemed a “natural flood”. This spring the Assiniboine River Valley north-east of Virden is seriously affected and Coun. Diana MacDonald said, “There’s thousands of acres underwater... it’s going to be a long flood. It’s not going to disappear real quick, so to me, that’s not a natural flood.”

MacDonald predicted the flooding would persist well into June because more water is coming in to the Shellmouth reservoir than can be released. She said, “We were already told it crested, but now it’s going over the spillway, so more water is probably coming with no control.”

Council agreed that the situation was serious. They agreed to cooperate with other organizations and lobby the government to recognise this as an unnatural event and provide support for producers.

Lach Voted Our MB 2026 Photo Contest Winner



PHOTO BY NANCY JO MOLLER

L to R: Debbie Strelczik (Loans Officer, Sunrise Credit Union) presenting Our MB winner, Donna Lach with a canvas of her winning picture.

By Heather Merckx
SCU DIRECTOR, BRAND & MARKETING

Sunrise Credit Union has just wrapped up the 2026 edition of the Our Manitoba Photo Contest, with Donna Lach being crowned the winner.

A panel of Sunrise staff selected 30 finalists from approximately 650 entries – the highest number to date. In April, Sunrise hosted a week-long public vote on the finalists through the ourmanitoba.org website, with Lach’s photo Inukshuk at the Shore receiving the majority of votes and claiming the top spot.

After learning about the inukshuk and how it can be a symbol of guidance, community, and survival, Lach became intrigued by it. “When I went to Churchill for the first time, to take photos of the aurora with a group of people in 2022, I saw this icon standing on the shore of Hudson Bay. It was “showing the way”. I was thrilled for the opportunity to capture this incredible icon on Treaty 5 land in Churchill, with the aurora behind it,” said Lach.

Winning the 2026 edition of the Our Manitoba Photo Contest has been amazing, Lach says, “I am so very honoured to have my photo selected by the people of Manitoba. I really am flabbergasted. Thank you for this opportunity!”

A passionate photographer for over 50 years, Lach always has had at least one camera. “Manitoba is such a beautiful province, I think mostly I love to capture the scenes, the flora and fauna, and candid shots (of people) that will tell a story,” Lach shared.

For years, Lach has been capturing the aurora borealis, and since 2019, she has contributed to Aurorasaurus, a NASA-sponsored citizen-science project, as well as Skywarden in Finland. These platforms let enthusiasts and researchers track, document, and study auroras in real time. “It’s all volunteer work,” Lach explains, “but I’ve been invited to take part in projects that study the aurora. I have sold a few prints because people ask, but my main focus is sharing my photos with others online.”

All 12 finalists will receive a canvas print of the winning photograph, be featured in the 2026 Sunrise Credit Union calendar, and have their work showcased on Sunrise Credit Union’s branch TVs and social media channels. In addition, Lach claimed the Grand Prize: a \$500 One-Year Term Deposit from Sunrise Credit Union.

The 2026 contest marked the 14th edition of the Our Manitoba Photo Contest. Lach was announced as the grand prize winner on Monday, May 12 - coinciding with Manitoba Day. Experiencing Manitoba through the eyes of our talented participants continues to inspire and delight everyone at Sunrise Credit Union.